

“The EU is embarking on a desperate plunder for raw materials. Instead of delivering a greener economy, the European Commission’s plans will lead to more extraction beyond ecological limits, more exploitation of communities and their land, and new toxic trade deals. Europe is consuming as if we had three planets available”, says Meadhbh Bolger, Resource Justice Campaigner for Friends of the Earth Europe.

A global coalition of 180+ community platforms, human rights and environmental organisations and academics from 36 nations is calling on the EU to abandon its plans to massively expand dirty mining as part of EU Green Deal and Green Recovery plans. In a statement released in the middle of EU green week, the coalition explains why, if left unchanged, EU policies and plans will drastically increase destructive mining in Europe and in the Global South, which is bad news for the climate, ecosystems and human rights around the world.

Coordinated by the Yes to Life, No to Mining Network’s European Working Group, the statement’s signatories are united in support of an urgent and rapid transition to renewable energy.

However, they argue that relying on expanding mining to meet the material needs of this transition will replicate the injustices, destruction and dangerous assumptions that have caused climate breakdown in the first place:

“The EU growth and Green Deal plans must consider a deep respect of the rights of affected communities in the Global South, that are opposing the destruction of their lands, defending water and even their lives. A strong collective voice is arising from affected communities around the Planet, denouncing hundreds of new mining projects for European consumption. Their urgent message needs to be heard in the North: Yes to Life No to Mining”, says Guadalupe Rodriguez, Latin American Contact Person for the global Yes to Life, No to Mining solidarity network.

“Research shows that a mining-intensive green transition will pose significant new threats to biodiversity that is critical to regulating our shared climate. It is absolutely clear we cannot mine our way out of the climate crisis. Moreover, there is no such thing as ‘green mining’. We need an EU Green Deal that addresses the root causes of climate change, including the role that mining and extractivism play in biodiversity loss”, adds Yvonne Orenge of Andrew Lees Trust, which is supporting mining affected communities in Madagascar.

The statement sets out a number of actions the EU can take to change course towards climate and environmental justice, including recognising in law communities’ Right to Say No to unwanted extractive projects and respect for Indigenous Peoples’ right to Free, Prior

and Informed Consent.

“Communities fighting at the frontlines of extraction are forcing minerals to stay in the ground. This is critical for helping us take circularity seriously and rethink the ideology of growth. Communities have a right to say no and will enforce it regardless of greenwashing, corruption and repression”, says Joám Evans, from the Froxán community in Galicia.

Other recommendations take aim at EU overconsumption of minerals and energy, calling for binding targets to reduce EU material consumption of materials in absolute terms and for just de-growth strategies, not ‘green growth’ or ‘decoupling’, to be placed at the heart of EU climate and environmental action.

“Simply put, we need to drastically reduce the amount of resources used and consumed in the EU and move to truly circular solutions. Legislation like the EU battery regulation is a step in the right direction, but must go further. Transport decarbonisation, decarbonisation of all kinds, in fact, can only be achieved with a strong reduction in demand. We need to realign our priorities to meet climate goals,” says Diego Marin of the European Environmental Bureau.

Source: gaiafoundation.org