



The Director-General

Brussels,
MARE/D3/PC/mbe/Ares (2019)

Mr. Ivan López
Chairman Long Distance Advisory
Council
c/del Doctor Fleming 7, 2º Dcha
E- 28036 Madrid
SPAIN

Subject: LDAC Opinion on Deep-sea Mining
Your Ref.: R-04-19/WG5

Dear Mr. López,

Thank you for your message related to the LDAC opinion on deep-sea mining activities in the Area. Let me reassure you that the EU is committed to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including SDG 14 and related SDGs. This is the reason why the emphasis has been put on activities to ensure that deep-sea mining, if it is carried out at all, will be fully in line with EU's commitment to sustainability, in line with the precautionary and ecosystems based approaches.

As pointed out in your Opinion, there are knowledge gaps, and this is why the European Union supported, through Framework Programme 7 and Horizon 2020, research to increase the knowledge of the deep-sea mineral and environmental systems. The very fact that deep-sea mining is environmentally challenging means we must be well-prepared to know, and prevent or mitigate, any potential impacts. This is why an important part of our investment in deep-sea mining research has been allocated to projects looking at environmental impact assessment and environmental protection measures. This includes ecological risk assessments of deep-sea ecosystems and vulnerability of deep-sea bio-diversity under increasing human stressors. For instance, the MIDAS project¹ studied the potential impacts associated with mining activities on the seafloor. Through its Research and Innovation Programme, the EU funds also projects on marine ecosystems, for example ATLAS² which will provide essential new knowledge of deep ocean ecosystems in the North Atlantic.”

The EU's interest is to make sure that the responsibilities and activities of the International Seabed Authority are considered in the broader context of developments

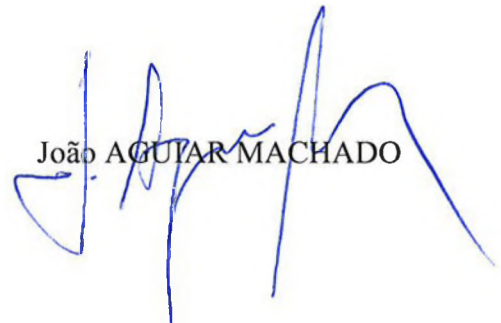
¹ <https://www.eu-midas.net/>.

² <https://www.eu-atlas.org/>

within the International Law of the Sea as a whole, and that a high level of protection of marine biodiversity is ensured in line with obligations under UNCLOS. In this respect, we are supporting a project to help the Authority develop a Regional Environmental Management Plan for the Mid-Atlantic Ridge (call EASME/EMFF/2017/019). This would yield a network of sites to be protected as unique marine ecosystems against potentially disruptive human activity.

I invite you to take contact with Ms Pascale Colson, coordinator of the Advisory Councils (pascale.colson@ec.europa.eu; +32 2 29 56273) should you have any question on this reply.

Yours sincerely,



João AGUIAR MACHADO