

MAKE ICT FAIR ACTION AROUND EP ELECTIONS 2019

Introduction

The entire supply chain of computers and technology equipment has a huge impact on environment, climate change and working conditions in Europe and in the Global South.

Mining projects, which supply ores for ICT equipment, are often linked to human rights violations, socio-ecological conflicts and violations of social and environmental legislation. Moreover, ICT devices contain conflict minerals.

Coal-powered manufacturing contributes to rising global temperatures and the devastating impacts of climate change. Almost four percent of global greenhouse gas emissions come from the ICT sector. Workers in electronics factories also are often unknowingly exposed to hazardous chemicals that damage their health, their payment is poor and often basic labour rights as stated e.g. in the ILO convention are not implemented and not independently monitored.

There is little transparency in the supply chain (which leads to corporate impunity and infringements of regulations).

The short life spans of ICT devices exacerbate the toll these devices take on the planet's finite resources. According to the World Economic Forum, e-waste is now the world's fastest-growing waste stream, reaching 48.5 million tonnes in 2018. Hence, the Life-cycle costs of production of new computers and technology equipment are not reflected in the retail prices of these products.

Multilateral Development Banks, such as the European Investment Bank ("the EU bank") and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), still cause significant and sometimes irreversible environmental damage and heavily impact human health, settlements and livelihoods.

Role of the European Union policies and the MEPs in particular

The European Union, and the European Parliament in particular, can play an important role in reducing the negative impact of the production of computers and technology equipment that has a huge impact on environment, climate change and working conditions in the Europe and in the Global South.

Regarding the respect of Human Rights by businesses, the United Nations are currently negotiating a possible Binding Treaty on Transnational Corporations and Other Business

Enterprises with respect to human rights. The current European Parliament has been supportive of this process, while the EU Member States have been blocking the process.

Multilateral Development Banks, in particular the European Investment Bank (“The EU bank”) and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) can also instrumental in promoting and implementing best practice in public procurement standards from leading EU countries and the new EU member states as well as developing countries. Improving of their own policies in this direction can contribute to improved environmental and social standards and better implementation of projects.

Last but not least, following the “practice what you preach” principle, it is essential that the European Parliament “leads by example” by upgrading their own internal procurement policies of computers and technology equipment.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ASKED BY BART STAES, CANDIDATE FOR GROEN

Topic 1: Human Rights violations in supply chains

Question 1: Would you support an EU legal binding framework to require EU companies to take a due diligence process to prevent human rights violations and support a United Nations Binding Treaty on “Transnational Corporations and Other Business Enterprises with respect to human rights”?

Yes.

Question 2: If you were elected, would you join the [global interparliamentary network](#) in support of a binding treaty on business and human rights?

Yes.

Question 3: What specific steps would you take if elected as MEP?

I would get in touch with Catapa and investigate how we could together with other MEP's question the European Commission and force them to undertake action and propose legislative steps towards a binding legislation.

Topic 2: Development Banks

Question 1: Would you support Development Banks such as the EBRD and EIB requiring a Human Rights Due Diligence before providing financial loans to projects that may cause

Human rights violations or Environmental Degradation?

Yes.

Question 2: What specific steps would you take if elected as MEP?

I would use the discussion on EBRD and EIB in the budgetary control committee during the yearly discharge procedure to question their representatives and to add this requirement in the yearly resolution on their work.

Topic 3: Procurement by the European Parliament of computers and technology equipment

Question 1: Would you support the European Parliament putting in place a social and environmental public procurement policy to re-use, repair, refurbish and recycle computers and technology equipment?

Yes.

Question 2: Would you support the European Parliament joining an independent Monitoring Organisation to advance in social responsible public procurement of computers and technology equipment, such as Electronics Watch?

Yes.

Question 3: What specific steps would you take if elected as MEP?

I would get in touch with the EP administration and discuss with them this proposal. I would use the discussion in the Budgetary Controls committee with the secretary-general of the EP to force the EP to follow this line.