

The Citizens' Initiative against Shale Gas Prospecting and Extraction
by the Hydraulic Fracturing Method in Bulgaria

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Bulgarian Prime Minister - Mr Boyko Borissov

Chairman of the 41st National Assembly – Mrs Tsetska Tsatcheva

Members of the 41st National Assembly

Sofia, February 1st, 2012

Dear Mr President, Mrs Chairman, Prime Minister, members of the National Assembly and media representatives,

This letter is a response to the repeated media publications and attacks towards The Citizens' Initiative against Shale Gas Prospecting and Exploration by the Hydraulic Fracturing Method in Bulgaria. We would like to state that the Initiative consists of conscious, responsible, and patriotic Bulgarian citizens who come from different professions, social strata, and political orientation. Our mutual concern and determination to prevent the poisoning of the water and land of our country, Bulgaria, is what unites us. Since we have observed difficulties in establishing the exact number of participants in the protests, even among cabinet members, we are willing to provide photographs which will aid the process of objective counting of the latter.

We strongly disagree with the suggestion that geologists are the only experts who can provide competent opinion about the **damage** that hydraulic fracturing can cause. We claim that they are the only experts who, because of their line of work, are most likely to be in conflict of interest. As far as we are concerned, their opinion should be taken into consideration only after experts such as, hydrologists, seismologists, toxicologists, biologists, ecologists, doctors, and soil scientists, have expressed their assessment. Geologists and lobbyists of mining companies are the ones who have prepared the currently applicable "Law for Mineral Resources" which does not provide adequate regulations on new technologies. Thus, the experts' discontent has arisen since they will be forced to introduce such practices in their work process.

We have reached the conclusion that under the guise of "exploration" and "trade secrecy" numerous companies are considering the use of technologies resembling the dangerous hydraulic fracturing method. Due to the absence of regulations and control others have intended to apply the same technology without describing its terminology in their work programme. By no means does the current ban on hydraulic fracturing prevent "clean water only" shale gas extraction. Nor does it prevent studies which use methods different than hydraulic fracturing.

From the very beginning we have insisted on statutory prohibition of the hydraulic fracturing method. In addition, we have required consequential amendments to the applicable laws, namely "Law for Mineral Resources", "Environmental Law", "Concession Law", "Law for Carbon Dioxide Storage", and "Law for Water Resources". Last but not least, we demand that experts, invited by the citizens' initiative, should join in the decision-making process.

The chairman of the National Assembly, Mrs Tsetska Tsatcheva, has promised that citizens will be a party in the consideration of the required amendments. Any attempt to isolate the participation of citizens will be perceived as yet another deceit. What is more, this will mean that the considered amendments are to serve only the interests of mining companies. Such developments will inevitably lead to immediate danger from an ecological catastrophe for the country. As a result, we will recommence our protests.

As for the visit of US Secretary of State, Mrs Hilary Clinton, and the possibility of shale gas extraction discussion with her Bulgarian colleagues, we would like to call attention to the fact that the state she was elected from, namely New York has an active full ban on the technology of hydraulic fracturing. The main concern expressed in the prohibition act is the danger from ground water contamination.

Any attempt to interfere with Bulgarian internal affairs and to lobby for the hydraulic fracturing method usage in our country, will be perceived as ill-intentioned. Such endeavours are inconsistent with the current situation in the state of New York.

According to the assurance that the citizens' initiative will be given the opportunity to participate in the amendment-making process, we are expecting to receive an invitation ASAP.

Yours Sincerely,

The Citizens' Initiative against Shale Gas Prospecting and Exploration
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Enclosures:

CC: President of the Republic of Bulgaria - Mr Rosen Plevneliev

CC: International Media