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Dear Commissioner Oettinger,

In the context of the recently published legal study on unconventional gas in Europe by Philippe & Partners, we, the undersigned Members of the European Parliament, would like to convey to you our profound concerns regarding your statement that the "legal study confirms that there is no immediate need for changing our EU legislation".

Your statement suggests a complacency that is in stark conflict with the conclusions that other institutions have arrived at. This complacency unfortunately is very much in line with your earlier unwillingness to have an open ear for citizens' concerns. Already in April 2011, several of us, together with citizens' initiatives from seven European Member States, called on you to institutionalise an exclusive dialogue on shale gas with civic and NGO representatives. To this date this has not been established, while opposition among European citizens against shale gas projects in a number of Member States, and particularly against fracking, has increased considerably over the last year. The European Parliament has now itself included a pilot project for such a European dialogue in the 2012 Budget.

The legal study by Philippe & Partners clearly states that there "is no reason for complacency" and that "some adjustments to legislation should be further considered". In fact, a recent study commissioned by the European Parliament's Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety came to the conclusion that European legislation needs improvement and a common regulatory framework. The study has particularly highlighted that the current regime governing environmental impact assessments is inadequate for shale gas.

In this context, Bulgaria's Minister of Energy stated that "Bulgaria has initiated the creation of common European legislation for research and production of shale gas". As the Commissioner responsible you should support such initiatives and not hinder them.

Different Member States have taken different attitudes with regard to shale gas resources. While France and Bulgaria have banned fracking, others are pursuing a different course. We call on you to learn from the experience in the United States and improve European legislation in this field before, not after, any further development of Europe's shale gas resources in order to give citizens the best possible guarantee of preventing or minimising possible adverse effects.

Yours sincerely,



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