

LAWYERS ARE RESPONSIBLE

18 July 2023

Allen & Overy, London

Dear Mr Wim Dejonghe, Senior Partner,
and Mr Gareth Price, Managing Partner,

Re: Allen & Overy's responsibility to withhold its legal services in relation to any new projects to extract fossil fuels.

We write on behalf of *Lawyers Are Responsible* following our letter to you dated 15 May 2023 in which we requested that **Allen & Overy does not accept any further instructions in relation to developing new, or the expansion of existing, fossil fuel infrastructure; that it refuses any such instructions for the foreseeable future and that it terminates the provision of its services to any clients in respect of any current instructions that will lead to developing new, or the expansion of existing, fossil fuel infrastructure.**

We set out in that letter the reasons why we consider that Allen & Overy should desist in this work and the evidence from reputable international sources to support our request.

Since writing, the UN Secretary General said two weeks ago that "*climate change is out of control*".¹ The 1.5°C limit was breached in June for the first time. We are yet to see if this will be sustained through July and August.²

However, world temperature records have repeatedly been broken during July, with temperatures the hottest they have been for 125,000

¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2023/jul/07/un-climate-change-hottest-week-world>

² <https://climate.copernicus.eu/tracking-breaches-150c-global-warming-threshold#:~:text=The%20global%2Dmean%20temperature%20figures,the%20first%20week%20of%20June.>

years. Temperatures in southern Europe alone are estimated to be at 40°C again this week, and in some places rising to 48°C.³ These excess temperatures have been seen across the world. The Barcelona Institute for Global Health estimates that more than 61,000 deaths were caused last year due to heat in Europe alone.⁴ The figure this year is expected to be higher.

Antarctic sea ice is at the lowest extent ever recorded and sea temperatures in the Atlantic have also reached a record high. Forest fires are burning with increased reach, intensity and longevity not only in Canada but wherever there is intense heat. Heavy rains and flash floods are causing devastation in the US, China, India and Japan.

The World Meteorological Organisation Secretary General said last week, *“The extreme weather – an increasingly frequent occurrence in our warming climate – is having a major impact on human health, ecosystems, economies, agriculture, energy and water supplies. This underlines the increasing urgency of cutting greenhouse gas emissions as quickly and as deeply as possible.”*⁵

The evidence is clear – we are not facing a climate emergency, *we are in one*. The actions of companies like Allen & Overy will shape whether the planet remains liveable. This is an urgent threat with an urgent decision essential on your approach to new fossil fuel projects.

We are disappointed that, against this context, you have not yet found the opportunity to reply to us.

We note the 7% increase in revenue achieved by Allen & Overy last year and sustained significant profits. We also note your intention to measure and report your global emissions to the Carbon Disclosure Project. This is laudable. However, this will include only Scope 1-3 emissions and not your advised (or Scope 4) emissions.

As such, it ignores completely the devastating impact your client work is having upon environmental sustainability and the prospect of us being able to inhabit a liveable planet in future.

³ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-66197368>

⁴ <https://www.isglobal.org/en/-/el-calor-record-del-verano-de-2022-causo-mas-de-61-000-muertes-en-europa>

⁵ <https://public.wmo.int/en/media/news/extreme-heat-rainfall-highlight-need-more-climate-action>

Next steps

We ask, again, that you please respond within the next 7 days substantively to our letter of 15 May as to your proposed actions to address your advised emissions.

If we do not hear from you, we will be taking steps to escalate our actions drawing attention to the threat posed to human and environmental survival by your continued services enabling fossil fuel infrastructure projects.

We reiterate that we would welcome meeting with you to discuss these critical issues and available steps to address them.

Yours faithfully,

Lawyers Are Responsible

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