



EMBARGOED UNTIL 12:01 AM CEST, MONDAY OCTOBER 7, 2019

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
07 October 2019

CONTACT:

Alex Doukas, Oil Change International, alex [at] priceofoil.org
Xavier Sol, Counter Balance, xavier.sol [at] counter-balance.org

Over 70 civil society groups call on European Investment Bank to stand behind proposal to stop funding fossil fuels, and to fight European Commission attempts to undermine ambition

Today, over 70 civil society groups spanning dozens of countries – including major international groups – sent a public letter to European Investment Bank (EIB) leadership, calling on them to stand firm behind a draft lending policy that, if adopted, would rule out future fossil fuel financing from the bank. The letter urges the EIB to resist efforts from stakeholders - including the gas industry and the European Commission - to weaken the policy.

The letter commends the EIB leadership and Management Committee for producing an ambitious draft policy in July that would prohibit new financing for fossil fuel projects beyond 2020, prioritizes the 'energy efficiency first principle' alongside renewable energy, and recognizes the necessity to support a just transition for workers in those sectors that will see fundamental changes.

However, the letter slams efforts by some EIB stakeholders and shareholders, particularly the European Commission, to weaken the draft policy. A revised draft released in late September watered down the first draft of the policy, creating new loopholes that could allow financing for more fossil fuel projects. Negotiations on the policy are in a critical phase, with the EIB's Board due to vote on it at their next meeting on October 15th.

"The European Investment Bank proposed a world-leading policy that planned an end to public money for the oil, gas, and coal industry. Unfortunately, this common-sense draft has been weakened by the European Commission acting on behalf of the gas industry. We are in a climate emergency, and it's clear the public knows it - they will not tolerate leaders who treat climate action like an afterthought," said Alex Doukas, Lead Analyst from Oil Change International.

The letter highlights concerns over a number of key changes that could allow for fossil gas projects to be eligible to receive financing in the future, or for fossil gas projects to be approved quickly before an eventual policy comes into force.

EIB fossil fuel finance topped €2.5 billion in 2018, the bulk of which supported parts of the controversial Southern Gas Corridor, including the Trans Adriatic Pipeline (TAP) and the Trans-Anatolian Pipeline (TANAP).

The letter calls on the EIB to put the stronger original draft of its lending policy up for approval at an upcoming October 15 meeting of the EIB Board of Directors.



“The European Investment Bank is one of the world’s largest public lenders. Millions of people are taking to the streets to demand more ambitious action, and that’s what the Bank can truly deliver if they stand firm and stop funding fossils,” said Sebastien Godinot from WWF European Policy Office.

“If the European Investment Bank is to really become the ‘European climate bank’ and align all of its operations with the objectives of the Paris Agreement by the end of 2020, as its President committed to during the recent UN Climate summit, a necessary step is to get out of fossil fuels business. There’s no time left for business as usual” said Xavier Sol, Director of Counter Balance.

Once released, a copy of the letter can be viewed at: www.priceofoil.org/EIBSignOnLetter

###

Notes:

- The original (late July) and revised (late September) drafts of the EIB Energy Lending Policy can be found here: <http://www.eib.org/en/about/partners/cso/consultations/item/public-consultation-energy-lending-policy.htm>
- Analysis from June 2019, shows that EIB financing for gas infrastructure is not compatible with ambitious climate action: <http://www.priceofoil.org/2019/06/12/gas-and-the-european-investment-bank/>
- The civil society sign-on letter was written by the Fossil Free EIB coalition, which has generated more than 50,000 online signatures calling on the EIB to end financing for fossil fuels: <http://fossilfree-eib.eu/>