

**Petition 0761/2012**

submitted under Rule 201 of the Rules of Procedure

by Edward Zytka

Translation

Dear Mr President,

CEASE shale gas prospecting IMMEDIATELY
[Shale gas: devastation, not a bonanza]

Foreign firms, principally from the US and France, are **prospecting for shale gas** in Poland. This is illegal, as it breaches Poland's criminal code, and futile, as the reserves concerned have been over-estimated. These companies are acting in secret: local people are being kept in the dark. This is **a crime**. The area in question stretches from Słupsk, through Mazowsze to Lublin. Shale gas exploration is **devastating Poland's countryside**. Taking all of these points into account, and on the basis of Article 63 of the Constitution of the Republic of Poland of 2 April 1997 and Article 221(3) of the Polish Code of Administrative Procedure (giving members of the public the right to submit petitions in the public interest); on the basis of the Environmental Protection Act, and as provided for in Articles 160(1) and 183 of Poland's criminal code of 6 June 1997 (Poland's Official Gazette No 88, Item 553, 2.9.1997 as subsequently amended); bearing in mind that this activity is a direct threat to human life and can seriously damage human health, in that the procedure used to release the gas involves drilling holes 3-5km deep and pumping in chemicals that then bubble up to the surface, and that the way in which **shale gas** (an unconventional gas) is forced out produces waste that pollutes water and endangers the lives and health of many people and animals; **I hereby demand the immediate cessation of drilling and the withdrawal of foreign and Polish firms** involved in the prospection and initial exploitation of shale gas. I add that it was reported on Radio TOK FM yesterday that a single drilling operation costs around USD 15 million.

JUSTIFICATION

According to press reports (see attached), as of 22 March 2012, there were 22 operational exploratory drilling sites in Poland, the first having been established in Pomerania (Kashubia). At nine of these the 'fracking' method is in use, with chemicals being forced into the ground, reacting with the rocks and releasing shale gas.

This pollutes groundwater on a simply enormous scale, because once the gas has been released, the drilling fluid returns to the surface.

We know from the environmental damage that has occurred in the US that **people and animals are falling gravely ill**, and animals are moulting more – they are losing their fur. In areas in which shale gas is being extracted, it is possible to ignite a flame by holding a match to a running domestic water tap.

As is always the way, **it is money, not sense, that makes the world go round.**

I call for the following to be dismissed from their posts:

1. MARCIN KOROLEC – Poland's Environment Minister
 2. PIOTR WOŹNIAK – Poland's Chief Geologist and Deputy Environment Minister
- **for concealing the truth about the threats** to the Polish people.

(Closing formula and signature)

ENCLOSURES

1. Article from the *METRO* newspaper of 19 March 2012 entitled 'Tonnes of dangerous shale waste brought in at night'
2. Two articles from the *Metro* and *Dziennik Gazeta Prawna* newspapers of 21 and 22 March respectively

ADDRESSEES

This letter has been sent to the following addressees:

1. 'House of Europe', ul. Widok 10, Wrocław
2. Jacek Protasiewicz MEP, care of the 'House of Europe'
3. Dr Angela Merkel, Chancellor of Germany, Pastor's daughter and Head of the CDU, Chancellor's office, Berlin
4. Barack Obama, President of the United States, The White House, Washington, DC 20500
5. Nicolas Sarkozy, President of France, Elysée Palace, 75 008 France
6. David Cameron, UK Prime Minister, 10 Downing Street, London, Great Britain
7. José Manuel Barroso, European Commission, B-1000 Brussels, Belgium
8. Ewa Kopacz – Marshal of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland
9. Bogdan Borusewicz – Marshal of the Senate of the Republic of Poland
10. Donald Tusk, Polish Prime Minister, 00-583 Warsaw
11. Waldemar Pawlak – Polish Economy Minister, 00-583 Warsaw
12. Mikołaj Budzanowski – Polish Treasury Minister
13. Jacek Rostowski – Polish Finance Minister, 00-916 Warsaw
14. The Polish Episcopate – 01-015 Warsaw
15. Law and Justice Party HQ, 02-018 Warsaw
16. Gazeta Wyborcza, 00-732 Warsaw
17. Archives
18. Andrzej Seremet – Polish Public Prosecutor General

Evidence of terrible ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGE from the free newspaper *Metro* of 19 March 2012 (published by Agora)

Metro, Monday, 19 March 2012

Tonnes of dangerous shale waste brought in at night

Toxic waste that could come from shale gas drilling carried out by an American company has been brought to gravel pits near Słupsk at night. The Greens are warning that there may be many more illegal waste dumps like this around Poland.

The *Głos Pomorza (Pomeranian Voice)* newspaper was the first to report the illegal dumping of waste at gravel pits in Głobino, south of Słupsk. It had been alerted by worried residents who had witnessed night-time visits by lorries to the gravel pits, which are situated near Słupsk's water catchment area.

After the report was published, local officials established that

the owner of the gravel pits had allowed the sludge to be dumped somewhere other than the area designated by the head of the local authority, and that the sludge had been dumped without being mixed with cement and aggregate in line with the relevant requirements.

Officials from the Słupsk office of the regional environmental protection inspectorate (WIOŚ) are looking into the matter, and the leader of the Słupsk borough authority has notified the public prosecution service. WIOŚ officials have so far established that the slurry had been dumped in the wrong place because there was no access road leading to the area in which dumping had been authorised (it is currently under construction), and that, between 1 and 5 March, around 217 tonnes of sludge were brought to the gravel pits at Głobino from shale gas drilling operations being carried out by the American company BMK Petroleum in Miszewo, near Trzebielino.

Officials are now waiting for the results of tests on the chemical composition of the waste, but as Agnieszka Grzybek from the Greens 2004 party (Poland's Green Party) points out, sludge from the fracking process is usually environmentally hazardous. 'Fracking involves a volume of water, of which 0.5-1% is made up of various chemicals (i.e. the mixture required to release the shale gas), being forced into the ground. Afterwards, this drilling liquid returns to the surface and often still contains heavy metals that it has brought up from underground. There are many reports on the environmental dangers this sludge poses. Storing it without processing could lead to groundwater pollution. The waste ought to be recycled, but this requires expensive, specialist processing'.

The Greens are warning that many more cases like the one at Głobino could occur throughout Poland, and that the issue as a whole highlights the slapdash way in which shale gas exploration is carried out. They have therefore asked Poland's Supreme Audit Office (NIK) to audit the procedure under which concessions for shale gas exploration are granted. Under these concessions, before giving the go-ahead, officials must carry out a preliminary analysis of the risks involved in using the fracking method to drill for gas.

'There are many signs that this method can be dangerous. France and Bulgaria have decided to give up on shale gas extraction, and there are moratoria on fracking in New York State and Quebec,' said Grzybek.

So will any checks actually take place? According to NIK spokesman Paweł Biedziak, there are plans to carry out checks on the offices that granted shale gas exploration concessions as of the third quarter of this year. 'But that does not necessarily mean that the first checks will not start earlier than that', he said.

Michał Stangret

EVIDENCE OF CRIME from the *Dziennik Gazeta Prawna* and *Metro* newspapers of 22 and 21 March 2012 respectively

Dziennik Gazeta Prawna, Thursday, 22 March 2012

We have a problem: there is 10 times less shale gas than previously thought

Experts fear that a report published yesterday by Poland's national geographical institute could spark an exodus from Poland of major mining companies that have bought up licences and invested hundreds of millions in drilling.

The first Polish study on the extent of Poland's unconventional gas reserves has shattered the dreams that energy companies, geologists, politicians and the Polish public harboured about hitting a shale gas bonanza. According to Andrzej Szczęśniak, an independent gas market analyst, 'Everyone was aware that the Americans' estimate that Poland had 5.3 trillion cubic metres of shale gas reserves was heavily overstated, but no one expected the actual amount of gas to be so small.'

The national geographical institute puts the figure at between 346 and 768 billion cubic metres. The actual amount of gas could be even smaller, because figures were given for the gas available underground, as well as under the Baltic Sea. The problem with this is that no one has yet extracted shale gas underwater, as it is not economically viable to do so.

According to the most pessimistic estimates, the gas reserves underground amount to barely 24 billion cubic metres. This would not even be enough to meet Poland's gas needs for two years. The geographical institute's stance, however, is more optimistic: it sees a possibility of extracting between 230 and 619 billion cubic metres of unconventional gas, stating that rocks underground could contain 1.5 trillion cubic metres of fuel.

Alongside Poland's state-owned oil and gas operators PGNiG, Orlen and Lotos, companies such as PGE, Tauron and KGHM are also investing in drilling.

To date there are 22 exploratory drilling sites in operation. Fracking is in use at just nine of these sites, and it is fracking that makes it possible to release gas from rocks. According to Piotr Woźniak, Deputy Environment Minister and Poland's head geologist, the drilling that has taken place so far has produced mixed results. 'In half the cases, gas flows were fairly low (...).'

Michał Duszczyk

Metro, Wednesday, 21 March 2012

Anti-shale protest in Pomerania

'The Americans are treating us with contempt, they are planning to drill and so we are blocking the road. We will fight to get our voices heard' – those are the words of the anti-shale gas protestors. At the end of October last year, Jacek Wróblewski of BNK Petroleum told *Metro* 'I'm disappointed. I don't know whether we will continue to drill for shale gas in Kashubia'. These were his words following a stormy meeting with residents of Sulęczyno and Steżyca, two Kashubian towns 70 km from Gdańsk.

Residents had already made it clear to BNK that they did not want drilling to take place on their doorstep because they were afraid that gas exploration would destroy the natural assets of their region. But in spite of the protests, BNK has drawn up plans to begin drilling in the commune of Steżyca.

'They are not listening to our objections, so we are stepping up our protests,' explains Hieronim Więcek, head of the Niesiołowice and Węsiory Stone Circles Association, which organised the demonstration. On 31 March a few dozen people (residents and environmental activists) are planning to gather at the drilling site and block the road (voivodeship road No 214).

In the Czech Republic, where foreign firms have also started to prospect for shale gas, the local authorities have supported residents' protests (some communes have even formed associations and submitted joint declarations on the subject). 'We can only dream of support like that', says Hieronim Więcek.

Michał Stangret