

European Parliament's plenary vote on conflict minerals: A great step forward for the respect of human rights

When considering the European Commission's "conflict minerals" proposal in March 2014, today's vote in the European Parliament represents a great victory for communities affected by human rights abuses fueled by natural resource extraction. *"CIDSE, together with Bishops and citizens from around the world, welcomes the strong message that the European Parliament sent to the EU Commission and the Council"* says Bernd Nilles, CIDSE Secretary General. *"The Parliament's vote means that all European manufacturers and importers of components and final products containing the four minerals, such as mobile phones or cars, will be required to check their supply chains to make sure they don't fuel conflicts. This is a great step forward for the respect of human rights! European Member States cannot backtrack on this during the final negotiations."*

The European Parliament's vote legally requires that all EU companies processing, importing and using tin, tantalum, tungsten and gold (3TG) act responsibly and undertake due diligence. This goes much further than the International Trade (INTA) committee proposal voted on 14th April, which only required European smelters and refiners to check their supply chains.

This evolution is a clear victory, though some gaps remain. The requirement needs to be better defined, to ensure that it qualifies as true due diligence. And many natural resources fueling conflicts around the world, such as copper or coal, are not taken into account in this regulation. But the message to the European Council and the European Commission is clear: A voluntary opt-in system for importers of raw materials is unacceptable.

The text will now go to Trialogue. Stefan Reinhold, coordinator of CIDSE's advocacy efforts on conflict minerals, said, *"European Member States will now have the chance to support and further strengthen this legislation. There are many examples from around Europe, such as the Due Diligence law in France¹ or the Modern Slavery Act in the United Kingdom², that show a clear trend to better regulate the activities of companies, so as to prevent their involvement in human rights abuses while giving guarantees to citizens that they are not complicit through their purchases."*

CIDSE, the International alliance of Catholic development agencies, has coordinated a [statement](#) signed by 146 Church leaders from 38 countries on 5 continents, asking for strong regulation to achieve the objective of breaking the link between natural resources and conflicts.

¹ <http://ccfd-terresolidaire.org/infos/rse/de-la-responsabilite/un-premier-pas-4989>

² <http://www.cafod.org.uk/News/Campaigning-news/modern-slavery-bill-amend>

CIDSE, together with *Commission Justice & Paix* and *EurAc*, has also coordinated a [video-campaign action](#), in which over 8.000 European citizens have signed on to a letter urging Members of the European Parliament to strengthen the weak proposal made by the European Commission in March 2014.

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Notes to the editors:

CIDSE is part of a greater coalition of NGOs behind the conflict minerals [campaign](#)

About CIDSE

CIDSE is an international alliance of Catholic development agencies. Its members share a common strategy in their efforts to eradicate poverty and establish global justice. www.cidse.org

CIDSE members are: Broederlijk Delen (Belgium), CAFOD (England and Wales), CCFD - Terre Solidaire (France), Center of Concern (USA), Cordaid (the Netherlands), Development & Peace (Canada), Entraide et Fraternité (Belgium), eRko (Slovakia), Fastenopfer (Switzerland), FEC (Portugal), FOCSIV (Italy), Fondation Bridderlech Deelen (Luxembourg), KOO (Austria), Manos Unidas (Spain), MISEREOR (Germany), SCIAF (Scotland), Trócaire (Ireland)

CIDSE has published extensively on Human Rights Due Diligence:

- [Human Rights Due Diligence: Policy measures for effective implementation](#)
- [Second UN Business & Human Rights Framework, Briefing Note](#)

For more information, see also key references from our member organisations:

Action de Carême/Fastenopfer: Classement des marques du high-tech / High Tech Ranking
<http://www.hightech-rating.ch/>

CCFD-Terre Solidaire: [Natural resources at the heart of conflict](#)

Commission Justice et Paix Belgique francophone: [Composition de nos appareils électroniques : des entreprises en crise... de moralité ?](#)

MISEREOR : [Für eine wirksame EU-Gesetzgebung zu Konflikt rohstoffen](#)