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Dear Ms Del Re,

Thank you for your letter dated 17 March 2021.

GSR was pleased to participate in the MiningImpact stakeholders dialogue on 21 January. Transparency is important to us.

At DEME and GSR, we believe wholeheartedly in the importance of taking a precautionary and ecosystem approach. This is in part demonstrated by our step-by-step approach to project development, which entails a continuous process of learning and improvement. Environmental monitoring is a key aspect of our development program, ensuring we understand the effects of our current and future activities, can accurately predict them, continually improve, and develop appropriate environmental management strategies.

While Greenpeace may not see a role for deep seabed mining in the transition to a sustainable future, it is premature to discard it as an option for delivering the metals the planet needs to realize a circular economy and a clean energy future.

All credible studies show that vast quantities of primary metals will be required before the prospect of a circular economy can become a reality. Strategies such as recycling, substitution and reuse will not be sufficient to meet the demands created by population growth, urbanisation and the urgent need to decarbonize energy and transport. We need to take a holistic, whole planet, approach to determine the most responsible sources of metals. Diversification of supply will be important.

For many environmental and social reasons, we believe seabed minerals could be an important part of the solution to reach our shared goals of a circular economy and a clean energy future. Accordingly, we are engaged in a multi-year research programme, working with an international team of independent scientists, to gather the necessary data so that rational, evidence-based decisions can be made.

At this point, we are in a research phase. We are undertaking detailed multi-year environmental baseline studies and completing an environmental impact assessment. The expedition to which you object is part of this scientific process and the field trial has been designed to better understand environmental effects of collecting minerals from the seafloor so that informed decisions can be made, based on the best scientific information possible.

It is also worth noting that all expeditions are conducted under a contract with the International Seabed Authority, a body established through the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea to regulate mineral activities beyond the area of national jurisdiction. Furthermore, this test aligns with the recently adopted resolution by the Belgian government to support fundamental scientific research and data collection for further knowledge of the deep sea and for the protection of existing marine ecosystems.

The trial of Patania II follows the submission of an Environmental Impact Statement for the activity, which was made publicly available through the ISA and Belgium government's websites. It is important to note that the results of this research will also be made public.

It is too early for any conclusions to be drawn. If it transpires that polymetallic nodules do not offer a responsible option for sourcing metals, GSR will not proceed with applying for a mining license. It is noted that such an application, if it were to be made, must include an environmental impact statement (EIS) and environmental management and monitoring plan (EMMP), among other documents, which the ISA (through public review and participation) will use to assess whether or not a proposed project should be allowed to proceed.

Included in GSR's EMMP will be a commitment to set aside at least 30% of the contract area to ensure the protection of representative habitats and stable biota. We have committed to numerous studies in the possible set-aside and mining areas to ensure we are making informed decisions based on science. One of the papers you cited¹ states remediation would be too costly to be considered a realistic option. GSR is committed to remediation research and based on scientific feedback and study, implementing appropriate remediation actions. The same paper also states "*innovative engineering design could reduce or minimize some risks to near- and far-field biodiversity.*" These are precisely the types of innovative engineering design options we are exploring and why the upcoming trial is so important. A number of the other papers you kindly provided reference knowledge gaps and again these are exactly the types of gaps we are looking to fill with research expeditions such as the Patania II trial.

¹ Van Dover C.L., Ardron J.A., Escobar E., Gianni M., Gjerde K.M., Jaeckel A., Jones D., Levin L.A., Niner H., Pendleton L., Smith C.R., Thiele T., Turner P.J., Watling L. and Waver P.P.E. (2017). Biodiversity Loss from Deep-sea Mining. *Nature Geoscience*, 26 June 2017. DOI: 10.1038/ngeo2983.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/318093120_Biodiversity_loss_from_deepsea_mining

Our ultimate goal is the same – to make the best decisions for the planet as we strive for a sustainable future.

I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a long horizontal stroke with a loop at the end and a vertical stroke crossing it.

ir Luc Vandenbulcke
Chief Executive Officer