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“Pricing the earth”: Sign-On Open Letter to EC Environment Commissioner

Saturday 22 May 2010, by [Collective / Multiple signers](#) (Date first published: 21 May 2010).

The letter reproduced below is addressed to the EC Commissioner for the Environment on Green Wash ‘Policy Summit’ entitled “Pricing the earth: How business can protect and profit from biodiversity” which will be held in Brussels on June 1st and 2nd as part of the Commission’s Green Week 2010.

Sign-ON: The deadline for responding to this request for Sign-ON is on Tuesday, May 25th at end of day (Latin America time).

Please send your responses to Olivier Hoedeman: olivier.corporate@europe.org

To European Commissioner Janusz Potocnik:

We, the undersigned organisations, would like to express our grave concern about the two-day ‘Policy Summit’ (titled “Pricing the earth: How business can protect and profit from biodiversity”) that will be held on June 1st and 2nd as part of the Commission’s Green Week 2010. The event, in the European Commission’s Charlemagne Building, is sponsored by Coca Cola, biofuels lobby group UNICA and The Alliance for Beverage Cartons & the Environment (ACE). Each of these sponsors have been given seats on panels at the Policy Summit, which is organised by Friends of Europe.

We find it unacceptable that the Commission has outsourced parts of Green Week to a think tank that allows its corporate members to sponsor debates in return for having a prominent role in the event. The European Commission’s DG Environment, as the organiser of Green Week, should not allow industry to buy its way into shaping Green Week debates. We also note with concern that DG Environment has given Friends of Europe this prominent role despite the continued boycott of the Commission’s lobby transparency register by this think-tank.

The environmental record of all three sponsors makes their role in Green Week particularly inappropriate:

- Coca Cola was earlier this year found guilty by a committee of the state government of Kerala (India) of “serious depletion of water resources” and contamination of water and soil. Elsewhere in India, CocaCola’s plants also cause water shortages, pollution of groundwater and soil, as well as exposure to toxic waste and pesticides.
- UNICA, the Brazilian sugar cane lobby, promotes the expansion of sugar cane production despite the fact that this has devastating effects on biodiversity as grasslands, wooded savannah and forests are converted into plantations.

- The ACE is represented by the company Stora Enso, which is involved in large-scale monoculture eucalyptus plantations in Latin America, with disastrous impacts on people and the environment.

We call upon you to intervene and ensure that the speakers representing the sponsors are withdrawn from the Green Week programme. We also appeal to you to ensure that future events hosted by DG Environment are not sponsored by corporations and industry lobby groups.

Signatories:

Sign-ons so far:

Biofuelwatch

COECOCEIBA-Amigos de la Tierra Costa Rica

Colombia solidarity campaign, United Kingdom

Corporate Europe Observatory (CEO)

Food & Water Europe

Grupo de Reflexion Rural, Argentina/Europe

India Resource Center

Salva la Selva, Spain

Rettet den Regenwald, Germany

Transnational Institute

Xarxa de l'Observatori del Deute en la Globalització (ODG-Debtwatch), Catalunya

Note: the programme of the 'Policy Summit' is online here

http://www.friendsofeurope.org/Portals/6/Documents/Programmes/FOE_Greenweek_Biodiversity_programme_speakers_11-05-10.pdf

Additional note: Olivier Hoedeman (Corporate Europe Observatory) testified before the Permanent People's Tribunal (PPT-Madrid) on the issue of the TNC lobbies and the relations of these TNCs with EC policy makers.

Stora Enzo, one of the cases brought before the PPT Madrid, is representing The Alliance for Beverage Cartons & the Environment (ACE) which is one of the co-sponsors of "Pricing the earth: How business can protect and profit from biodiversity".