



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NGO's object to EU paying lip service only to UNECE

The findings and recommendations of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), which criticise the European Union's energy policy for violating the **Aarhus Convention**, have been making waves in the media and within the European Commission (1). But it is already evident from their reactions that everything will be done to continue in a "business as usual" mode. This begs a number of questions: does the production of "clean" energy gives the right to disregard the law? Does it justify the collateral damage inflicted upon windfarm neighbours (i.e. their health, real estate losses, etc.), as well as upon endangered bird and bat species, ecosystems, tourism, and the financial health of nations? We know, for instance, that "green" energy policies have caused higher electricity prices and increased budget deficits wherever implemented. In Spain, € 24 billions' worth of public debt caused by renewable energy subsidies are yet to be passed on to electricity consumers, **with further disastrous results on its bankrupt economy.**

Pat Swords, the engineer who filed the initial complaint to UNECE, insists that the European Commission cannot just respond by "intending to issue clear instructions to member states when they update their NREAPs" - **as reported by Euractiv** (2). The 27 National Renewable Energy Action Plans (NREAP), as they now stand, were established in violation of the Aarhus Convention. "These are proceeding without proper authority; they must therefore be re-assessed and submitted to public

participation after publication of transparent information.” As noted by France’s **Journal de l’Environnement**: “The EU’s judicial system itself recognized on June 14th that **the Aarhus Convention enables European NGO’s to demand that Brussels re-examine certain texts**” (3).

“The most significant breach revealed by the UNECE ruling”, says Pat, “is that the environmental assessments legally required by both the Aarhus Convention and the more detailed EU legislation on Strategic Environmental Assessments, along with the in-depth public participation when all options were open, were simply by-passed. This being the case, **no assessments were made of the effectiveness of the National Renewable Energy Action Plans in terms of emissions savings, costs, and impacts.** Alternatives were not considered, and neither were mitigation measures. Considering the size of the planned investments, and the enormity of their impacts, it is a matter of considerable importance **which cannot be brushed under the carpet as the European Commission appears to be doing.**”

The Irish engineer concludes: “the deleterious impacts now occurring in relation to financial, environmental and human health issues, would have been foreseen and mitigated if the EU had complied with the Convention’s rules, which are inspired by the principle of **'proceeding with care'**.”

The European Platform Against Windfarms (EPAW) concurs with the United Nations: governments must abide by the law. They cannot call themselves democracies, become signatories to an international convention on the rights of citizens to be consulted in environmental matters (Aarhus Convention), or on landscape protection (The European Landscape Convention), then proceed to violate what they have just signed. It is not only undemocratic and unethical: it paves the way for further abuses in the future. “The vision of **George Orwell** may soon become a reality,” warns Mark Duchamp, of EPAW. “After all, we are already reeling under the tyranny of *Newspeak* and, increasingly, *thoughtcrimes*.”

EPAW is particularly concerned by the growing health issues associated with wind turbines. **As these increase in size and power, their emissions of infrasound and low-frequency noise (ILFN) cause sleep deprivation and other traumas over greater distances:** now at least 10 km on flat land, and even more at altitude. The

number of studies evidencing a health risk posed by ILFN is growing, starting with those noted by Professor Leventhall in 2003 (4), to a steadily increasing number of peer-reviewed journal articles by acousticians, psychoacousticians, medical practitioners, physiologists, psychologists, epidemiologists, and other researchers (5).

A striking example of the turbines' **ill-health effects extending out to over 10 km** is Hubert de Bonneville, a writer who lives 4,000 feet above sea level in Central France, and 11.5 km away from six 2MW turbines erected on a high spot. He reports that these machines are causing him sleep deprivation, "long and strong headaches", and an inability to concentrate and do his work. With time, the effects on his life and well-being have become "unbearable". He is now trying to renovate his house rapidly in order to sell it (if he can) and move away. But in the meantime, he must regularly go to Clermont-Ferrand to get some much-needed sleep at his friends' house there. **He has become a "refugee" in his own country.** (6)

The connection between low-frequency noise exposure, physiological stress, and symptoms consistent with vestibular dysfunction has been known by some acousticians for years, says EPAW. Recent work from physiologist Professor Alec Salt (5) has further shown that **the response of the inner ear to infrasound and low-frequency noise is much greater than the response to audible noise**, especially in quiet background noise environments. It results in the stimulation of the "**alerting mechanism**", also known as the "**fight or flight response**", and at night it is thought to be causing "**night-time waking in a panicked state**" described consistently near windfarms around the world. And nothing can stop ILFN penetrating through walls and roofs.

Most doctors just don't know much about this, remarks EPAW, as it is essentially a new illness to medicine. As a consequence, windfarms' health victims are often accused of inventing it all. This misunderstanding, however, is fast disappearing thanks to recent scientific research (5). "Hard evidence cannot be ignored any longer," concludes Mark, "and governments can't continue to refuse to conduct the necessary acoustic monitoring (7): **willing blindness and fraudulent denial are no longer acceptable.**"

The millions of bats being killed annually by wind turbines are another grave problem, as the price of food depends partly on the amount of insecticides being used, which in turn depends on the number of insects, and therefore on that of bats, many of whose species are already on the endangered list. The health of consumers is also in question when more insecticides are being used.

In this connection, the **World Council for Nature** (WCFN) is asking: why did the European Commission spend millions of euros drafting complex environmental legislation, hiring hundreds (thousands?) of civil servants to protect the EU's dwindling biodiversity and natural ecosystems, and then rely for their actual protection on **mendacious impact studies prepared by the windfarm promoters themselves**? Why did Brussels create at great cost a nature conservation network called "Natura 2000", and then spend millions more to draft a Guidance Document entitled "**Wind Energy Developments and Natura 2000**", which is nothing more than a road-map showing developers how to go about obtaining authorizations to erect deadly wind turbines within these nature reserves? "If this isn't a systemic dysfunction, what is?" asks its chairman, Mark Duchamp.

Contacts:

Pat Swords, BE CEng FICHEM CEnv MIEMA
Chemical engineer
[+353 1 443 4831](tel:+35314434831) (Ireland) Skype: pat_swords
pat.swords.chemeng@gmail.com

Mark Duchamp [+34 693 643 736](tel:+34693643736) (Spain) Skype: mark.duchamp
Executive Director, EPAW
www.epaw.org
Chairman, World Council for Nature
www.wcfn.org
save.the.eagles@gmail.com

References:

(1) - UNECE findings and recommendations:

http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/pp/compliance/C2010-54/Findings/C54_EU_Findings.pdf

(2) - UN panel blows cold air on EU renewables policy:

<http://www.euractiv.com/energy/un-panel-blows-cold-air-eu-renew-news-514534>

(3) – Traducido de: **“L’ONU épingle les énergies renouvelables européennes”**

“La justice européenne elle-même a reconnu le 14 juin que la convention d’Aarhus permettait à des ONG européennes de demander à Bruxelles le réexamen de certains textes.”

<http://www.journaldelenvironnement.net/article/l-onu-epingle-les-energies-renouvelables-europeennes,30523>

(4) - Leventhall, Benton & Pelmar, (2003) Literature review for DEFRA, available from: <http://www.wind-watch.org/documents/review-of-published-research-on-low-frequency-noise-and-its-effects/>

(5) - Carmen Krogh: <http://www.wind-watch.org/documents/peer-reviewed-articles-regarding-adverse-health-effects-of-industrial-wind-turbines/>

Alec Salt: <http://www.wind-watch.org/documents/perception-based-protection-from-low-frequency-sounds-may-not-be-enough>

Malcolm Swinbanks: <http://www.wind-watch.org/documents/numerical-simulation-of-infrasound-perception/>

Steve Cooper: <http://www.wind-watch.org/documents/reviews-of-noise-impact-assessments-stony-gap/>

Ambrose and Rand: <http://www.wind-watch.org/documents/bruce-mcpherson-infrasound-and-low-frequency-noise-study/>

(6) - Hubert de Bonneville: <http://www.windturbinesyndrome.com/2012/french-writer-going-nuts-from-wind-turbines-france/>

continued here: <http://www.windturbinesyndrome.com/2012/the-private-horror-of-wind-turbine-syndrome-a-true-story-france/?var=cna>

(7) - Wind Turbine Acoustic Pollution Assessment Requirements:

http://waubrafoundation.com.au/Wind_Turbine_Acoustic_Pollution_Assessment_Requirements.pdf