

## **WILL YOU BE THE NEXT VICTIM OF SHALE GAS ?**

### **Thoughts about the value of a house without water - October 2013**

Read this story which may soon become your story. You are not a farmer who has allowed himself to be hoodwinked by the propaganda of the venal Polish government. You have not signed a contract leasing your land to a small company which may go bankrupt at any moment, but which masks a powerful multinational.

You are just the owner of a main or a second home with a small orchard, situated in a bucolic setting, and you believe you are in no danger from the the unknown quantities linked to the shale gas and oil industry.

And yet, everything may be turned upside down as you can see from this story that happened in Ugoszcz, a small village in Mazovia, ninety kilometers from Warsaw.

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### **TESTIMONY**

I own a chalet in the forest on the banks of the river Bug. Already, in 2011, I had noticed that every time I was absent for several weeks, the water that came out of the tap ran brownish and oily for half an hour. Afterwards, the kitchen smelt of gas for a long time. First of all, I thought that my gas bottle was leaking. But as the same smell could be detected in different parts of the surrounding forest, I began to think about shale gas and to look for information.

In the spring of 2012, when I turned on the pump that brought up water from eighteen meters below, there was an explosion that tore the reinforced rubber pipe. You could smell gas everywhere. I decided to buy a new system.

In the summer of the same year, another strange thing happened. I was indoors, sitting on a wooden stool when there was a tremor, strong enough to make me fall onto the floor. My house is made of wood, so it was not damaged ; there would certainly have been cracks in a permanent structure. From that moment on, the dribble of water got smaller and smaller and disappeared completely in the spring of 2013. My system no longer worked. Obviously, the underground aquifer eighteen meters below that had supplied me with water for fifteen years had disappeared. Later, I discovered that companies prospecting for shale gas use explosives at a great depth.

For years, I had planned to move permanently into my house in Ugoszcz. But, no longer having access to water, I have to ask to be connected to the village water network. Since my land is quite far from the centre of the village, it is going to be very expensive. The Town Hall has refused to help with the cost of the connection.

A few years ago, several families of beavers had been brought in to live in the nearby stream, and they all disappeared last summer, exactly like the fish and the crayfish. I can also see that the bees have disappeared – my trees have not produced any fruit this year : not a single plum, not a single apple in the orchard. Never before had such a thing happened.

The drilling pad is some four kilometers from my house and is no longer operating. It is deep in the forest, inside the triangle formed by the villages of Treblinka- Maliszewa-Lipki.

The forest paths are full of potholes caused by heavy vehicle traffic and hundreds of tons of mud have been dumped amongst the trees. I could not get onto the site ; the wheels of my motor bike sank in up to the axles. And until recently, this place was so beautiful and so clean .....

I also found another well, not far from the place called Zlotki Kolonia. Machines were drilling into the earth, sending up dirty mud that ran down the forest path.

Three years ago, the local farmers tried to drive out the team whose big lorries were moving slowly near the village sending powerful vibrations into the ground.

I also wonder what effect this poisoning is having on farm animals. Most of the cows drink the water from the stream called Ugoszczanka, and the pigs get their water from wells, not from the village network.

Finally, I do not understand why the authorities allow such a barbaric destruction of the environment and the people. Has greed made them completely blind ?

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The situation described here brings out all the signs of an ecological catastrophe, the scale of which has not yet been evaluated. Neither the well water, nor that of the village network has been analyzed. This fact shows clearly how the companies fail to comply with the existing regulations

Very large sums in damages should have been paid to the author of this testimony and to the farmers in the region of Zamosc, who have been deprived of clean drinking water for two years... Also to a lot of other people, who are the victims of exploratory drilling, without even mentioning exploitation ! It seems to be accepted that it is the Polish people who will suffer the financial consequences of this catastrophe, and not the guilty multinationals who have been given the blessing of Mr Tusks government and of the Assembly (diète) .

The concessions for drilling for gas in the shale were given without any procedure, without any invitations to tender. The beneficiaries are not well-known multinationals, but small, dummy companies, registered in Poland for the circumstance : they all have very long names (with the name of the multinational camouflaged in the middle) and with authorized capital reduced to the minimum, this last so as not to have to respond to claims for damages.

It is another colonization of the country, yet another, after industry and the banking system. Yet this is the most dangerous of them since it destroys the very essence of the country : its environment, its drinking water, the health of its inhabitants.

Needless to say that NO insurance company will agree to insure you against the risks linked to drilling, just as is the case with nuclear energy.

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