

Dear President Maystadt,

On behalf of CEE Bankwatch Network, Crude Accountability and Norwegian Helsinki Committee, we are writing to inform you about the case of Mr. Andrey Zatoka, a recently imprisoned environmentalist in Turkmenistan, who was arrested on false charges on October 20, 2009 and held in prison until November 6 when his appeal was heard in the Dashovuz Regional Court. His five-year sentence was commuted to a \$350 fine; but Mr. Zatoka was also required to give up his Turkmen citizenship and leave the country permanently. He left Turkmenistan for Russia on Sunday, November 8.

Mr. Zatoka, a world renowned environmentalist and civil society activist, was arrested on October 20, 2009 and charged with assault after he defended himself from attack by a known drug addict in the marketplace in his home town of Dashovuz. The incident was clearly a set-up and was the culmination of over three years of harassment of Mr. Zatoka by the Turkmen government. (Mr. Zatoka was arrested in December 2006, also on falsified charges, and was released in January 2007 after international outcry over his detainment.)

A biologist and civil society activist, Mr. Zatoka has been an instrumental part of many of the most successful environmental programs in Central Asia since the 1980s.

As the EU's bank, we trust that the EIB will join with concerned people across the globe in condemning the treatment of Andrey Zatoka.

As the EIB considers financing the Nabucco Gas Pipeline project, we request that you take into account the serious human rights violations occurring in Turkmenistan, as exemplified by Mr. Zatoka's case. Mr. Zatoka was not the only political prisoner in Turkmenistan. Many others continue to sit in Turkmen prisons without strong advocates to protect them.

We urge the EIB to uphold the highest human rights standards when considering all projects and to refrain from financing projects that will involve the government of Turkmenistan or hydrocarbon development—including transport—in that country.

Yours sincerely,

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