



global witness

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## **Europe accused of ‘bowing to dictatorship’ in dash for gas *Cult cartoonist joins Global Witness to highlight EU’s hypocrisy***

The European Commission is turning a blind eye to corruption, lack of transparency and poor human rights in the repressive police state of Turkmenistan in a bid to secure future gas supplies, according to a new illustrated briefing paper from the campaign group Global Witness.

The report, ‘*All that Gas?*’ represents an innovative collaboration between Global Witness and cutting-edge satirical cartoonist, David Rees, who has produced original artwork for the publication. His seven new cartoons feature EU bureaucrats discussing crude strategies to ‘get the gas’. Rees is best-known for his US cartoon series ‘*Get Your War On*’, published on the internet and in *Rolling Stone* magazine.

“There is something ludicrous and undignified about the way in which the EU is courting the unsavoury regime of Turkmenistan in a desperate bid to shore up supplies of gas. David’s cartoons convey this sharply and succinctly,” said Tom Mayne, Campaigner at Global Witness.

“Turkmenistan is one of the most repressive regimes in the world, with an appalling human rights record, no political opposition, and no free press. The European Commission appears to believe that a softly-softly approach will lead to positive change, but this is not going to happen unless there are more stringent conditions upfront. It is naive to suggest that the EU’s influence will be greater once the gas deals are done. The opposite is true,” said Mayne.

The Global Witness report, published on the opening day of the 14<sup>th</sup> Turkmenistan International Oil & Gas Conference, outlines five reasons why the EU’s strategy is misguided:

1. The EU would be swapping one unreliable supplier (Russia) for a potentially even more unreliable one. Turkmenistan is currently only offering to provide 2% of the gas the EU needs and, as yet, there is no way for the gas to reach member states.
2. Turkmenistan never meets its projected production figures and may have overstated its gas reserves. The gas sector is too opaque to be able to predict future output.
3. Turkmenistan does not seem inclined to implement serious human rights reforms. Instead it is showing worrying signs of ‘playing’ the Commission by making cosmetic reforms that can be easily reversed.
4. Financial transparency in Turkmenistan is sorely lacking, most of country’s money is held in offshore accounts, and there is almost no information regarding gas revenue management. Western energy companies may end up compromised.
5. The precedents are bad: investment by the West in oil rich states such as Angola and Equatorial Guinea has not helped to bring about reform or reduce poverty.

Global Witness is calling on the EU to change its approach and make the most of the opportunity to influence Turkmenistan, which stands to benefit hugely from European investment. As a condition of investment, the EU should request that the Turkmen government ratifies, and stands by, international conventions on human rights and corruption, and publishes a budget that includes all the gas revenues, including those in offshore accounts

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Briefing paper available at: [www.globalwitness.org/allthatgas](http://www.globalwitness.org/allthatgas)

Cartoons are available for publication. Contact David Rees on [dr@mnftiu.cc](mailto:dr@mnftiu.cc)

More info on Turkmenistan Oil and Gas Conference: [www.oilgasturkmenistan.com](http://www.oilgasturkmenistan.com)

**Global Witness investigates and campaigns to prevent natural resource-related conflict and corruption and associated environmental and human rights abuses.**