**FORUM:** Environment Commission

**QUESTION OF:** Limiting the negative effects of fracking on the environment

**SUBMITTED BY:** Russian Federation

ENVIRONMENT COMMISSION,

*Viewing with appreciation* that the large scale implementation of hydraulic fracturing techniques will also have a significant impact on the biodiversity, considering building fracking sites will convert natural areas into industrial zones, destroying forests and habitats along the way,

*Keeping in mind* fresh water is become a scarce resource in today’s industrialised society and even more so due to the effects of global warming, though the question of groundwater contamination is debatable and controversial, it is undeniable that the immense amount of water used in the process will have negative effects on the environment, this excessive water usage could lead to droughts in particularly arid areas,

*Noting with satisfaction* the declaration made by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) concerning the fact that fracking presents substantial environmental and health challenges,

*Alarmed* by the matter that fracking causes methane gas to be released into the air, which has a global-warming potential 56 times higher than the carbon dioxide that is found in other fossil fuels,

*Fully aware* that fracking has been used in millions of wells around the world since 1949 and that its economic and technological benefits are not to be devalued,

*Fully aware* that demand for energy is increasing and that availability of conventional fossil fuels is limited,

*Defining* hydraulic fracturing as the process “of injecting liquid at high pressure into subterranean rocks, boreholes, etc. so as to force open existing fissures and extract oil or gas” Britannica Dictionary,

*Deeply concerned* that the process of hydraulic fracturing is greatly destructive to the environment on both a local and global scale, with effects including but not limited to: potential seismic hazards, habitat destruction, contamination of groundwater, draining local water supplies and contribution to climate change particularly as a result of methane leakage,

*Fully alarmed* that should hydraulic fracturing be adopted or relied upon on a large scale, a global rise in temperature would exceed 2℃ leading to devastating environmental repercussions and infringement of the Paris Agreement,

*Deeply disturbed* that the precise formulation of chemicals used in the process of hydraulic fracturing by corporations is often not made known to their host nation’s government or appropriate agencies, making meaningful analysis of their effect on the environment difficult or impossible,

*Reminding* member states that accessing conventional natural gas does not have the same negative environmental effects as that which is accessed through hydraulic fracturing, making it an overall less damaging fuel,

1. Strongly recommends member states become less reliant on hydraulic fracturing and instead diversify their energy supply to include a higher proportion of renewable sources by means such as but not limited to:
   1. conducting research on which forms of renewable energy are most appropriate to that member state’s landscape and climate
   2. urgently increasing investment into renewable energy through means including but not limited to:
      1. funding research into new or improved renewable energy sources
      2. subsidising renewable energy corporations
   3. conserving and improving existing renewable energy sources such as but not limited to:
      1. solar energy
      2. hydraulic energy
      3. geothermal energy
      4. tidal
      5. wind
   4. using conventional natural gas in place of shale, as a “bridging fuel” (to be used while long term sustainable strategies are being implemented) to renewable energy in place of other fossil fuels in order to:
      1. reduce carbon emissions in the short term while long term strategies are being researched
      2. reduce the emission of sulfur, dangerous metals and particulates into the atmosphere which are released through the burning of coal
      3. prevent the negative environmental consequences of hydraulic fracturing from occurring (conventional natural gas is both easier and safer to access);
2. Requests that member states make corporations involved in hydraulic fracturing responsible for minimising risks to the environment including:
   1. seismic hazards by means such as, but not limited to:
      1. requiring corporations to carry out or fund a site specific geological and tectonic analysis to assess whether commencing operations would be likely to lead to seismic activity above a predefined limit, which should be no more than 0.5 on the richter scale
      2. requiring corporations to carry out an assessment of how hydraulic fracturing will affect nearby local communities
      3. compelling corporations to monitor seismic activity at all times
      4. requiring corporations to shut down operations if seismic activity exceeds a predefined limit (see above)
   2. habitat destruction by means such as, but not limited to:
      1. requiring corporations to undergo or fund an analysis of the area’s habitat(s), biodiversity and the extent to which commencing hydraulic fracturing will affect them
      2. preventing corporations from using sites shown to be of great value to a region’s biodiversity
   3. contamination of water supply by mean such as, but not limited to:
      1. necessitating corporations regularly maintain storage facilities for the pressurised fluid used to minimise leakage
      2. regularly inspecting operations to ensure the proper safety precautions are being implemented;
3. Encourages member states demand corporations to inform the relevant national authorities of the products and processes they are using or propose to use in the process of hydraulic fracturing including but not limited to:
   1. the precise formulation of chemicals used in the pressurised fluid so as to:
      1. predict the possible risks should groundwater be contaminated
      2. assess whether the risks associated with these chemicals are acceptable
   2. the materials and methods of construction used both in piping and storage facilities so as to assess whether they will adequately protect against leakage and gas migration
   3. the depth, and horizontal length to which corporations drill or intend to drill;
4. Proposes member states compel corporations involved in hydraulic fracturing to use water responsibly, to ensure it is not unnecessarily wasted and that a region does not experience water shortages as a result of it. This could be accomplished by:
   1. requiring an assessment of the region’s water supplies to ascertain whether, due to the vast amount of water used in the process, hydraulic fracturing is suitable
   2. monitoring the area for signs of water shortage and any adverse effects on:
      1. local people
      2. habitats
      3. biodiversity
   3. installing suitable water treatment centres to purify waste water to national health standards;
5. Urges member states to make the corporations involved liable for any and all damage caused by hydraulic fracturing. Making these corporations responsible for mitigating issues such as, but not limited to:
   1. those outlined in operative clause two
   2. inconvenience or harm to local people such as:
      1. health hazards
      2. damage to property;
6. Encourage federal, state, provincial, and local governments to adopt and adequately fund the legal regulatory and physical structure necessary to protect water resources and populations;
7. Asks member states enforce appropriate sanctions against corporations that do not satisfactorily comply with the relevant operative clauses outlined in this document including but not limited to:
   1. if the effect of the corporation’s malpractice has no, or little effect on the environment or local people:
      1. financial sanctions
      2. increased numbers of inspections
   2. if the corporation is in breach on multiple occasions or it is shown their conduct is or has been excessively detrimental to the local environment or peoples, to deny the corporation permission to commence or continue operations.