

We call on the ISA to stop granting exploration contracts for deep sea mining and to not issue contracts for exploitation

We call on the European Union to stop supporting deep sea mining and focus instead on becoming a world leader in the transition to sustainable economies.

We call on all countries to stop sponsoring exploration and exploitation licences in the Area and to cease issuing permits for deep sea mining on their continental shelf.

We call on the international community to ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns (SDG12) that reduce demand for minerals and avoid opening new sites. Only this fundamental shift in thinking can bring about the change we need.


#KeepItInTheSeabed

SEAS AT RISK

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Seas At Risk is an umbrella organisation of environmental NGOs from across Europe that promotes ambitious policies for marine protection at European and international level.

 Seas At Risk gratefully acknowledges EU funding support.

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Production 2018

1. Deep Sea Conservation Coalition, 2016 2. International Seabed Authority, 2017 3. Avaaz, 2016 4. Euronews, 2016
5. NOAA 6. UNEP, 2015 7. European Commission, 2014 8. Eurometaux, 2018

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Deep sea mining? Stop and think!

Deep sea mining has no place in a future shaped by the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development.



The race for deep sea mining is on - governance is deeply flawed.

For more than a century we have ripped apart the land, causing irreparable damage in our insatiable quest for copper, manganese, nickel, cobalt, gold, silver, zinc, rare earth elements and other metals. Now the mining industry is moving on to target the deep sea.

While some deposits lie beneath national waters and are sovereign resources, many others lie in the Area Beyond National Jurisdiction ('the Area').

As of July 2018, the International Seabed Authority (ISA), which regulates access to resources in the Area, has agreed 29 exploration contracts. No exploitation contracts are yet in effect.

A 2016 review of the ISA highlighted severe structural shortcomings in its transparency and capacity, raising serious questions about its ability to govern the Area.

1.5 million km²

licensed for deep sea mining exploration in the Pacific, Atlantic and Indian Oceans.¹

As the global steward of the world's largest ecosystem, the ISA must prioritise conservation of the deep sea and safeguard this common heritage for future generations.

Sponsoring states for existing ISA exploration contracts are:²

Belgium	France	Poland
Brazil	Germany	Russia
Bulgaria	India	Singapore
Czech Republic	Japan	Tonga
China	Kiribati	UK
Cook Islands	Republic of Korea	
Cuba	Nauru	

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Deep sea mining should only be allowed if it has the prior and informed consent of civil society – at this time, it does not.

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) declared the seabed in the Area, together with its mineral resources, as the 'Common Heritage of Mankind'.

UNCLOS gives ISA the mandate to ensure effective protection of the marine environment from harmful effects that may arise from activities in the Area and to manage those activities 'for the benefit of mankind as a whole'.

Citizens are thus the most important stakeholders here. Public opinion must be taken into account, and the risks, benefits and alternatives of seabed mining properly considered.

No comprehensive and informed public debate about the need for deep sea mining has ever taken place at ISA or UN level. A democratic and participatory debate is urgently needed.

In 2014,

776,300

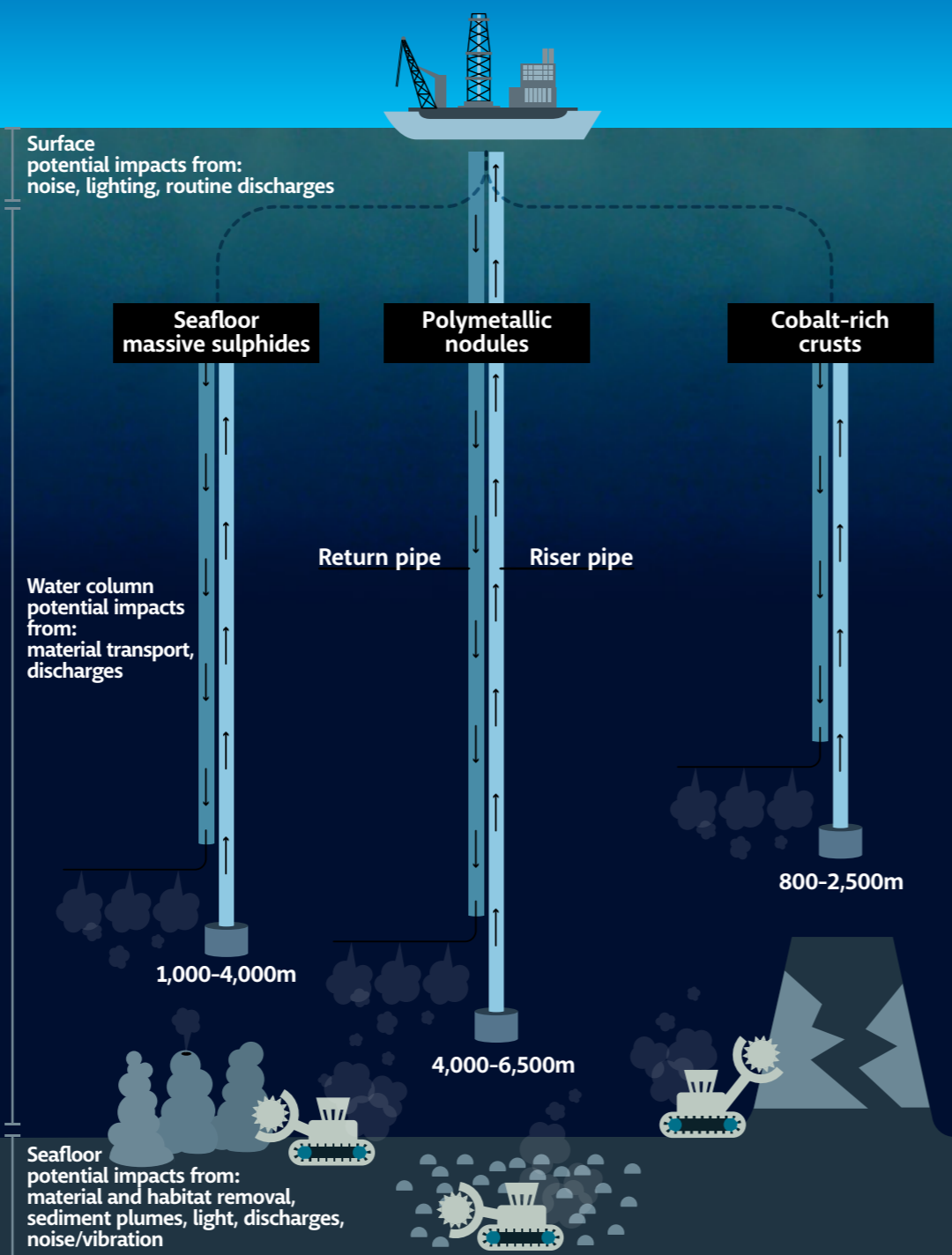
people petitioned the ISA for a moratorium on deep sea mining.⁵

In 2018,

558 of 666

Members of the European Parliament voted for an international moratorium on deep sea mining.⁶

Types of deep sea mining



The science is clear: deep sea mining imposes a serious threat to sustainability.

The deep sea has a huge diversity of life and plays an important role in the planet's food cycle, climate regulation and the production of oxygen.

Most deep sea ecosystems targeted for mining have slow recovery rates. Loss of biodiversity will be inevitable and likely permanent.

Plumes containing toxic heavy metal particles can spread over large areas, smothering marine ecosystems far beyond the mining sites.

The socio-economic benefits of deep sea mining are highly uncertain and short-term, at best.

The deep sea constitutes the largest source of biodiversity on Earth. Yet less than

0.0001%

of more than 1.3 billion km³ of deep water has been studied.³

There are over 100,000 seamounts around the globe.

<0.1%

have been explored.⁴

Scientific knowledge about the deep sea is, as yet, extremely limited. The precautionary principle advises prioritising sustainable alternatives to avoid tethering our economy to this high-risk technology.

Deep sea mining has no place in the world's Agenda 2030 for sustainable development.

Deep sea mining is driven by unsustainable patterns of production and consumption, such as our market-driven appetite for new smart phones, tablets and other electronic devices - products that are designed to be thrown away, cannot be repaired and are only partly recycled.

The 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda sets goals for healthy oceans, responsible consumption and production, clean technologies and renewable energy, inclusive economic development, wellbeing and innovation. This requires a fundamental shift in our economies and lifestyles.

Instead of deep sea mining, we need a circular economy that puts eco-design, re-use, repairing, sharing and recycling at its heart. We need new business models to meet the needs of all, within the means of the planet, and well-informed consumers who make responsible choices.

Up to

90%

of the world's electronic waste is illegally traded or dumped, and less than 16% of global e-waste volumes are recycled.⁷

Every year,

160 million

mobile phones in the EU go unused, with less than 15% recycled.⁸