

R6new Deep-sea mining

Proposers:

Agenda item: 4. Resolutions

Motion text

1 Mining resources comes with negative impacts on the environment that should be
2 reduced to a minimum. At the same time, a just transition to a carbon-neutral
3 society is only possible when key parts of our infrastructure are renewed.
4 However, this transition requires mining resources in itself; cadmium is for
5 example needed for the construction of solar panels. Some methods of mining are
6 more harmful to the environment than other methods. Underwater mining is
7 especially harmful to the environment and should therefore be prohibited.

8 According to [“Seas to risk” report](#): “Areas approved for deep-sea mining (DSM)
9 exploration now cover over 1.3 million square kilometres in the Pacific, Indian
10 and Atlantic Oceans. Of the 30 exploration contracts the International Seabed
11 Authority (ISA) has established so far, European contractors hold a total of
12 nine. Countries sponsoring or holding contracts include Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech
13 Republic, Slovakia, Poland, France, Germany and the UK”.

14 The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has launched a
15 moratorium on deep-sea mining. It has called on its member states to implement a
16 moratorium on deep-sea mining and the issuance of contracts for exploitation and
17 exploration. Environmental and biodiversity NGOs have welcomed this measure.

18 But many European countries continue the race to exploit the mineral resources
19 of the seabed even though this has devastating consequences on the 250,000 known
20 living species and on the millions we do not yet know of and the fact that
21 mining releases huge amounts of carbon, which reduces the capacity of the oceans
22 to slow down climate change.

23 We can mention the [Solwara 1 project](#) planned to mine mineral-rich hydrothermal
24 vents in the Bismarck Sea, part of the Pacific Ocean, not far from Bougainville
25 Island. This is the first deep-sea mining project at the international level
26 that was approved but then brought to a halt because of environmental
27 destruction. Other tentative projects are the ones planned near the Canary
28 Islands. The so-called “grandmothers of the Canary Islands” are composed of more
29 than 100 seamounts that cover the bottom of the sea, located about 269 miles

30 south of the island of El Hierro. They are extinct submarine volcanoes with
31 important mineral deposits of manganese crusts, polymetallic nodules, and
32 phosphorites. The European Union has formally declared that the grandmothers of
33 the Canary Islands are a strategic reserve of raw materials necessary for the
34 energy transition.

35 On the other hand, European countries and the EU have made the security of the
36 supply of raw materials one of their priorities. It encourages the exploration
37 of new frontiers and innovative mining methods under the pretext that the
38 ecological transition requires the use of rare minerals such as cobalt used for
39 the batteries of electrical devices.

40 We refuse to use the ecological transition to go and exploit and destroy the
41 seabed!

42 The "Sustainable Blue Economy" strategy adopted by the European Commission
43 foresees that the EU defends the conditional exploitation of seabed mineral
44 resources in the international area after sufficient research has been carried
45 out on the impact on the marine environment, biodiversity, and human activities.

46 The Federation of Young European Greens (FYEG) is unambiguous: our biodiversity
47 has to be protected – whether on land or underground.

48 We must make our continent a global leader in sustainable development. When
49 building a sustainable Europe, we cannot forget to protect our seabed.

50 **WHAT WE STAND FOR:**

- 51 • Ban on deep-sea mining in European waters as well as on the continent.

- 52 • Ban on processing minerals from the seabed in Europe and ban on importing
53 products containing minerals from the seabed into Europe (similar to the
54 ban on conflict minerals).

- 55 • Ban private deep-sea mining research projects and those for economic
56 purposes, and only fund public deep-sea science research projects, such as
57 those by academia and international institutions, that look into
58 sustainable methods and contribute to our understanding of deep-sea
59 ecosystems, in order to form a scientific consensus that deep sea mining
60 can be done sustainably.

- 61 • Increase waste recycling rates to 80% to recover raw materials and
62 facilitate recycling across Member States, by giving Member States with
63 the capacity to mass-recycle the possibility to buy disposed material from
64 other Member States. Special attention is given to the recycling of e-
65 waste, thus precious minerals and metals used for the production of
66 technology in order to phase-out mining. To increase and improve waste
67 recycling, European legislation should require producers to design
68 products so that they can be easily recycled, for example by not mixing
69 plastic with paper packaging.
- 70 • Producers have to sell products designed to last as long as possible.
71 Producing products that stop working after an artificially short amount of
72 time is not only a burden for the consumers, but also the environment
73 since it increases demand for new products, and therefore resources. To
74 alleviate the pressure on our environment, and to reduce the need for
75 underwater mining, artificial lifetime limitations, including negligent or
76 avoidable obsolescence, must be banned across Europe. To stimulate the
77 production and purchase of sustainable products, the lifespan of consumer
78 technologies has to be included on its packaging.
- 79 • Enabling a local and decentralized repair industry on national and
80 European level, by providing financial and educational incentives to
81 create local repair shops that can perform repairs on the widest range of
82 goods possible at the lowest prices possible.
- 83 • Ban the design of products that can exclusively be repaired by the
84 manufacturers of the product.
- 85 • The right to repair must be enshrined in European law. All consumer
86 technologies should be able to be repaired by consumers themselves when
87 needed. This includes creating legislation that sets minimum design
88 requirements to ensure easy disassembly and replacement of key components.
89 Similarly, producing products that are difficult or impossible to be
90 repaired is a burden for consumers and the environment as it leads to
91 unnecessary excess demand.

92 We call for respect for the biodiversity of the seabed and respect for the right
93 of marine biodiversity to develop freely without human intervention.

94 Through this motion, we want to affirm our refusal to participate in this race
95 for scarce resources which is destructive to our marine biodiversity and which
96 brings nothing.