



DEEP-SEA MINING

LETTER TO NORWEGIAN PARLIAMENTARIANS

Thursday 9th November 2023,

To: Members of the Norwegian Parliament - Stortinget,

Subject: Act to prevent Deep Sea Mining from happening in Norwegian waters

Dear Members of the Norwegian Parliament,

We, undersigned members of the European Parliament as well as national and regional parliaments, call on you to oppose the Norwegian government's plans for deep sea mining in the Norwegian Sea.

On Tuesday the 20th of June, the Norwegian Government proposed opening up 281,200-square-kilometer of the Norwegian Sea¹ to deep-sea mining, an area nearly the size of Italy.

Scientists, activists, as well as parliamentarians and politicians from all around the world have been warning for years about the risk such activity will cause to marine biodiversity and the acceleration of climate change. [Over 700 science and policy experts](#) have warned that deep-sea mining would result in the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem functioning that would be irreversible on multi-generational timescales and could risk disturbing carbon sequestered deep in the ocean. 262 Parliamentarians from 52 countries signed the [Global Parliamentary Declaration Calling for a Moratorium on Deep Seabed Mining](#). Indigenous Peoples from 34 countries and 54 indigenous groups called for total ban on deep sea mining. The [European Academies' Science Advisory Council](#) also highlighted the disastrous environmental consequences of seabed mining and called the narrative that it is needed for the green transition “misleading”. Following these warnings and a growing citizen mobilization from all around the world, 22 States have already committed to support a moratorium, a precautionary pause or a ban on deep-sea mining at international level. The Ocean is a critical ally in the fight against climate change and its biodiversity must be protected.

On top of these international warnings, many objections were raised against the Norwegian opening decision specifically. Among them, the [Norway Environment Agency](#) itself released a statement explaining that the impact assessment conducted has so many

¹ The area is located in Norway's extended continental shelf, and not in Norway's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

knowledge gaps that it does not suffice as a legal basis for decision making. They further stated that the assessment does not provide adequate information on whether this activity can be carried out in a safe or responsible manner. Moreover, some parts of the area designated by the Norwegian Government have been identified as [vulnerable or valuable](#) by Norwegian research institutes and government agencies. Recently, the European Commission officials expressed [serious concerns](#) on the opening of Norwegian waters to deep-sea mining's (potential) impact on fish stocks, fisheries and more generally marine ecosystems which do not know borders. EU cod fishing fleets are active in the area around the archipelago of Svalbard, in line with international law and their historic fishing rights. We would also like to point out that to-date, there is no international legal framework for this potential activity, therefore no common standards. In the midst of the environmental and climate crisis, the Norwegian Government's decision to start mining in the Ocean's fragile ecosystems would be reckless.

As European parliamentarians we are deeply concerned by our close ally pushing forward this destructive industry, rather than joining the EU in the transition to a circular economy. The green transition cannot be used as a justification for harming biodiversity and the world's largest natural carbon sink, especially since alternatives exist. The demand for minerals can be reduced by 58% through innovation in renewable technology and circular economy measures². Instead of plunging into high-risk deep-sea activities before having full understanding of their consequences, we must reduce our dependence on these materials.

Finally, Norway's decision to allow exploration and extraction of deep-sea minerals, which would make it the first nation in the world to do so, would also create a precedent in the ongoing negotiations on deep-sea mining in international waters. We cannot take the risk to precipitate the opening of all of the world's oceans to the mining industry. Last month, Norway signed the High Seas Treaty at the United Nations and is co-chair of the High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy, which has committed to 100% sustainable ocean management by 2025. The Government must follow-up on its international commitments with cohesive national policies.

For all the above reasons, we, as European parliamentarians committed to ocean protection, urge you to vote against the Government's proposal and to support the adoption of an international moratorium on deep-sea mining.

Yours sincerely,

Marie Toussaint, European Parliament, France

Caroline Roose, European Parliament, France

Alexandra Manes, Assembleia Legislativa da Região Autónoma dos Açores, Portugal

Alfons Röblom, Ålands lagting, Åland, Finland

² [Report The Future is Circular - Circular Economy and Critical Minerals for the Green Transition \(3.201Mb\)](#)

Aline Trede, National Council, Switzerland
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Ana Miranda, European Parliament, Spain
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Andrés Ingi Jónsson, Alþingi, Iceland
Anja Hazekamp, European Parliament, The Netherlands
Anne Stambach-Terre noir, Assemblée nationale, France
Annika Hirvonen, Sveriges riksdag, Sweden
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