



**Dear Member of the European Parliament,**

We are writing to you as a participant in the European Parliament delegation attending the Euro-Latin American Parliamentary Assembly next week in Lima, Peru. It has come to our attention that you have been approached by the **European Business and Parliament Scheme (EBPS)** about the possibility of visiting their member companies: Suez, BBVA, BP and Telefónica during your stay in Lima.

According to the letter which you have received from EBPS' Vice President Vidal Quadras Roca on March 26th, *"These programmes will provide the participants with knowledge about the company's operations and practical business issues in Peru"*.

We are unconvinced by the EBPS' claims that its activities are *"non-partisan and non-lobbying"*. Each of the four mentioned firms pay a €15,000 annual membership fee and undoubtedly expect something in return. We interpret the planned EBPS activities in Lima as a public relations exercise to foster goodwill for its member companies and to help those companies achieve their lobbying objectives. We also share the concerns outlined by MEP Monica Frassoni in her April 4th letter to the President of the European Parliament, one of which is the fact that the EBPS has an office in the European Parliament and that its staff use e-mail addresses ending with *europarl.europa.eu*.

With this letter we would also like to express our dismay regarding the activities planned by the EBPS during your stay in Lima. We can only interpret these activities as an attempt to influence your perception of the role of EBPS member firms in Peru and Latin America more generally. **All four firms mentioned above are all facing tough and justified criticism over the economic, social and environmental impacts of their operations in Latin America.** In fact, all four firms are being indicted at the session of the Permanent Peoples' Tribunal (PPT) on Transnational Corporations that will take place in Lima during the civil society summit 'Enlazando Alternativas' on May 13-16 2008, running parallel to the 5<sup>th</sup> EU-LAC Summit of Heads of State and Government.

The indictments are as follows:

### **SUEZ**

In Peru, SUEZ is involved in the controversial Camisea Gas Field project in the Amazon region; the company's pipeline violates indigenous rights (e.g. Convention No. 169 concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples) and large-scale gas leaks have caused injuries and serious environmental damage. Elsewhere in Latin America, SUEZ' private water division has come under heavy criticism for its failures to fulfil contractual obligations to improve access to clean water and sanitation. SUEZ was forced to leave cities in Bolivia and Argentina, but still runs privatised water services in Mexico and Brazil, in many cases violating the Human Right to access to Water and labour standards as reported by the PSI (Public Services International, a trade union federation of over 500 unions public sector unions in over 140 countries).

### **BBVA Group**

BBVA Group is involved in 15 countries in Latin America, and is being indicted for: its labour record in laying off thousands of workers (particularly in Mexico, Colombia and Peru); its financing of such heavily polluting projects as the Paper Pulp plant of the Spanish company ENCE in Uruguay; the Petrobras oil development in Ecuador's Block 31 (in the Yasuni National Park, the crown-jewel of the



Ecuadorian mainland national park system; it an area of unique biological and scientific importance, as well as a critical homeland for vulnerable indigenous peoples); and finally for, the pipeline at Camisea (Peru) which seriously violates Equator Principle benchmarks (the gas field and the pipelines of the Camisea Project are located in one of the world's most ecologically and socially fragile areas). The pipeline has ruptured several times since its construction. Additionally, NGOs repeatedly reported the negative impacts on the indigenous peoples, such as: involuntary resettlement; destruction of food and water supplies of local communities; and, exposure to illnesses for which the indigenous population has no immunological defenses. Calculations indicate that approximately 160.000 indigenous people are directly affected by the Camisea Project.

In July 2005 a European Parliament Resolution *"calls on the EU and its Member States to prohibit through appropriate legislation financial institutions under their jurisdiction or control from investing directly or indirectly in companies involved in production, stockpiling or transfers of anti-personnel mines and other related controversial weapon systems such as cluster sub-munitions"*. Even so BBVA are investing heavily in the arms industry through direct or indirect invests in various companies which produce arms, including cluster bombs and munitions.

## **BP**

BP's operation in Casanare, Colombia caused a major scandal in 1997 when it was revealed that the corporation had contracted a private security firm DSL to train the police in lethal activities. Six peasant leaders were assassinated. BP supposedly changed its policies, and represents itself as a leader in corporate social responsibility, but the human rights situation in Casanare remains dire. For the last decade leaders of community based social movements have been eliminated, in February-March 2003 there were 60 disappearances in two municipalities, and the Colombian Army 16th Brigade financed by BP is today carrying out extra-judicial executions. BP benefits from paramilitary assassinations to prevent trade unions organising in its installations. Casanare's abundant water resources have been damaged, and there is serious environmental impact of the 800 km pipeline carrying the oil for export, forcing farmers off their land. In 2006 a group of 1,000 farmers from Antioquia won a multi-million pound settlement from BP after the oil and gas giant agreed to pay for environmental damages in order not to start a court case on the human rights violations.

## **Telefónica**

Telefónica is being indicted for widespread violations of labour laws in Colombia and other countries where it is operating. In Peru it was ordered to pay the Peruvian government a fine of €284,000 after the earthquake on August 2007, when disruption to its services which greatly exacerbated the situation. The Ministry for Transport and Communications of Peru declared that Telefónica was not fulfilling contractual obligations with the Government and their customers because services provided were below legal standards.

With this letter we cordially invite you to a Briefing Meeting on the Permanent Peoples' Tribunal (PPT) which is being organised by the Peruvian counter part organisations of the Europe-Latin America bi-regional network *Enlazando Alternativas*. This Briefing will also provide the opportunity to meet and exchange information with trade union and community representatives who have direct experience and knowledge of the impacts of the TNCs named by the EBPS.



Please let us know of your availability for this meeting which will be organised at the Sheraton Hotel at a time convenient for your schedules.

Yours faithfully,

Brid Brennan (Transnational Institute)

*On behalf of the NGOs, trade unions, associations and social movements campaigning for equitable and sustainable trade policies in the EU and in Latin America and coordinating in the **Seattle to Brussels Network** and in the the **Bi-regional network Europe-Latin America and the Caribbean Enlazando Alternativas***

*Acsur-Las Segovias (Spain)  
AK Latinoamerika en la "Casa del Mundo" de München (Germany)  
Alianza Social Continental - Hemispheric Social Alliance (North, Central and South America)  
Attac Österreich (Austria)  
Attac España (Spain)  
Attac Hungary (Hungary)  
Attac Poland (Poland)  
Colibri e.V. (Germany)  
Colombia Solidarity Campaign (UK)  
Comité Peruano de Apoyo al Llamado Mundial de Acción contra la Pobreza  
Confederación Nacional de Comunidades del Perú Afectadas por la Minería-CONACAMI, Peru  
Coordinadora Andina de Organizaciones Indígenas CAOI  
Corporate Europe Observatory (Holland)  
Ecologistas en Acción/Ekologistak Martxan/Ben Magec (Spain)  
Entrepobles/Entrepueblos/Entrepobos (Spain)  
Forschungs- und Dokumentationszentrum Chile-Lateinamerika e.V. (Germany)  
Foundation for Gaia (UK)  
France Amérique Latine (Francia)  
Friends of the Earth Europe (Europe)  
Fundación para la Cooperación APY Solidaridad en Acción (Spain)  
Informationsgruppe Lateinamerika IGLA (Austria)  
Latin American Solidarity Centre (Ireland)  
Observatorio de las Multinationales en América Latina - Paz con Dignidad (Spain)  
Red Colombiana de Acción Frente al Libre Comercio (Colombia)  
Red Mexicana de Acción frente al Libre Comercio – RMALC (Mexico)  
SETEM (Spain)  
Transnational Institute (Holland)  
Utbildning för Biståndsverksamhet-Latinamerika (Sweden)  
Verdegaia (Spain)  
Xarxa de l'Observatori del Deute en la Globalització (Spain)*