

1. Summary of the information received by Amnesty International France from the principal French banking groups regarding own-account and third-party client investments in companies linked to the trade in antipersonnel landmines and cluster bombs

In June 2006, Amnesty International France (AIF) and Handicap International (HI) launched a campaign calling on the AXA Group to end all its own-account investments and third-party client investments in companies linked to the trade in antipersonnel landmines and cluster bombs.

On 25 May 2007, letters were sent to the executive managements of the *BNP Paribas*, *Crédit Agricole*, *Natixis* and *Société Générale* groups, questioning each organization on the nature of its investments in these sectors.

Here is a summary of the replies received:

BANKS	AXA	BNP PARIBAS	CREDIT AGRICOLE	NATIXIS	SOCIETE GENERALE
QUESTIONS					
<u>PUBLIC POLICY OF NO OWN-ACCOUNT INVESTMENTS IN ANTIPERSONNEL LANDMINES</u>	YES	YES	NO*	<i>Not indicated</i>	YES
<u>PUBLIC POLICY OF NO OWN-ACCOUNT INVESTMENTS IN CLUSTER BOMBS</u>	YES	YES	NO	NO	YES
<u>PUBLIC POLICY OF NO THIRD-PARTY CLIENT INVESTMENTS IN ANTIPERSONNEL LANDMINES AND CLUSTER BOMBS</u>	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
<u>COMMITMENT TO RAISING AWARENESS OF THIRD-PARTY CLIENTS</u>	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO

* In a letter dated 20 December 2007, the Crédit Agricole Group informed Amnesty International France that an internal written policy on the subject was in the process of being drawn up.

1.1 Own-account investments

NATIXIS is the only group not to have communicated to us their policy on own-account investments in companies linked to the trade in antipersonnel landmines. Regarding cluster bombs, the group declared that “*the initial comparison made against Amnesty International’s list reveals a relatively poor showing from Natixis*”, thus divulging the absence of a public policy on the subject. AIF can only deplore the group’s lack of such a policy for both

antipersonnel landmines and cluster bombs, all the more so since this institution states that it has a social policy based on a consideration for individuals.

The Crédit Agricole Group, although concerned about the issue of cluster bombs, has not yet produced a public policy on the subject: *“The Group wishes to act in a responsible manner and to anticipate future prohibitions of this type of armament. However, noticing that no consensus yet exists on the definition of cluster bombs, and thus on their manufacturers, we propose joining in the steps initiated by AXA”*. Amnesty International encourages such steps. However, the company’s commitment should lead to a public decision to no longer invest in such companies, both independently and ahead of consensus on a list of those companies trading in them.

The BNP Paribas Group stated to AIF that it does not have own-account investments *“in companies known to be involved in cluster weapons, more so for antipersonnel landmines, whose use has for that matter been banned by the Ottawa Convention”*. AIF notes nevertheless some ambiguity in this response and calls on the BNP Paribas Group to re-evaluate the nature of its investments against an up-to-date list.

The Société Générale Group declared to AIF that its *“own-account capital investments in industrial companies do not pertain to the armament sector”*.

1.2 Third-party client investments

All of the groups questioned offer their clients investments in companies linked to the trade in antipersonnel landmines and cluster bombs. We are asking them to:

- Implement a policy of awareness raising among their clients, so as to inform them of the precise nature of their investments and thus allow them to modify their choices accordingly.
- End the practice of offering their clients investment opportunities in companies linked to the trade in antipersonnel landmines and cluster bombs.

2. Note on the actions of Amnesty International France and Handicap International regarding AXA

In October 2005, the Belgian NGO Netwerk Vlaanderen exposed the financial links between five financial groups (Dexia, Fortis, ING, KBC, AXA) and companies manufacturing antipersonnel landmines and cluster bombs.

As a result of the pressure campaign that followed these revelations, the first four groups significantly their investment policies. The AXA Group’s commitments were however less satisfactory. AIF and HI proceeded to denounce the group’s investment policy by means of an initial campaign. Widely supported, the campaign called on AXA to end those investments that had been criticised.

Several days beforehand, on 23 February, on the initiative of the Norwegian government and several NGOs, 46 States, including France, signed as part of the Oslo Conference a common declaration committing them to take steps leading to the signature in 2008 of a treaty banning cluster bombs, which “cause unacceptable harm to civilians”, a situation sadly illustrated by the recent war in Lebanon in summer 2006. Amnesty International attended this conference as a member of the “Cluster Munition Coalition”.

AIF and HI cancelled their insurance contracts with AXA on Thursday 1st March 2007, on the occasion of the 8th anniversary of the coming into force of the Ottawa Convention banning antipersonnel landmines.

Between April and June 2007, AIF suggested that the public take action while the institutional dialogue with AXA continued and intensified due to the setting up of a series of technical meetings.

Finally, in July 2007, the recommendations proposed by AIF and HI had an effect. On 17 July, AXA announced its decision to progressively end its own-account investments in companies manufacturing cluster bombs. As part of this announcement, the company decided to set up a working group open to members of the banking sector and aiming to:

- Compile an exhaustive list of companies involved in the trade of cluster bombs;
- Specify ways of raising awareness among clients regarding indirect (third-party) investments.

3. Anti-personnel landmines and cluster bombs.

The presence of antipersonnel landmines and cluster bombs has devastating humanitarian consequences on civilian populations in affected countries and remains a major obstacle to the economic and social development of those countries.

The yearly report by Landmine Monitor details an overwhelming state of affairs: although the use of landmines is decreasing, these weapons still spill blood in 33 countries or territories, killing or mutilating a victim every 30 minutes. On 3 December 1997, the signing of the Ottawa Convention took place, ratified by 158 countries including France, banning the use, storage, production and transportation of antipersonnel landmines and requiring their destruction.

Several million cluster bombs have been dropped during the latest conflicts in Iraq, Afghanistan, Kosovo and Lebanon, creating thousands of victims. Unexploded bombs, lying on the ground, in the trees or on the roofs of houses, represent a permanent threat to civilians.

Along with 137 other countries, France has committed itself through the Oslo Process to an international treaty banning cluster bombs, which “cause unacceptable harm to civilians”. This treaty could come into force during 2008.