



Information letter for those to whom fracking matters and updates on the website FFI

contact: [ineke@frackingfreeireland.org](mailto:ineke@frackingfreeireland.org)

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## **WHY IRELAND NEVER-EVER SHOULD BE FRACKED**

### **THE IRISH ROUND TOWERS**

the good energy  
from the towers of power

Towers of Power are paramagnetic antennas which collect and focus beneficial cosmic energies and direct them into surrounding soil. The spherical paramagnetic energy field around them stimulates biological processes in the vicinity, enhancing the health, vitality and well-being of plants and animals. Topsoil production is accelerated and bumper crops are often the result. Plants have increased sugar levels, which makes them taste sweeter, while they become more resilient, and less pest and frost prone.

#### **Irish Round Towers and Professor Phil Callahan**

The unique round towers in Ireland have long proved enigmatic. The American professor Phil Callahan PhD has been investigating round towers for several decades. The local Irish farmers, he discovered, appreciate them for their fertile surroundings. He observed farmers ferry their cows in row boats to Devenish Island so they could eat the lush grass growing around the tower there.

Constructed of paramagnetic stone (that is - stone which is weakly attracted to a magnet), these ancient towers act like giant magnetic antennae, drawing down energies beneficial to soil, says Callahan, well known for his studies of insect 'antennae'. Soils around round towers are highly paramagnetic and enjoy great fertility.

Callahan believes that the Irish towers act as wave-guides or aerials for extra-low-frequency (ELF) radiation from high above Earth ( Schumann radiation) and the sun . Vital to our health, ELF waves are able to penetrate water and soil, unlike higher frequencies of radiation. To amplify incoming ELF, towers must be paramagnetic, and the effect is enhanced even more when paramagnetic and diamagnetic (i.e. weakly repelled by a magnet) materials are sandwiched together. The Irish towers, often made from granite or basalt stone with wooden floors, were perfect for the task.

The Irish round towers were constructed by monks towards the end of the great period of monastic expansion, between the fifth and the seventh centuries. When they were built they would have been the only stone structure in the monastery. Today 25 or more towers stand upright in more or less perfect form, whilst the remains of another 43 dot the countryside.

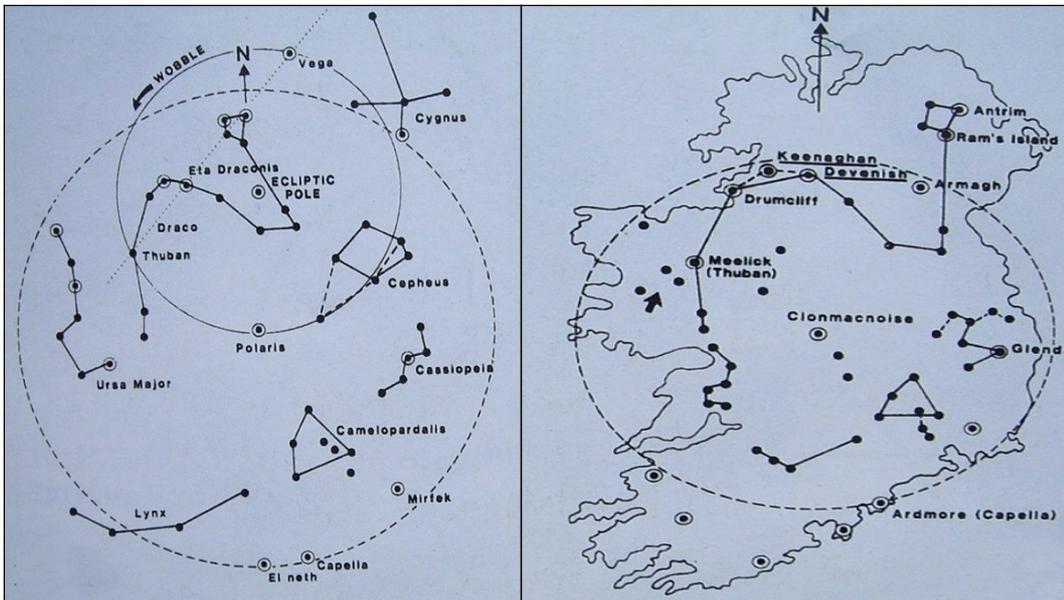
## Discovering the star map

One day, Callahan had bought Professor Barrow's *Irish Heritage* pamphlet on round towers which included a fine map of the still-standing towers. "I was lying on a couch looking at the map. There was something very familiar about it - apart from it being a map of Ireland! After about five or ten minutes, it suddenly flashed into my mind - insight I believe it is called - exactly why the map appeared so familiar. The towers formed a star map of the northern night sky. I have used that sky map dozens and dozens of times hiking around in the deserts of the world. It is gouged like a carved woodblock in my brain."

One of the best preserved monasteries is Clonmacnoise in the centre of the great plain of Ireland. It is on the Shannon River and is widely assumed to have been the centre for the entire monastic movement.

Callahan thought it logical to use it to represent the star Polaris. All the other star groups then fell in to place - Ursa Major, Draco, Cassiopeia, Camelopardalis and Lynx, far to the south.

What Callahan had drawn was an almost perfect sky for the December solstice. The imperfections in the round tower star plot lie mainly in the fact that the monks had to fix their towers to the lay of the land.



*In 2600 B.C., when the great pyramid of Giza was being built, the star Thuban would have been the pole star. About 13,000 years into the future the Earth will have wobbled to the point where Vega will be the pole star.*

What is astonishing about the round tower star map of Ireland is that there were two great ecclesiastical centres during the early days of Christianity in Ireland, one at Armagh in the north and one at Clonmacnoise in central Ireland. In relation to the round tower plot of Draco, Armagh is exactly at the point of the ecliptic centre. This demonstrates very clearly that the Celtic monks of Ireland knew not only that the Earth was round, but also about precession - the slow wobble of the Earth around a theoretical or ecliptic centre of the sky, a circular movement which takes 25,800 years to complete.

It is probable that the knowledge of astronomy, and especially of precession and the ecliptic centre demonstrated in Ireland originated in Ancient Egypt. The Denderah circular zodiac (300 B.C.), for example, proves they too had this knowledge.

"The technocrat, who is high-energy, inorganic-slanted, will of course scoff at my star map of round towers and say that the correlation is coincidental," Callahan shrugs. "For the high-energy technocrat every phenomenon that does not hit one on the head with an inorganic hammer is a coincidence. Coincidence is the cop-out word of the century used to put low-energy organic researchers in their place."

read more:

The enigma of the round towers - <http://www.trcb.com/travel/destinations/the-enigma-of-the-irish-round-towers-part-two-5970.htm>

Tower Power -

[http://www.britishdowsers.org/EEG\\_site/archive/articles/asa2003\\_issue32/towers%20of%20power.htm](http://www.britishdowsers.org/EEG_site/archive/articles/asa2003_issue32/towers%20of%20power.htm)

**Leave your desktop studies, get out for a walk, tune in into nature, open your eyes, be filled with wonder and then you know: this is not just rural Ireland, it is 'Gods country', (as one of our clients said when he visited our studio in the Ox Mountains) we should be a good steward of the earth.**

**Do not think that people who are involved in fracking could ever become our friends, despite their friendly smile! They have one goal - as father O'Shea (apologize for misspelling) said in a meeting in Manorhamilton – making money!**

**Do not be happy if the government postpones fracking until it is safe: no harm to the environment. This is not the question, fracking will destroy our culture heritage, unspoiled landscape and spirituality.**

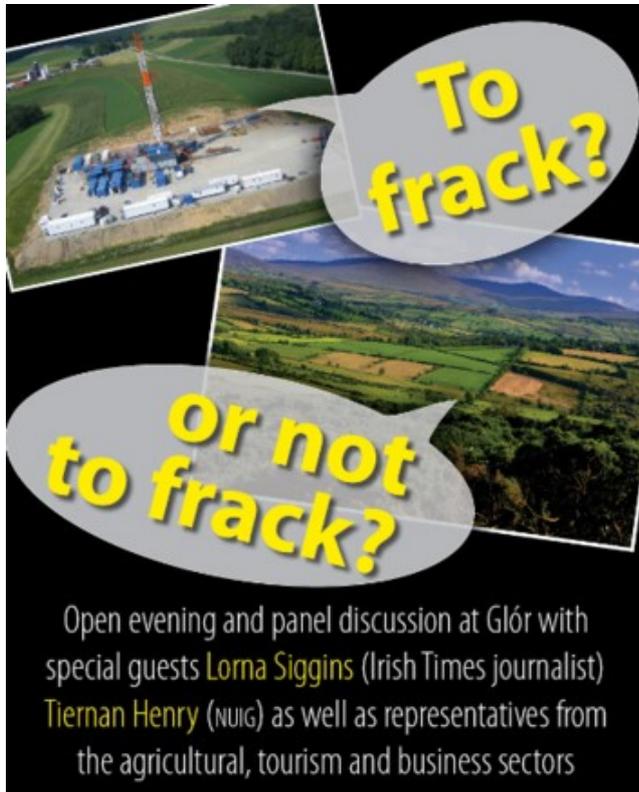
**No Fracking Ireland, Keep Ireland Fracking Free, Keep Ireland Guaranteed Fracking Free! Full Stop!**

Ineke Scholte

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## EVENTS and other small CAMPAIGN news

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**To Frack?**

**or not to Frack?**

Open evening and panel discussion at Glór with special guests **Lorna Siggins** (Irish Times journalist) **Tiernan Henry** (NUIG) as well as representatives from the agricultural, tourism and business sectors



**April 15<sup>th</sup> 2012 - start 7pm**

Cost €7/€5(concession)



Clare – Sunday April 15, 7 pm

Press release

To Frack or not to Frack?

**NUIG hydro-geologist Tiernan Henry will speak on the dangers of hydraulic fracturing at a public event at Glór, Ennis, on Sunday, April 15, at 7pm. This will be followed by a panel discussion which will be chaired by Lorna Siggins, Western Correspondent with the Irish Times. There will be a chance for full audience participation in a questions and answers session.**

Clare Fracking Concerned spokesperson Róisín Ní Gháirbhith said that even though the entire chamber of Clare County Council had voting against fracking, this did not effectively prohibit it.

“Local government just does not have that power. Secondly anyone who becomes informed of the controversial method of fracking knows it would be a criminal undertaking to let it happen in Co Clare and the other areas of the West of Ireland where it

is being proposed.”

Ní Gháirbhith added that the event was being held to keep support alive for this issue. “It is important that people who are genuinely concerned about the threat of fracking attend this event. We need to keep this issue on our local politicians’ agenda and they need to know that we the people do not, under any circumstances want this in our county or indeed Ireland” she said.

Fracking involves using a pressurized cocktail of water, sand and chemicals to release methane gas from shale rock and has caused environmental pollution in the US.

“We have invited representatives from every sector of society, including farmers, politicians, tourism operators, business people, hoteliers, publicans, geologists, as well as Enegi Oil, the company which is interested in fracking in Clare to take part in a panel discussion,” said Ní Gháirbhith.

Enegi Oil has a licence for a 500km2 area known as the ‘Clare Basin’ that covers a large part of West Clare, as well as parts of Kerry and Limerick. The company has stated “the Clare Basin area has great potential” and that it is “a new exciting lead”. Enegi is currently proceeding with phase two of its exploration process, taking more detailed samples of what it describes as “an organically rich source rock that may contain shale gas”. It can then proceed to apply for a drilling licence.

For further information or interview contact:

Lorna Siggins: [lorna.siggins@gmail.com](mailto:lorna.siggins@gmail.com),  
Róisín Ní Gháirbhith 086 1043528 - Clare Fracking Concerned, Susan Griffin 087-7917589- Clare Fracking Concerned

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**Update from the "Guaranteed Fracking Free" Logo Campaign:**

Hello everyone,

Here are some news and ideas from the logo campaign.

1. Do you have any personal contacts in the tourism/agri-food sectors who already support the idea of keeping Ireland fracking free? If so, would you please consider suggesting to them the idea of adopting the logo, to use in any way that suits them?

We would like to be able to add supportive businesses to our list,

at <https://sites.google.com/site/frackingireland/-guaranteed-fracking-free-logo>, so please send us the name and address of any business that agrees to be listed to [gff.logo@gmail.com](mailto:gff.logo@gmail.com).

2. We also have a Photo Gallery started on the same site, so any photos of the logo in use would be very welcome. Please send them straight to Charlie Williams at [kiff.ireland@gmail.com](mailto:kiff.ireland@gmail.com).

3. Here are some ideas of ways to use the logo, for groups:

- a. If your local county council has voted in support of keeping Ireland fracking free, invite them to formally adopt the logo.
- b. Print car window stickers to sell and to give to shops to display in their windows.
- c. Make badges/T-shirts etc. to sell. These can be a good money-maker for a group, and they also increase the visibility of the logo and thus the effectiveness of the campaign.

If you want to propose any items you have for sale to other groups, etc., please let us know.

That's all for the moment!

Kind regards,

Sarah Akamine  
[gff.logo@gmail.com](mailto:gff.logo@gmail.com)



<http://www.glor.ie/events/category/film>

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Reminder:  
Deadline for submissions on National Climate Policy Development is April 30.

<http://www.environ.ie/en/Environment/Atmosphere/ClimateChange/ClimatePolicyDevelopmentConsultation/>

(Keeping in mind the Howarth Study from Cornell which found that shale gas produces more greenhouse gas emissions than coal or oil...especially methane, which is the worst thing for climate change in the short term...  
<http://www.eeb.cornell.edu/howarth/Howarth%20et%20al.%20--%20National%20Climate%20Assessment.pdf>)

Reporter: Isabella Bancroft

Hi all,  
there's a Technical Briefing on the handling of contaminated lands, including their redesignation as Brownfield Sites, being held at the Marine Hotel in Dun Laoghaire in May. The link below is to the organisers's site - please forward it to anyone who might want to attend...

<http://www.envirocentre.ie/Events.aspx?ID=abc85feb-df51-4a84-a99b-fcfbe0255467&PID=a257bece-c1e7-464a-9cd0-fde10d3a18c3&EID=9c8638a2-cba6-404b-8234-0106e876e402&M=2>

Reporter: Seán Conlan

**Are you interested in pursuing a currency initiative in your locality? Then why not learn how others are doing it and share experiences with them. FEASTA - the Foundation for the Economics of Sustainability are inviting those interested to join the FEASTA Currency Group.**

It's a primarily online Community of Practice (CoP) for local currency advocates (and would-be advocates) to share experience and information around the development and implementation of local currencies - initially via a Facebook Group and a group email list. For more information just send an email to [currency@feasta.org](mailto:currency@feasta.org)



## WHAT YOU CAN/MUST DO

Reporter: Michael Mc Evoy

With 2010 votes, "moratorium on fracking" is currently ranking 12th in 38 Degrees' list of campaign suggestions.

If we all use our votes, it could get to the top and get their campaigning machine behind it.

38 Degrees have had some BIG campaign successes. Please take 1 min' to click on the link and vote.

<http://38degrees.uservoice.com/forums/78585-campaign-suggestions/suggestions/1717939-a-call-for-a-moratorium-on-hydraulic-fracturing-in>

## IRISH NEWS

# Ireland is still 'only learning about fracking'

Seamus Enright

IRELAND lags behind the rest of Europe in policy, legislation and activism when it comes to fracking, according to a German councillor and scientist.

Having previously spoken to a crowded assembly in Leitrim last August, eminent geoscientist Dr Helmut Fehr returned to the region on Monday to give a presentation in the Rainbow Ballroom in Glenfarne on the topic of 'How public opinion and the media have turned against fracking in Germany'. Along the way however Mr Fehr stopped in Glangevlin to visit the sealed council site containing a now-capped fracked bore hole.

He explained to The Anglo-Celt that in his native Germany, where a moratorium on fracking was introduced in some areas, communities there had learned to interpret

the language used by energy companies to garner a full picture of the processes used to fracture rock layers in extracting natural gas or other substances. However he says Ireland needs a more concerted effort from both campaigners and politicians, who he says are vital in the attaining transparency on fracking matters.

"There is not necessarily a culture of misinformation surrounding fracking in Germany, rather a selective output of information to the public," Dr Fehr told The Anglo-Celt. "In the Münster area in Germany for example we have areas where deeper layers of water rise up driven by gas, proving that the fissures in the ground are not as tight as the companies would suggest.

"There have been situations where through fracking, contamination of water supplies with benzene has been discovered. The company knew but

they didn't tell the public, they didn't tell the government or the campaigners, they hold back on this information, particularly on accidents."

He also spoke of how the companies engage the politicians with promises of tax revenues and jobs. He claims such promises were empty as the industry resulted in displacing other jobs.

"In Germany, the politicians have learned from the campaigners, they learned if they don't listen to the them it reflects in their vote at election time. But campaigners need the politicians too, they need someone who can influence policy. "Ireland is very similar to Germany in that there is only little legislation in place concerning mining, our situation goes back centuries. Ireland is now only really at a stage where you are learning about fracking and the possible outcomes," he said.

London to Monte Carlo for our Ally

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grandfather  
Cookstown,  
his grand-  
father, John  
and 1912. On  
his ances-  
trous speak

of my time."

Montana is a state of stunning scenery and a richness of natural resources in the form of oil, coal and gas. Montana's agriculture is mainly based on wheat and

and crop every two years, leaving the land fallow in order to build up moisture levels.

There is no major slaughter facility in the state, so beef cattle are exported as stores for finishing in mas-

is extremely tight at present - "never been better", as Governor Schweitzer puts it.

"The drought in Texas and Arizona has led to a lot of liquidated herds and you have had years of low prices. With maize at \$7 per bushel, it is a great time to be a cow/calf producer but not a good time to be running a feedlot with expensive cattle and expensive feed. There is going to be a wreck (crash) one of these weeks; everybody who

Governor Schweitzer is in detailed discussions with Chinese officials. "China is not really interested in our wheat; they are self-sufficient most years.

"What they really want is pork. I am in negotiations with them to build a big pork slaughtering plant in Montana. We don't produce a lot of pork, but we produce feed and they want to slaughter more than a million pigs per year in Montana.

nor said.

"My Irish and Ukrainian grandparents had it figured out 100 years ago, using the first wind charger. The farms were completely off grid but had all the electricity they wanted."

Interestingly, Gaelectric, a privately held renewable energy group established in 2004 and headquartered in Dublin, is a significant player in the wind energy business in Montana.

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7. Defector (HTH)	€94
8. Paxton (AXP)	€94

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s (SYW)	€231
(TJF)	€226
ia (MHR)	€225
WAU)	€210
MJI)	€185
ORL)	€181
ce (LDQ)	€181
AXP)	€177

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2. Lotus (WAU)	+0.16
3. Defector (HTH)	+0.15
4. T Martini (TMT)	+0.12
5. J Orion (JUO)	+0.11
6. Frank (MJI)	+0.09
7. Decree (HZC)	+0.08
8. Fatals Duke (HZJ)	+0.08

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## Fracking opening up new opportunities in Montana

Governor Schweitzer said that the relatively new technology of hydraulic fracturing (fracking) is opening up new opportunities in Montana.

"Montana had led the technology of hydraulic fracturing of shale," he said. "In eastern Montana, the Bakken field was estimated to have 0.5 billion gallons of recoverable oil. Today, the estimate is 25 billion barrels. This is at about two miles deep. We knew the oil was there; it's just that the shales are so tight that they don't release it."

### OPPOSITION

The possible use of fracking technology in Ireland has generated a strong campaign of opposition on environmental grounds. The govern-

nor's blunt response: "Some people are concerned at potential damage to groundwater, but it's not geologically sound for them to have those concerns. For every 2.3 feet that you drill down, the pressure increases by one pound per square inch. So, when you get to a couple of miles deep, you are at 4,000 psi. If oil and gas were going to get to the surface, don't you think they would have done it by now? We are not fracturing all 10,000 feet; the reason the oil and gas has not made it to the surface is that there is so much impermeable shale above it. When we frack, we are only fracturing a small 100 to 200 foot layer down deep."

He said that there is now 'extensive activity' across two thirds of Montana - a

kind of a land rush to explore this new technology in some other shales.

How are people reacting? "It is being mostly welcomed, but there is some opposition. There is a pretty good record with these companies - you just need to regulate it. We've been in the oil and gas business for 100 years in Montana, so there are rules and laws that dictate what you can and cannot do."

**Some people are concerned at potential damage to groundwater, but it's not geologically sound for them to have those concerns**

# Drastic effects of fracking

**U**NBELIEVABLY a law was passed recently in Pennsylvania forbidding doctors from informing their patients of what 'fracking' chemicals they had ingested from the local shale-gas mining operations that had poisoned their systems and the local water supplies.

This shows the power of the petro-chemical giants, an industry that through President Bush in 2004 persuaded Congress to exempt the industry from the 'safe drinking water and clean air acts' – laws long enshrined in American legislation. Yet this is an industry that would be inflicted on west Fermanagh by Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment Arlene Foster's advocacy. Does the lady lack foresight?

**JOHN-PATRICK BELL**  
Manorhamilton,  
Co Leitrim

## Leitrim the loneliest county

<http://www.independent.ie/lifestyle/leitrim-the-loneliest-county-3073963.html>

By Anita Guidera

Saturday April 07 2012

Two types of ruins dominate the landscape of County Leitrim, telling contrasting stories of its past. The decaying remnants of stone cottages that dot the hillsides echo an older, more modest way of life, while the concrete remains of derelict, half-built housing estates have become monuments to our modern malaise.

Last week's census figures revealed that almost one in three houses are unoccupied in Ireland's least populated county. It is the highest vacancy rate in the country and a sorry legacy of an economic boom, fuelled by tax incentives.

"The incentives were a disaster for small rural communities like my own because they sucked young people into the bigger towns which has had a knock-on effect on other services," said Sean McDermott, a County Councillor from Glenfarne, in the depopulated north of the county.

And while the census showed a modest population rise for the second consecutive cycle, Leitrim's high dependency rate and rising unemployment levels make dealing with the vexed issue of what to do with these 'ghost estates' seem the least of their problems.

With just over 30,000 inhabitants, the county has a similar population to Swords or Bray or Dundalk, except its inhabitants are spread over 1,500 plus square kilometres of land carved up by mountains, lakes and rivers.

This reflects an ancient rural habitation pattern but poses challenges that have been compounded by the recession.

Kinlough native and former county footballer, Colin Regan who was editor of the now defunct Leitrim Post during the boom years, believes

the building explosion discriminated against this traditional rural living.

"The entire focus was to move people into these artificial housing estates and to try and make it almost impossible, through regulation, for people to get planning permission for one-off housing, even on their own land," he said.

There is no escaping the ugly trail of destruction that has been left behind. Sprawling, unfinished housing schemes now bookend what were once pretty, single-street villages.

By the end of 2008 alone, planning permission had been granted to 1,000 houses, and a further 1,390 were under construction, despite 786 vacant units.

"The real tragic legacy is not just the empty houses, but that a lot of them were built in such scenic, pristine locations," added Mr Regan.

One such development in Keshcarrigan, on the banks of the river Shannon, made headlines in the Chicago Tribune a few weeks ago when it became the subject of a guerilla gardeners' initiative.

Armed with gloves, spades and tree saplings, the group that call themselves, 'Nama to Nature' planted over 1,000 trees in the hope that the half-finished estate could one day become a nature reserve.

Drumshanbo-based councillor, Enda McGloin insists that the local authority must now work towards completing the scores of unfinished estates in the hope that buyers can be found.

Meanwhile, services in the recession-stricken county are being stretched to breaking point and emigration is rampant.

"There is almost a mini-Kinlough living in Perth and Brisbane now," said Mr Regan.

The number of post offices in the county has virtually halved since 2001. Eight schools face losing a teacher, while seven more schools

could be downgraded in the next two years.

Garda stations in Kiltyclogher and Drumkeerin are facing the chop.

Maintaining over 2,000km of a road network that snakes around lakes and mountains is becoming a growing headache for a local authority that has been forced to shed outdoor staff to cut costs.

Mr McGloin believes that local indigenous industries such as food production and tourism will play a crucial role in the troubled county's future.

But even the innovative Food Hub in Drumshanbo, that provides a training kitchen and production facilities for fledgling companies, is struggling to keep afloat.

Yet another challenge looms for Leitrim this summer, when anti-fracking demonstrators face down Tamboran Resources, an Australian mining company, which has divided communities with its plans to exploit a substantial gas field on the Fermanagh/Leitrim border.

The company claims the gas field could deliver security of energy supply for Ireland for the next 40 years and provide hundreds of jobs. But many fear the controversial fracking process used to remove the gas -- which involves forcing millions of gallons of chemical fluids deep into the ground -- will damage the water supply and irrevocably destroy the pristine landscape.

But for all the mistakes of the past and challenges of the future, there is an unmistakably optimistic feeling on the ground.

Agriculture is currently thriving and the county is developing a strong organic branding, with the Organic Centre in Rossinver at the helm.

Leitrim has long been a Mecca for angling and boating -- the River Drowes produces the first salmon of the season almost every year -- and its reputation as a niche tourism destination is quietly taking off.

A case in point is the award-winning Teapot Lane, Ireland's first 'glamping', or glamorous campground, situated near the county's tiny strip of coastline. Since opening two years ago, the campground, with yurt and tree house accommodation, has been enjoying high levels of occupancy.

The arts is another burgeoning sector, with centres such as the Dock in Carrick-on-Shannon and the Glen Centre and the Sculpture Centre, both in Manorhamilton, attracting a growing community of artists.

Leitrim is the ancestral birthplace of Hollywood legend, James Cagney and has in more recent times been home to two Booker prize nominees, the late John McGahern and Booker winner, DBC Pierre (Peter Finlay).

One newcomer, Dublin-born actor and writer Donal O'Kelly was drawn to relocate to north Leitrim because of its receptive arts community.

"Sometimes in Dublin the arts scene seems industrial. It is more organic, more of a natural habitat up here.

"It is easier to get collective events in motion. I find it really inspiring," he said.

- Anita Guidera

<http://www.independent.ie/lifestyle/leitrim-the-loneliest-county-3073963.html>

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**Eamon O Cuív calls for national debate and National Strategy on Fracking**

<http://www.donegaldemocrat.ie/news/local/o-cuiv-calls-for-national-strategy-on-fracking-1-3719597>

With initial assessment licenses granted to companies to explore the potential for the extraction of natural gas in the Leitrim Roscommon and Cavan Area and in County Clare, a raging debate has ensued as to the safety and suitability of fracking and unconventional Gas Extraction for Ireland.

We need to examine this issue in detail and to develop a **national strategy** in relation to fracking and whether it should be permitted or not. This is a matter of urgency.

I am calling on the Minister to develop such a strategy and to involve all interested parties and the public in the process. This process would also involve a cost/benefit analysis of fracking nationally and internationally.

The issues that need to be examined include:

- Dangers to Public Safety
- Environmental and Pollution issues
- Possible physical damage to scenic landscapes as a result of drilling sites.
- Possible seismic effects
- The social and economic effects of fracking both nationally and locally
- Archaeological and cultural effects
- The employment effects on local communities including the effect on sustainable local industries of agriculture, tourism and in particular on the water based tourism in county Leitrim
- The possible effect to the existing major food industries in Ireland from any negative associations arising from pollution.
- Affects on Infrastructure

As many of these areas are designated under Natura 2000, consultations should also take place with DG Environment on the effects on these designations.

As with all policy, fracking must be considered in the context off the Government's Sustainable Development Strategy and our Climate Change commitments.

As part of the policy review and in view of the fact that the Northwest fracking area extends into the North, there is a clear need to that this state discuss the matter with the authorities in Northern Ireland.

The development of any National Strategy on fracking should include

comprehensive public consultation at all stages of the process and the maximum transparency and openness and involvement by all individuals and groups interested in the issue.

#### **Editor's Note**

The discovery of potential reserves of natural gas in areas such as Leitrim and the Clare Basin Regions has lead to speculation that hydraulic fracking will provide a native source of fuel as well as bring in much needed revenue to Ireland. But what exactly is "fracking"? Fracking is a process in which water, chemicals and sand are blasted deep below ground to release oil and natural gas trapped within rock formations.

This unconventional method has allowed companies in countries such as the US and Australia to tap into a wealth of new natural gas reserves. According to some sources, there is potential for massive amounts of natural gas on both sides of the border in Ireland. The same sources estimate the reserves will be able supply gas to Ireland for 12 years as well as create over 3,000 jobs substantially decreasing Ireland's gas imports. These estimates are speculative.

Although findings by private companies suggest a huge potential for unconventional gas in Ireland, the conditions that have facilitated the shale gas revolution in the US may not be replicated nor even desirable here. In addition, Ireland's government has yet to enact regulations on waste disposal. In fact, areas that have preceded Ireland in fracking such as New York, South Africa, India, France and Quebec have introduced moratoria on drilling and fracking because of concerns arising from pollution. This will possibly lead to tighter regulations being imposed on fracking or an outright ban on fracking. Ireland currently lacks any kind of comprehensive strategy on fracking and the development of such a strategy should be prioritized, given the very fragile ecology of the areas involved and the local population that reside in these areas.

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#### **Speech by [Pat Rabbitte TD](#)**

Minister for Communications, Energy & Natural Resources

#### **Responding to motions on hydraulic**

## fracturing (fracking) - Labour Party Conference

"My goal is to maximise the benefits to Ireland from our indigenous oil and gas resources. But I will also ensure that both exploration and production are conducted safely and on an environmentally sound basis.

On the issue of hydraulic fracturing, let me give you some background. Three authorisations were granted by the previous Government, for two years each. The work to be carried out under these authorisations is mostly based on desktop studies of existing data. These authorisations do not allow for any exploration drilling.

If any company completes that phase and applies for an exploration licence that involves any form of drilling, it would then be subject to a full Environmental Impact Assessment - including a full Public Consultation Phase. I would also seek the expert advice of the Environmental Protection Agency, the National Parks and Wildlife Service and, where necessary, independent consultants.

If a commercial discovery of onshore natural gas was made, the project would then need as a minimum -

a planning consent from Bord Pleanála, an Integrated Pollution Prevention Control Licence from the EPA, a Gas Act consent and a safety case approval from the Commission for Energy Regulation, and  
a Petroleum Lease, a Plan of Development consent and a Gas Pipeline consent from me

Under Irish and European law it would not be possible to permit any project to proceed unless it could be objectively decided following assessment that it would not have an unacceptable environmental or social impact. I fully agree that we cannot allow any project like this to proceed unless we are sure, in advance, that it will be both technologically and environmentally safe.

But I also believe our decisions on these issues must be based on transparent assessments of evidence. So, last October I asked the EPA to examine the whole issue of fracking and its potential environmental implications.

As a first step, the EPA has commissioned preliminary research, which will be available at the end of this month. I have already decided to commission a further and much more

extensive piece of research from the EPA, which will inform my assessment of any application - if and when an application is made. It will help in establishing whether or not hydraulic fracking can be used in a safe manner.

The research will not be simple and it will not be produced overnight. The United States has been examining this subject for the best part of three years.

I can therefore promise you that we will have had at least one if not two more Labour Party Conferences, and many more opportunities to debate this issue will have passed, before the question of the approval of any fracking operation arises. At every opportunity for debate as it arises, we will have further and better evidence and a more developed basis for assessing the potential implications of this technology.

**But unless and until I can be satisfied that there would be no unacceptable environmental or social impacts, there will be no hydraulic fracturing in this country."**

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Comment by Aedin:

This is good news indeed - not a moratorium or a ban but definitely gives us time. The campaign does not stop but I feel that there is light at the end of the tunnel.

Read more:

<http://www.labour.ie/press/listing/13343394223694852.html>

### 66th Annual Labour Party conference

Posted on April 11, 2012 at 04:27 PM

Eamon Gilmore - "Politics in Ireland has been transformed."The 66th Labour Party National Conference will take place this weekend in Galway on the 13th, 14th and 15th of April in the Bailey Allen Hall in Áras Na MacLéinn, NUI Galway.

Delegates from all over the country will be making their way to Galway where more than 150 motions will be debated under the categories of jobs, reform and fairness.

Among the speakers over the weekend will be the Party Leader Eamon Gilmore TD, David Begg, as well as Ministers, TDs, MEPs, Senators, Cllrs and party members. As with every conference one of the big highlights will be the Party Leader Eamon Gilmore's speech on Saturday evening, which will be shown live on RTE 1.

While some of the conference will be shown live on RTE 1, as with other years we will be broadcasting the entire conference online on Labour.ie. We will be also be tweeting over the weekend (do follow Labour) and you can follow the chat using #LP12. Our Facebook page will be constantly updated and we will continually upload images of the weekend to Flickr; so even if you're not able to attend the conference yourself you can still be part of the weekend. Keep an eye here for updates over the weekend. You can access the full schedule and motions to be discussed on our special Conference 2012 site which will go live on Friday.

If you're a political blogger and would like to attend, you need to get in touch with us as soon as possible; email us at labourpress@oir.ie and do include a link to your blog. If you do not have accreditation you will not be able to attend.

<https://www.labour.ie/%20blog/%202012/%2004/%2011/%2066th-annual-labour-party-conference/>  
(this link seems wrong?!)

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### **Conference motions Labour Party**

Conference Motions  
Session 1 : Creating Economic and Social Development Through Communications, Energy and Natural Resources

Motion 8 )

Conference calls for an indefinite moratorium on the exploration, extraction and production of shale gas by the method of hydraulic fracturing (commonly known as fracking) both off-shore and on-shore throughout the Republic of Ireland. Pursuing difficult to reach fossil fuels is contrary to Labour's blueprint for a low carbon Ireland policy.

Conference further calls on the government to revoke existing licences granted to shale gas exploration companies who have an intention to proceed with hydraulic fracturing.

Proposing Branch : North Clare Branch - (Clare

<http://www.labour.ie/conference/motions/detail/13333734722831707/>

#### Conference Motions

Session 1 : Creating Economic and Social Development Through Communications, Energy and Natural Resources  
Motion 7 )

Conference calls on the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources to consider the introduction of a moratorium on hydraulic fracturing in the Republic of Ireland until the completion of the 'Study of the Potential Impact of Hydraulic Fracturing on Drinking Water Resources' by the United States Environmental Protection Agency. This study commenced in February 2011; interim report due 2012; final report expected to be published in 2014. We would hope that the 2012 report would be of particular guidance in Ireland's gas exploration case.

Proposing Branch : Gralton South Leitrim Branch - (Roscommon / South Leitrim)

## **CORRESPONDENCE – LETTERS**

Letter to Jacqueline  
from minister O'Dowd

Subject: FW: Hydraulic Fracturing  
Date: Tue, 10 Apr 2012 12:34:28 +0100

From: Minister.O'Dowd@dcenr.gov.ie

Dear Ms. Costello,

Thank you for your recent letter regarding fracking. I am aware that there has been a

good deal of public interest recently on the topic of onshore gas exploration. While there has been considerable focus on the possibility of the technology of hydraulic fracturing ("fracking") being used, the authorisations that have been granted by my Department do not permit exploration drilling of any kind at this point in time and specifically do not provide for fracking.

The authorisations granted by my Department in February 2011 are called "licensing options". The licensing options are for a two-year period from 1<sup>st</sup> March 2011. Exploration drilling, including drilling that involves hydraulic fracturing is not permitted under these licensing options. Before the companies concerned could apply for an exploration licence and proceed to an exploration drilling phase, they must first complete the licensing option work programme agreed with my Department.

These work programmes are primarily based on desktop studies of existing data and should be completed by February 2013. When they have completed their work programmes, three months before this deadline, each company will then have to decide if it wishes to move to the next stage and apply for an exploration licence.

Any application for an exploration licence that would involve exploration drilling, including drilling that proposed using hydraulic fracturing would likely involve 1-3 exploration wells and would require:

- A consent from the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (who would be advised by the EPA and National Parks and Wildlife Service); and
- Planning permission for the well pads from the local authority.

Such an application would be subject to the requirements of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Directive. Such an assessment would entail consideration of the potential impacts of the project on population, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, including the architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the inter-relationship between the above factors. This process would also include a Public Consultation Phase, of eight weeks, which would be advertised on my Department's website and in the local press. This would provide an opportunity for the public to input into the decision making

process. My Department would also seek and be guided by the expert advice of other relevant statutory authorities such as the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) and the Local Authorities. The outcome of the EIA would help determine whether or not an Exploration Licence would be granted. - Activities associated with exploration drilling would also require planning permission.

In the event that at some point in the future a commercial discovery of natural gas is made and an onshore gas extraction project is proposed, in addition to the EIA process described above, there is also a comprehensive regulatory framework in place that would apply to any such proposal.

The development of such a project would require a number of statutory consents including a planning consent from An Bord Pleanála under the Planning and Development (Strategic Infrastructure Act) 2006, an Integrated Pollution Prevention Control Licence from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), along with a Petroleum Lease, a Plan of Development consent and a Gas Pipeline consent from myself as Minister of State at the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources.

A production project that might involve a large number of wells and well pads would require all of the following consents:

- A planning consent from An Bord Pleanála under the Strategic Infrastructure Act
- An IPPC Licence from the EPA
- A Plan of Development consent and a Gas Act consent from the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources
- A Gas Act consent from the Commission for Energy Regulation (to bring gas to the national grid)
- A Safety Case approval from the Commission for Energy Regulation (the Commission is currently developing its safety framework).

### **EU Commission Guidance on Regulation**

The EU Commission has recently published a guidance note identifying the following Directives that could apply through the life cycle of a shale gas production project:

- Environmental Impact Assessment Directive
- Mining Waste Directive
- Water Framework Directive
- REACH Directive
- Biocidal Products Directive
- Seveso 11 Directive
- Habitats Directive
- Environmental Liability Directive

A core element of these consent processes would be to consider the potential environmental impact of any proposed development.

While it is also too early for a formal public consultation at this point as too many factors have as yet to be decided, including whether or not drilling will actually be proposed, I am aware that public bodies that would have roles were there to be an application for exploration or production that involved hydraulic fracturing, are seeking more information on the issues involved. Minister Rabbitte has requested the EPA to conduct research and advise on the environmental

implications of hydraulic fracturing as a means of extracting natural gas from underground reserves. The EPA is currently funding preliminary background research in the form of a study being carried out by Aberdeen University and a report in respect of this study is expected shortly.

The EPA proposes to commission a further and more extensive study in 2012 and is liaising with my Department in relation to the scope of same. The final scope will be informed in part by the findings of the Aberdeen University study.

I hope that you will find this information helpful.

Yours sincerely,

Fergus

Fergus O'Dowd, T.D.

Minister of State

Department of Communications,  
Energy and Natural Resources

## EU -NEWS

### EU CAMPAIGN

Hello,

As you may know, the Rio+20 summit will be held in Brasil from June 20 to June 22. And, from June 15 to June 23, will be held the People's Summit, in Rio, organized by the brazilian civil society (practical information below). Please note that the Brazilian and international organizations are calling for a Global Day of Action on June 20, for example by occupying extractive TNCS to denounce their ecological, social and economic crimes.

Registering self-organised activities for this people's summit is possible until the 20th of april (the deadline will be certainly extended). Many activities on the extraction of natural resources will be proposed.  
Therre questions to all of you :

- have you planned to go to Rio+20 and to the People's summit ?
- would you be interested in organising during the People's summit a common activity on shale gas / fracking issues in order to share our analysis / practices, etc...
- do you think useful to propose to the organisers to integrate shale gas / fracking issues into big plenaries that will be held on natural resources extraction (to be defined in termes of what will be organized)

For European folks : we are trying to define a common process of discussion to prepare Rio+20 at an european level, to share what we have planned, to think about a common activity on "Europe and Green Economy" in Rio, etc, etc.. Please let me know if you want to be kept informed of next steps of common preparation at the european level.

All the best

Maxime Combes, Attac France and involved in the anti-shale gas mobilization in France.

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Maxime COMBES

[maxime.combes@gmail.com](mailto:maxime.combes@gmail.com)

+33 6 24 51 29 44

skype : maxime.combes

Twitter : MaximeCo

*Projet Echo des*

*Alternatives* : <http://www.alter-echos.org>

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E-mail from Juliette Rousseau  
([jmhrousseau@gmail.com](mailto:jmhrousseau@gmail.com)):

**FYI, few informations on the organization of the People's Summit in Rio+20, in Rio de Janeiro.**

An [English version](#) of the Summit's website is now available.

So far, you can find there :

- the [program of the summit](#)
- the [registration forms](#) for certain types of activities. Please note that the deadline to register self-organized activities is April 20th.
- the [methodology document](#). It is very important that you read this document, it settles the basis of the whole summit organization, defines the various activities, and the objectives of the summit. It might also help clarifying some issues regarding the organization itself.

Inputs on the organization :

The GA (Coordination Group) was internationalized : each Brazilian member invited in an international representative of a partner network. The next meeting of this internationalized GA will happen in may, the 11th and 12th, and will be followed by Working Groups meetings on the 13th. It is important that those of you who were invited to seat at the GA try to make it to that meeting, there was only one European representative at the last meeting in march.

There are various Working Groups, supposedly each one of them is opened to international partners but so far very few, outside of Latin America, got involved, and only two WGs are actually articulated. If you want to get involved in their work, you can get in touch with their referents :

- Methodology WG : Lucia Ortiz (Friends of the Earth Brazil) : [lucia@natbrasil.org.br](mailto:lucia@natbrasil.org.br)

- Mobilization WG : Graciela Rodrigues (Equit) : [mobiliza@rio2012.org.br](mailto:mobiliza@rio2012.org.br)

International work at the executive secretary :  
Two of us at the secretary are working on the international issues in organizing the People's summit :

Juliette Rousseau : [jmhrousseau@gmail.com](mailto:jmhrousseau@gmail.com)  
(Aitec)

Marcela Escribano : [marcela@alternatives.ca](mailto:marcela@alternatives.ca)  
(Alternatives)

Please contact us if you have any questions regarding the Summit organization, the registration for activities, the coordination of mobilization, etc. We would also be grateful if you could keep us updated on the mobilizations going on in your country, it would greatly help our work on global mobilization.

Finally, we are really seeking for some content documents on other languages than Portuguese. If you happen to be able to traduce some texts from Portuguese/Spanish, to English/French/etc, please let us know. If you have materials on green economy critic, or any issue fitting the Summi'st themes and political frames in other languages, please send them to us, we'll add them to the Summit's website.

In solidarity,

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Juliette Rousseau

Secretaria Operativa/articulaçao internacional

Cupula Dos Povos Rio+20

(+ 55)21 6716-1920

Skype : zouliet1

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**FRANCE**

Hello

**Please find below the press release of the french local groups after their meeting on April 7 and the mobilisation of April 8 against the licence to explore oil in the Mediterranean sea** (more than 3 or 4000 people in two places on the South coast - see this [article](#)), not very far from Marseille (deep offshore drilling).

As a result of this mobilisation, Nicolas Sarkozy (as candidate or President ? nobody knows) announced that the government will refuse to extend the licence to Noble Energy

for the next years. As we are at election time, the french local groups express their concerns and announce they will maintain their mobilisation. But getting this kind of announcement is a great victory since that means this licence extended two times in the past would be canceled in the coming days. Without our citizen mobilization, this licence would not have been questioned and drilling tests would be planned for 2013 off the coast of Marseille. (more information in French in this article I wrote two days ago : <http://www.bastamag.net/article2269.html>).

But not everything is great. As you may know (some of you have already sent on this list some information), the french government has just published the report commissioned last spring. Its main recommendations are to say that we must evaluate the resources in France and developing scientific tests using fracking to improve techniques. Nothing new in the french debate. The law of last July 2011 left open the possibility of such scientific tests. More important than this report is the concomitant publication of a decree creating the commission to supervise these scientific tests. The french local groups claim that "we see this commission as illegitimate giving pride of place to oil and gas companies" and french organisations (FOE, Attac France, etc) have denounced (here for the [press release](#)) the use of science for the benefit to companies. We are saying that we do not want this commission and we are asking all the NGOs to refuse to participate in a such trap / pitfall.

The publication of this report and this decree are accompanied by the proliferation of articles, editorials and interviews with so-called experts pro-shale gas. As citizen mobilization thrive today in new areas (Var and Côte d'Azur, Savoy, Ile de France, etc ...) we can maintain the pressure in the public debate. And if the license in Méditerranée is really cancelled, it would be a great victory given the context.

Since many other permits are still valid, and since the administration wants to approve new licences, we demand the banning of all drilling techniques harmful to water, environment, local economies and health of population.

Feel free to forward these informations and to ask me for any clarification needed.

Best

Maxime Combes, Attac France

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Maxime COMBES

[maxime.combes@gmail.com](mailto:maxime.combes@gmail.com)

[+33 6 24 51 29 44](tel:+33624512944)

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## ROMANIA

**We are a group of the civil society that started in Barlad – Vaslui County, Romania, organizing demonstrations against shale gas exploitation by the hydraulic fracturing method in the Moldavia area. We began these activities about two months ago, we organized the first major demonstration in Romania on the subject, on March 22, 2012, attended by about 8,000 people in Barlad.**

We have struggled to benefit from media exposure and we succeeded, as you can see if you visit the sites below:

[http://www.b-o.ro/Conferinte\\_de\\_presa-844-Prima\\_conferinta\\_de\\_presa\\_a\\_Grupului\\_de\\_Initiativa\\_al\\_Societatii\\_Civile\\_Barladene\\_5\\_Aprilie\\_2012.html](http://www.b-o.ro/Conferinte_de_presa-844-Prima_conferinta_de_presa_a_Grupului_de_Initiativa_al_Societatii_Civile_Barladene_5_Aprilie_2012.html)

[http://www.b-o.ro/Evenimente-837-Realitatea\\_TV\\_-\\_Gazele\\_de\\_sist\\_aduc\\_seisme\\_4\\_Aprilie\\_2012.html](http://www.b-o.ro/Evenimente-837-Realitatea_TV_-_Gazele_de_sist_aduc_seisme_4_Aprilie_2012.html)

<http://forum.b-o.ro/photo/thumbnails.php?album=707>

[http://www.petitiononline.com/nu\\_vrem\\_exploatarea\\_gazelor\\_de\\_sist\\_in\\_romania\\_prin\\_fractionare\\_h](http://www.petitiononline.com/nu_vrem_exploatarea_gazelor_de_sist_in_romania_prin_fractionare_h)

<http://www.cotidianul.ro/exploatarile-gazelor-din-sist-adevarate-bombe-chimice-mai-periculoase-decat-cianurile-de-la-rosia-montana-i-177406/>

<http://www.cotidianul.ro/exploatarea-de-la-barlad-poate-declansa-cutremurul-asteptat-din-vrancea-ii-177589/>

<http://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-esential-11812412-proteste-barlad-5-mii-persoane-cerut-blocarea-exploatarii-gazelor-sist.htm>

[http://www.adevarul.ro/locale/vaslui/vaslui-stiri\\_din\\_vaslui-adevarul-proclamatii-gaze-sist-barlad-neculai\\_rotaru\\_0\\_670133253.html#](http://www.adevarul.ro/locale/vaslui/vaslui-stiri_din_vaslui-adevarul-proclamatii-gaze-sist-barlad-neculai_rotaru_0_670133253.html#)

But our efforts do not stop there. We continue the fight against water and soil

contamination in our geographical area, and beyond, because of expert studies which prove the existence of high risk factors and even catastrophic effects on flora, fauna and on the members of our community.

Please visit <http://www.gazedesist.ro/> for more details.

Our city will hold another major demonstration on April 26, 2012, attended by about 15,000 people, as estimated, and a press conference the day before, on April 25, 2012. Specialists in the field will explain once again the process of shale gas exploitation by this method, the disastrous effects on the environment and on health.

Because your organization is concerned with protecting the environment and that is inherently human and animal health protection, we invite you to join our protest by attending the press conference and the demonstration to be held on April 25 and 26, 2012 in Barlad – Vaslui County, Romania, asking for your opinion on this subject.

In order to best organize logistics for this event, please contact us at telephone +40 745 029955 (Mrs Munteanu Anamaria) or email address: [office@proeduc.ro](mailto:office@proeduc.ro).

Kindly confirm receipt of this message and look forward to your response.

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**CZECH REPUBLIC**

**Czech environment ministry revokes shale gas exploration license**

<http://m.ceskapozice.cz/en/business/companies/czech-environment-ministry-revokes-shale-gas-exploration-license>

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**POLAND**

Not very encouraging news from the European Parliament, below. A curiosity about Polish shale gas, gleaned from a shale-sceptical European Commission report from last year: "Although Poland has always been apprehensive about its dependence on Russian gas, it has issued nearly 25% of the shale gas exploration permits to Russian companies."

**MEPs prepare for battle over shale-gas drilling** (European Voice, April 12)

Report says there is no need for EU law on shale-gas extraction.

Battle in the European Parliament over the rights and wrongs of drilling for [shale gas](#) has begun in earnest with the publication this week of a draft report for the environment committee.

Drawn up by Bogusław Sonik, a Polish centre-right MEP, the report concludes that there is no need for new [European Union](#) laws to regulate shale-gas extraction, arguing that existing laws governing drilling for conventional gas are adequate.

Environmental campaigners have been calling for specific EU legislation devoted to shale gas, which is extracted by hydraulic fracturing or "fracking". They say that the practice, which blasts a mixture of water and [chemicals](#) into cracks in rock formations to extract the gas, poses a danger to water supplies. But the oil industry says extraction takes place too far underground to affect groundwater.

Nevertheless, Bulgaria and France have both already imposed moratoriums on drilling for shale gas. Bulgaria's was imposed in January, following substantial popular protests.

'Misinformation'

Sonik told European Voice that public anxieties over shale gas were being fuelled by misinformation. He accused the Russian company [Gazprom](#) of spreading some of that information in order to keep Europe dependent on Russian gas. "The point of energy politics in the EU is to diversify the source, and, if it's possible, to become energy-independent," he said.

His report argues that all the chemicals used in the process should be registered, and says the EU should develop mandatory pre-authorisation requirements before shale-gas exploration can take place.

Sonik said that his home country, Poland, could greatly increase its proportion of locally sourced energy if it were able to exploit its shale gas. It would also wean the country off its dependence on coal. "It's ideal for realising our goal to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions," he said.

'Weak' report

But [Reinhard Bütikofer](#), a German Green MEP

who is following the issue, accused Sonik of failing to address the risks posed by shale-gas extraction. "Water recycling is being mentioned, but the language is weak. Greenhouse-gas emissions are not raised as an issue. The polluter-pays principle should definitely be included, and improving the EU's legal framework for fracking is underemphasised," he said.

The Parliament's industry committee, of which Bütikofer is a member, will also produce a

report, being drafted by Niki Tzavela, a Greek member of the Europe for Freedom and Democracy group. An analysis conducted by the European Commission in January concluded that new legislation was not needed for shale-gas drilling. But Green MEPs want the Parliament's reports to call on the Commission to propose such dedicated legislation. The environment committee will debate Sonik's draft later this month, and vote on it in May, with a vote to follow in the plenary in June.

## GLOBAL NEWS

### AUSTRALIA

Reporter: Mariann Lloyd-Smith:

#### The coal seam gas map

<http://csg.getup.org.au/>

Hi All,

I think you will be interested in this exciting new tool on unconventional gas, developed by the Get Up team here in Australia with the help of the anti coal seam / shale gas groups.

It's an interactive map showing all the coal seam gas reserves and mining wells across the country. There are literally thousands, and what is really worrying is that the map also shows the natural water aquifers that may be affected by coal seam gas mining operations.

Most importantly, this will be a map of our anti CSG movement. We want this to become a comprehensive reference point for the public and the media of all the families, farms and businesses affected by the rampant expansion of coal seam gas. **Groups, farmers, environmentalists and landholders are being encouraged to use it to tell their stories.**

**This is a great model that could be used across the globe to tell the international story of the damage this industry can do to our environment and to us.**

Regards Mariann



A Message from GetUp....

Coal seam gas mining is rapidly spreading across Australia without independent scientific research or appropriate regulation. **This industry threatens our agricultural lands, our environment, our precious groundwater resources, and the health of our communities.** Our governments, state and federal, are not doing enough to prevent irreversible damage.

**The good news is that a national movement is coming together to stand up for the homes, the land and the environments that are under threat by CSG.** Community groups are popping up all over regional and metropolitan Australia, and together we are all writing emails, signing petitions, attending rallies and blockades, and getting the word out there about the risks posed by an unchecked coal seam gas mining industry.

But it's not only important to demonstrate our strength in numbers to decision-makers. **We need to show the personal side of this issue--the real**

**Australians who are and will be affected by coal seam gas mining.**

Australians like Leah, who started her own community group against gas out of concern that the land and water in their area will be irreversibly damaged by drilling, fracking and wells.

**It is your story that will inspire others in your community to take action.**

And together it is our movement, which spreads right across Australia, that can protect our homes, land and environment from coal seam gas mining. Put yourself on the movement map:

<http://csg.getup.org.au/>

**This map is only as powerful as those that use it.** Together we can demonstrate the many individuals that make up this growing movement.

PS - One of the biggest threats posed by coal seam gas mining is to our groundwater reserves. Australia's groundwater resources are found in almost exactly the same parts of the country where coal seam gas deposits lie. You can see them overlap on the map here: <http://csg.getup.org.au/>

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7 Apr 2012 8:12 AM

**Shale shocked: USGS links 'remarkable increase' in earthquakes to fracking**

By [Joseph Romm](#)

Cross-posted from [Climate Progress](#).

A U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) team has found that a sharp jump in earthquakes in America's heartland appears to be linked to oil and natural gas drilling operations.

As hydraulic fracturing has exploded onto the scene, it has [increasingly been connected](#) to earthquakes. Some quakes may be caused by the original fracking — that is, by injecting a fluid mixture into the earth to release natural gas (or oil). More appear to be caused by reinjecting the resulting brine deep underground.

Last August, a [USGS report](#) [PDF] examined a cluster of earthquakes in Oklahoma and reported:

Our analysis showed that shortly after hydraulic fracturing began small earthquakes started occurring, and more than 50 were identified, of which 43 were large enough to be located. Most of these earthquakes occurred within a 24 hour period after hydraulic fracturing operations had ceased.

In November, a British shale gas developer [found](#) it was "highly probable" its fracturing operations caused minor quakes.

Then last month, Ohio [oil and gas regulators said](#) "A dozen earthquakes in northeastern Ohio were almost certainly induced by injection of gas-drilling wastewater into the earth."

Now, in a paper to be delivered at the annual meeting of the Seismological Society of America, the USGS notes that "a remarkable increase in the rate of [magnitude 3.0] and greater earthquakes is currently in progress" in the U.S. midcontinent. The [abstract is online](#). *EnergyWire reports* (subs. req'd) some of the findings:

The study found that the frequency of earthquakes started rising in 2001 across a broad swath of the country between Alabama and Montana. In 2009, there were 50 earthquakes greater than magnitude-3.0, the abstract states, then 87 quakes in 2010. The 134 earthquakes in the zone last year is a sixfold increase over 20th century levels.

The surge in the last few years corresponds to a nationwide surge in shale drilling, which requires disposal of millions of gallons of wastewater for each well. According to the federal Energy Information Administration, shale gas production grew, on average, nearly 50 percent a year from 2006 to 2010.

The USGS scientists point out that "a naturally occurring rate change of this magnitude is unprecedented outside of volcanic settings or in the absence of a main shock, of which there were neither in this region." They conclude:

While the seismicity rate changes described here are almost certainly manmade, it remains to be determined how they are related to either changes in extraction methodologies or the rate of oil and gas production.

EnergyWire points out, "all of the potential causes they explore in the paper relate to drilling, or more specifically, deep underground injection of drilling waste."

Last year, the Department of Energy [set up a committee](#) to examine the full range of environmental impacts of fracking. I testified

to the members and, in addition to raising the issue about methane leakage and [global warming](#), brought up the issue of earthquakes.

The committee said that they were indeed aware of this issue, and ultimately the seven-member panel [released a report of environmental guidelines](#) for the natural gas industry, which included a call for more research on "Understanding induced seismicity triggered by hydraulic fracturing and injection well disposal."

It's time go beyond mere research and start developing national standards to minimize these earthquakes.

Joseph Romm is the editor of [Climate Progress](#) and a senior fellow at the Center for American Progress.

Read more: [Fossil Fuels](#)

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Washington, D.C. – A U.S. **Geological Survey research team has linked oil and natural gas drilling operations to a series of recent earthquakes from Alabama to the Northern Rockies.**

<http://www.ewg.org/analysis/usgs-recent-earthquakes-almost-certainly-manmade>

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**Hi All,**

**News from South African anti-fracking**

**NGO:**

We have a piece on our website ([www.fractual.co.za](http://www.fractual.co.za)) about the shareholder resolution on fracking risks that the SEC require ExxonMobil to place on their AGM agenda for next May 30th. We think it's an interesting new development that your listserv members may find informative.

The link to it is :

[http://www.fractual.co.za/as\\_you\\_sow.php](http://www.fractual.co.za/as_you_sow.php)

BTW thanks for inviting us to your listserv. We have focused mostly on the USA to date, but find the European developments fascinating.

Kind regards ..... Ian Perrin

Lisette van Vliet, Ph.D.  
*Toxics Policy Advisor*

**Health & Environment Alliance (HEAL)**

28 Boulevard Charlemagne  
B-1000 Brussels BELGIUM  
Tel: +32 2 234 3645 (direct)

E-mail: [lisette@env-health.org](mailto:lisette@env-health.org)

Website: [www.chemicalshealthmonitor.org](http://www.chemicalshealthmonitor.org)

[www.env-health.org](http://www.env-health.org); [Heal on Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

## REPORTS - RESEARCH

**Human health risk assessment of air emissions from development of unconventional natural gas resources**

<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0048969712001933>

Saludos cordiales

Paco Ramos

[xixon@ecologistasenaccion.org](mailto:xixon@ecologistasenaccion.org)

[www.ecologistasenaccion.org/asturias](http://www.ecologistasenaccion.org/asturias)

Ecologistes n'Aición d'Asturies

**Cancer-in-the-ransom-note**

Friends--

My new essay on the cancer risks posed by fracking has posted today on the Huffington Post blog. Here below is a link. The essay highlights the findings of the recent report from Food and Water Watch Europe.

The intended audience is cancer patients, but I hope it speaks to all.

Kind regards,

Sandra

Sandra Steingraber, Ph.D.  
Distinguished Scholar in Residence  
Ithaca College  
Ithaca, New York

Sandra Steingraber Cancer in the Ransom  
Note  
Why should cancer patients in the United

States and Canada -- and those who  
love or diagnose them -- care about a report  
about looming water shortages in  
...

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/sandra-  
steingraber/cancer-in-the-ransom-  
note\\_b\\_1369459.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/sandra-steingraber/cancer-in-the-ransom-note_b_1369459.html)