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Key concerns of ECA-Watch on the lack of coherence between the policies of Export Credit Agencies (ECAs) and the policy commitments of the OECD.

The 5th of November 2007 several member NGOs of the ECA-Watch network attended the 10th informal consultation between civil society organisations, the working party on export credits and credit guarantees (ECG), and the participants to the arrangement on officially supported export credits. At the end of this meeting, the NGOs decided to withdraw from this consultation, as these consultation meetings consistently fall below minimum standards, both in terms of process, as well as in terms of progress on issues of substance.

The following key issues of concern ECA-Watch wishes to share:

1. It is the assessment of ECA-Watch that the members of the ECG show a lack of coherence with OECD policies and objectives, particularly relating to transparency, bribery, environment and development concerns. These concerns have been presented in a separate memorandum that has been made available as room document No. 2/Rev to the participants in the consultation meeting. ECA-Watch is convinced that all OECD policies and objectives should fully apply to the members of the ECG. To contribute to major improvements in this field, ECA-Watch recommends an external review process on all these issues, which should involve NGOs, experts and any other interested stakeholders.
2. The ECG prides itself for the progress it claims to have made over the last 10 years on several issues of public concern. ECA-Watch is making the assessment that such a claim is hard to sustain, as many export credit agencies (ECAs) seem to be paralyzed by an incapacity to balance various public interests against the private interests of the corporate clients they are meant to serve. ECA-Watch shares the opinion that a much more dynamic process is desirable, in which the different ECG members press each other to enhance their performance. ECA-Watch recommends that the ECG effectuate, on a regular basis, transparent peer review procedures (country examinations), similar to those applied by other OECD committees.
3. Access to information is an essential requirement for enhancing the dialogue of ECG members with outside stakeholders. It is essential that the ECG and its members substantially increase the transparency of their operations and procedures. To assist transparency and dialogue, ECA-Watch recommends that consultations are not just taking place in plenary sessions, but also are organised more frequently in the framework of working groups dealing with specific sectoral/thematic issues (e.g., sectoral working groups of environmental practitioners).
4. Meaningful dialogue requires a two-way communication. ECA-Watch greatly regrets that the ECG or its members have never responded in a substantive manner to many of the recommendations and suggestions that have been submitted verbally and in writing. It is not the fact that NGO concerns have not been taken on board that caused ECA-Watch to leave the consultation meeting hosted by the ECG. Rather it has been deeply disappointed by the lack of substantial response to the issues presented.

ECA-Watch regrets that this step has been necessary. It will aim for meaningful consultations in other relevant international and regional bodies concerning guidelines and regulations for ECAs for the cross cutting issues that have been identified. Also it will look forward to any contribution that other parts of the OECD may consider to enhance the policy coherence between the policies and procedures of the ECG and the OECD at large.