



STATEMENT

**In reply to video reportage on Alaverdi's "Ankyun Plus" TV
Titled "[EcoLab participants in Teghut](#)"**

Published on 8 May 2013

On behalf of the EcoLab project, its partner organisations and donors, we would like to state, that we consider the above mentioned reportage as a misuse and misrepresentation of the project, its partners and donors' names in favour of Teghut (Lori region, Armenia) copper-molybdenum mining project of Vallex F.M. Establishment.

We are grateful for the hosting of the study visit of the EcoLab seminar's participants on Sustainable Development on 30 April 2013. The study visit included an excursion on the site and a detailed presentation about the mining project. However, we would like to state, that the partners and donors of EcoLab are well aware of the large civic opposition, in Armenia and in a number of diaspora communities around the world, to the Teghut mining project. Moreover, they are aware of the criticisms that have been made and the concerns that have been raised by academics, think tanks, as well as NGOs in Armenia and internationally, concerning the lack of sustainability of the mine from an environmental, social, economic and cultural perspective. In fact, three of the EcoLab partner organisations (IDHR, Peace Dialogue and Journalists' Club "Asparez") have been struggling for years against unsustainable mining projects in Armenia and through their numerous statements and actions they aim to stop mining in Teghut for the protection and development of human life and environment in Armenia.

Sadly, however, the above mentioned news report, which portrays a one-sided perspective about Teghut mine, misrepresents the views of the EcoLab project, its partners and donors. We would like to confirm that the participants of the seminar were provided with the opportunity to learn about the "other side of the story" and that by no means should it be assumed that the EcoLab partners and/or donors are supporters of mining in Teghut or that they endorse the mining project. The sole purpose of the visit organised by EcoLab was to provide comprehensive information about the situation over the Teghut issue to the young participants, so they would be able to develop their approach and activism actions based on in-depth analysis of the context. The mentioned video material contradicts to EcoLab's intention; we perceive it as abuse of confidence and as an example of the unethical and unprofessional corporate identity of Vallex, as well as a harmful example for the young participants of the project.

The EcoLab project is the Armenian country program of the Joint Civic Education programme. The Joint Civic Education programme empowers social change through active citizenship education, by providing capacity building for young people and facilitating cooperation among civil society professionals. EcoLab is based on the idea of Education for Sustainable Development for young environmental activists or those who want to take the opportunity to enhance their skills and capacities so as to contribute to the implementation of their own project ideas.

EcoLab's partners are the MitOst Association (Germany), the Institute for Democracy and Human Rights (Yerevan, Armenia), Peace Dialogue NGO (Vanadzor, Armenia), Syunik NGO (Vayots Dzor, Armenia), and Journalists' Club "Asparez" (Gyumri, Armenia). The project is funded by the German Federal Foreign Office, the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation (Portugal) and the Robert Bosch Stiftung (Germany).