

## Open letter to SG of NATO: Your comments on Russia's involvement in European anti-fracking groups



By e-mail to: Anders Fogh Rasmussen (Secretary General of NATO)

CC to: Jean-Claude Juncker (nominee for the EU-commission presidency), Martin Schulz (EU-Parliament president?), Herman van Rompuy (EU-council president)

### Open letter

Subject: Your comments on Russia's involvement in European anti-fracking groups

Dear NATO Secretary-General Rasmussen,

We, groups of citizens and environmental organizations concerned about fracking and large-scale shale gas drilling, campaign against the development of unconventional fossil fuels like shale gas in Europe. We were very surprised to read your comment in several European media outlets that *"Russia, as part of their sophisticated information and disinformation operations, engaged actively with so-called non-governmental organisations - environmental organisations working against shale gas - to maintain European dependence on imported Russian gas"*.

Such claims are not new, but until this very day no one has proven it.

As NATO's work heavily depends on detailed and precise intelligence-gathering, we hope that your extraordinary claim about the European anti-fracking movement is backed up by extra-ordinary evidence. We therefore call on you, as the secretary-general of an important regional military organization with global reach, to either offer proof for these accusations or to publicly apologize for this false statement.

Furthermore, we would like to draw your attention to the fact, that the European authorities, such as the European Commission, have already published several studies demonstrating the high risks involved in the fracking industry.

It is also widely recognized that fracking for shale gas will neither reduce Europe's dependency on Russian gas supplies nor will it lead to lower gas prices. Anti-fracking groups across Europe agree that Europe's increasing reliance on imported fossil fuels like natural gas is a concern, but we are convinced that an ambitious development of renewables and serious investment in energy efficiency is the best way to reduce our reliance on Russian fossil fuels. We would welcome a serious and informed discussion on the topic of energy security.

Anti-fracking groups are raising awareness about the risks of large-scale shale gas development for the climate, air, water and public health. Social movements like ours have a key role to play in nurturing a public debate about the future of European climate, environmental and low-carbon energy policies. The precautionary principle, the principle of preventive action, the 'polluter pays' principle are written into the Lisbon Treaty. Preserving, protecting and improving the quality of the environment and combating climate change are key objectives of the EU.

Labeling the European anti-fracking movement as infiltrated by Russian agents undermines the legitimate public debate about the risks and impacts of fracking and undermines our democratic institutions, which NATO is supposed to defend.

This is not the first time that we have been accused of being Gazprom spies or "working against the public interests of the state". We will no longer tolerate a defamation or criminalization of our important work. If there are indeed groups that oppose fracking, who secretly work with Russia against the interests of the European people, we would also like to know who they are.

Therefore, we look forward to receiving proof of your accusations. Or a public apology.

Our best regards.

The European anti-fracking movement