

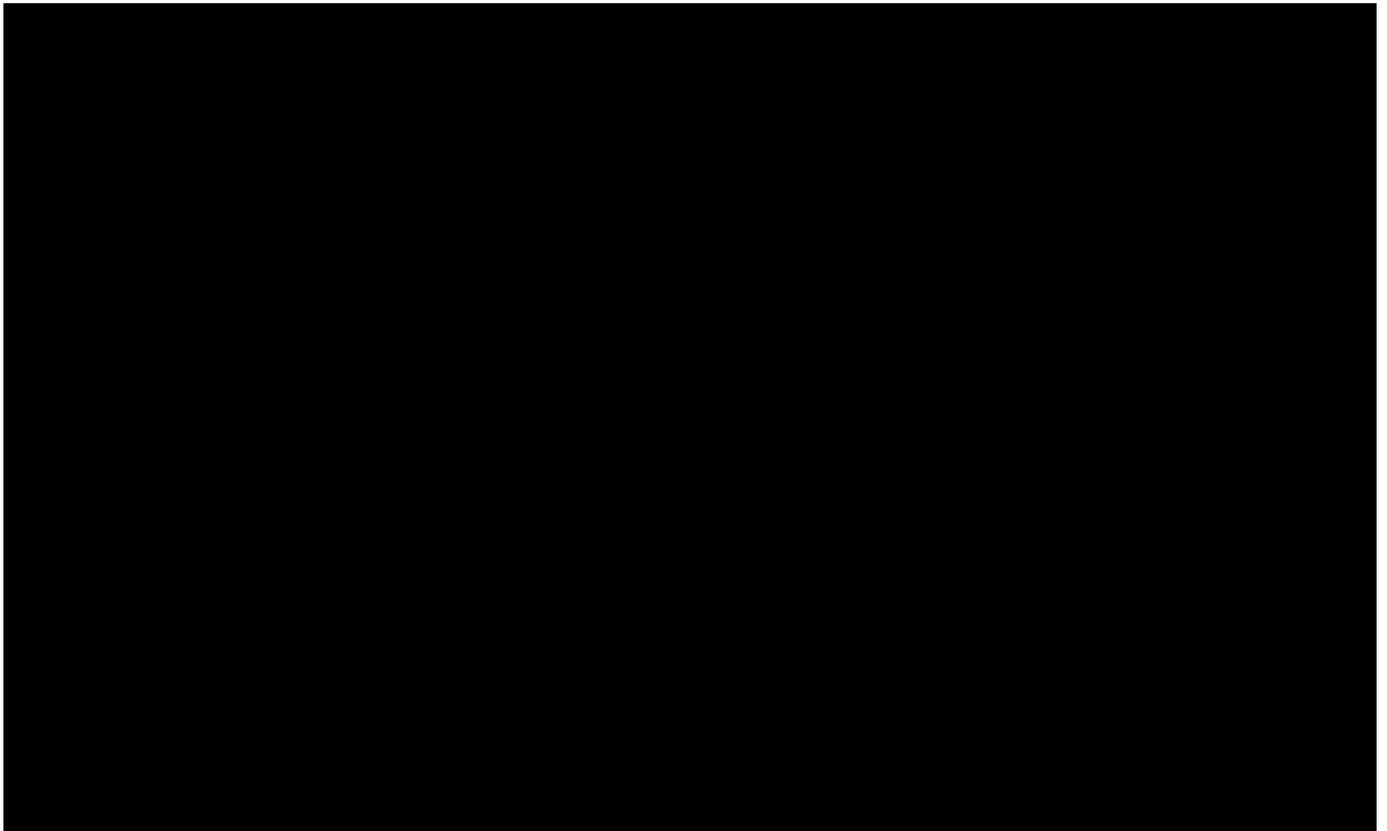
St Andreans call on EU parliament to tighten up 'conflict minerals' policy

December 19, 2012 11:57 am [0 comments](#) [Sunniva Davies-Rommetveit](#)

One year on from the Coalition for a Conflict-Free St Andrews' debut, the group have launched a video calling on people to sign a petition requesting that the European Parliament stops sourcing "conflict minerals" from countries such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Zimbabwe and Sierra Leone.

Conflict minerals, mined in conditions that disregard basic human rights and that wreak havoc upon the local environment, are commonly used in electronic devices such as smart phones and laptops. The group has been calling for the University of St Andrews to raise awareness amongst their students and to prevent the University itself from buying electronic devices from companies that unethically source minerals.

Being the first university in Europe to start the movement, the MEP David Martin recently responded positively towards the group's efforts to rally students in St Andrews behind their cause. Mr Martin wrote: "I greatly support what you are doing in St Andrews. Pressure groups have become a potent force for change and they are especially important when the implications of our attraction to gadgetry...cloud the issues surrounding the sources of components, the exploitation of workers and the all-too-soon disposal of redundant products."



Martin explained that he has brought the issue of conflict minerals to the European Commission Parliamentary Questions, asking that the EU adopts a framework whereby companies in the EU state where the product's coltan, tungsten, tantalum and tin is sourced. As well as this, he has called for a public awareness campaign that would "encourage corporate and social responsibility in the demands placed on Congo's mineral sector."

Bennett Collins, a STAND member and Coalition activist, recently blogged on the Raise Hope for Congo website, saying: "Now, to coincide with the first birthday of the Coalition for a Conflict-Free St Andrews, a video and Change.org petition have been released in part to help catalyze the movement in the UK to reach the ears of policymakers and also to push Conflict-Free across the channel into mainland Europe.

"However, the preeminent reason for this video still rests primarily within the fact that the European Union and its member states are moving at an astonishingly slow pace to propose adequate conflict mineral legislation. As this year's Nobel Peace Prize laureate, the European Union has a duty more than ever to ensure human rights, democratic values, and fair economic practices are upheld and utilised both in and outside its borders."

The group are hoping to raise awareness and get widespread student backing for their cause, with 20,000 signatures needed overall. Following the University of St Andrews' support for the Coalition, it recently included a statement about stopping the sourcing of unethical minerals in its procurement policy; the group now hopes to build on this inaugural success.

The petition can be signed [here](#).