

TO:

Mr Philippe de FONTAINE VIVE
Vice-President of the EIB
100, Bd Konrad Adenauer
L-2950 Luxembourg
European Investment Bank


Brussels, 28th October 2010

RE: EIB mining seminar on 6th October 2010 and misleading information on the position of civil society

Dear Mr Fontaine Vive,

Counter Balance coalition of NGOs monitoring the activities of the European Investment Bank (EIB) is seriously concerned about the recent approach of the Bank, which undermines its attempts towards open and transparent dialogue with all stakeholders.

On October 6th, the European Investment Bank organised a “Mining Seminar”, which was held in Luxembourg, to discuss the development and environmental impacts on three EIB-financed mining projects, and earlier this week the EIB published on its website an article on the seminar, stating among other things, that *“Civil Society representatives applauded the social programmes of the mining companies”* and that the mining projects presented were *“successes [are] in contrast with a bad reputation”*. [1]

However, the majority of the concerned civil society organisations (CSO) both in the North and in the South were left out of this discussion by the EIB. There were also no representatives of local impacted communities where these projects are taking place, to share any of their concerns from their own experience with the participants of the seminar. Consequently, fundamental critics on the mining projects were missed out.

Therefore, this statement seriously undermines the credibility of the bank and puts under question the willingness of the EIB to engage in an open and transparent dialogue with all stakeholders.

We welcome the fact that the EIB has taken the initiative to discuss contradictory projects, such as projects in the mining industry, and is looking towards ways forward. However, considering the absence of non-government or industry related civil society representatives, we are concerned that this exercise might appear more like a PR instrument instead of a constructive dialogue to improve its practices and tackle the real and still existing problems on the ground.

Instead of applauding the mining companies, a lot of CSOs still have fundamental critiques on their negative social and environmental impact. One of the cases presented as "exemplary", the Lumwana mine, was the subject of a Friends of the Earth France/CEE Bankwatch Network fact finding mission in 2009. Several hundreds of farmers were expelled of the deposit where they were cultivating the land, local people were simply informed of the upcoming project but not asked for their consent, and above all, the EIB consequently forgets to mention that besides copper, Lumwana mine is also a uranium mine. Today, no proper information on radioactivity has been given to local communities, and a recent report from the Council of Churches in Zambia says that Zambia is not ready for uranium exploitation for the lack of appropriate policy framework, insufficient environmental and community protection, and lack of capacity to manage radioactive waste.

Counter Balance is very concerned about the fact that the Bank did not include these criticisms in its discussion. This approach casts doubts on the quality of the EIB dialogue with civil society. We believe that the Bank could only improve its lending in engaging in an in-depths assessment of its practices that would also include contradictory analysis.

Sincerely yours,



**Desislava Stoyanova
Counter Balance coordinator**

Reference:

- [1] « Sustainability takes centre stage at EIB mining seminar », 21st October 2010, EIB.
<http://www.eib.org/about/news/eib-mining-seminar.htm>