

European Green Party/EFGP_{aisbl}
4th COUNCIL MEETING
Helsinki, 5-7th May 2006



Adopted resolution

Baikal before profit!

European Greens are against construction activities by Transneft Open Joint Stock Oil Transporting Company within the borders of World Heritage Site "Lake Baikal".

Since 2003 Transneft has been planning to build the world's longest pipeline, running 4,188 km (2,602 miles) from central Siberia to the Russian Far East and the Sea of Japan to transport oil to the markets of Pacific Asia over the northern end of Lake Baikal. In late 2003 the pipeline project failed to pass through the mandatory Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). The main reason why the project was turned down then was because the pipe would have crossed the catchment basin of Lake Baikal, a World Natural Heritage Site since 1996, just 12 km away from the water edge. In 2004 Transneft modified the pipeline project and moved the pipe to a distance of 80 to 100km to the north from Lake Baikal. Despite fierce public opposition to the project because of other pipeline-related environmental risks and a huge scandal around the state EIA, this new project was approved by the Federal Service for Ecological, Technological and Atomic Supervision (Rostekhnadzor or FSETAN), an independent governmental agency responsible for environmental protection.

However, in March 2005 Transneft illegally started surveying activities within the World Heritage Site "Lake Baikal". In some places the pipe would run as close as 800 metres away from the lake. Moreover it runs through seismically active mountainous areas north of lake. In its proposed route through the Severomuisky Range, the pipeline could be ruptured in earthquakes, landslides, mudflows, and other geological events which would cause both considerable economic losses and irreversible pollution of the Lake Baikal watershed and the lake itself.

Lake Baikal is a place of superlatives: the deepest, the oldest, the clearest, the cleanest, the highest level of biodiversity, the largest volume (20% of the total) of liquid freshwater in the world, and home to a freshwater seal. For this reason Lake Baikal is on the World Natural Heritage List of UNESKO.

European Greens strongly request that President and government of Russia do not support the pipeline if it is built to Perevoznaya Bay or in the seismically active area in the Lake Baikal basin.