

CRUDE ACCOUNTABILITY

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TO: Lorenzo Rilasciati
Senior Economic and Environmental Officer
Office of the OSCE Coordinator on Economic and Environmental Activities
OSCE Secretariat
lorenzo.rilasciati@osce.org

CC: Dr. Halil Yurdakul Yigitgüden, The OSCE Co-ordinator on Economic and Environmental Activities, OSCE Secretariat, pm-ceea@osce.org; Ambassador Lamberto Zannier, The OSCE Secretary General, pm@osce.org

Dear Mr. Rilasciati,

My name is Kate Watters and I am the executive director of Crude Accountability, an environmental and human rights nonprofit (501-c-3) organization registered in the US, which works in the Caspian and Black Sea regions. Crude Accountability is also a member of the Civic Solidarity Platform, a coalition of human rights organizations from OSCE countries.

I am writing to express my deep concern about the fact that the organizers of the [Concluding Meeting of the 21st OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum](#) (Prague, 11-13 September 2013) refused to allow the open display and distribution of Crude Accountability's reports on environmental issues and human rights in Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan during the forum.

Sergey Solyanik, Crude Accountability's consultant, who was officially representing our interests at the forum, sent the meeting organizers electronic versions of our reports prior to the meeting. The organizers confirmed receipt and did not express any objections to their content. However, at the beginning of the meeting on September 11th, Alexey Stukalo, deputy coordinator of the OSCE, told Mr. Solyanik that he was forbidden from placing Crude Accountability's materials on the table with other documents. Mr. Stukalo stated that the content of Crude Accountability's reports and their open distribution at the meeting could result in a negative reaction from a number of delegations. He proposed that Mr. Solyanik distribute the reports individually to the conference attendees. This is the first time in our many years of work that we have experienced a well-known international organization like the OSCE, whose interests are security and cooperation, behaving in this way.

Because we were not able to distribute our materials, many meeting participants did not have an opportunity to become acquainted with our positions on environmental rights in the Caspian region, including the violations of the responsibilities of member countries of the OSCE. Furthermore, we believe that this ban violates the basis for partnership and cooperation between the OSCE and nongovernmental organizations. It also violates the spirit of the Aarhus Convention, the principles of which the OSCE states it upholds.

If the Economic and Environmental Forum was known before as an open forum where civil society representatives could raise difficult questions and look for joint ways to resolve them with member countries of the OSCE, now the spirit of dialogue has been diminished and this incident causes us to question the degree to which nongovernmental organizations can effectively and fully participate in this meeting.

I hope to hear from you and that we can continue to work together in a positive and productive manner.

Sincerely,

Kate Watters
Executive Director

With support from fellow members of the Civic Solidarity Platform:

1. Yuri Dzhibladze, Center for Development of Democracy and Human Rights, Russia
2. Danuta Przywara, Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights, Poland
3. Avetik Ishkhanyan, Helsinki Committee of Armenia
4. Brigitte Dufour, International Partnership for Human Rights, Belgium
5. Dmitir Makarov, International Human Rights Movement, Russia
6. Sardar Bagishbekov, Public Foundation Voice of Freedom, Kyrgyzstan
7. Alex Postica, Promo LEX, Moldova
8. Roza Akylbekova, Kazakhstan International Bureau for Human Rights and Rule of Law, Kazakhstan
9. Natalia Taubina, Public Verdict Foundation, Russia
10. Ivar Dale, Norwegian Helsinki Committee, Norway
11. Leila Alieva, Center for National and International Studies, Azerbaijan
12. Eka Popkadze, Georgian Young Lawyers' Association, Georgia
13. Geert Ates, United for Intercultural Action, Netherlands
14. Olexandra Matviichuk, Center for Civil Liberties, Ukraine
15. Vadym Pyvavarov, Association UMDPL, Ukraine
16. Liudmila Alekseeva, Moscow Helsinki Group, Russia
17. Artur Sakunts, Helsinki Citizens' Assembly-Vanadzov, Armenia
18. Mariya Yasenovska, KRF Public Alternative, Ukraine