

President of the European Commission
Ursula von der Leyen

CC Frans Timmermans, Josep Borrell Fontelles, Thierry Breton, Helena Dalli, Jutta Urpilainen, Virginijus Sinkevičius, Didier Reynders

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Indigenous Peoples Are Key Rightsholders for the Success of the Energy Transition in the EU and Beyond

Dear Commission President von der Leyen,

We would like to convey our **congratulations on your recent visit to Latin America**, meeting the Presidents of Brazil, Argentina, Chile, and Mexico.

We appreciate that the European Union is committed to strengthening the rules-based international order alongside Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), through, among others, the Global Gateway promoted during your last tour in Latin America.

We applaud that the European Global Gateway initiative aims to promote inclusion and tackle **inequalities, focusing, among others, on Indigenous Peoples.**

The Securing Indigenous Peoples Rights in the Green Economy (SIRGE) Coalition **supports these high ambitions.** The Coalition is an Indigenous-led coalition that champions a **just transition** to a low-carbon economy.

Indigenous Peoples are the key rightsholders in the process of building strategic partnerships. Even though Indigenous Peoples constitute just over 6 percent of the world's population, they manage or hold rights to 25 percent of the planet's land, which house about 80 per cent of the world's remaining biodiversity. At least 24 percent of the world's carbon is stored above ground on the lands we manage.

As you rightly mentioned during your visits, European and Latin America's course to decarbonisation is accompanied by a rise in demand for transition raw materials. **While the ultimate goal of decarbonisation is a positive change in energy consumption, the impact of mining to obtain mineral resources on Indigenous Peoples is growing and is threatening our rights, ways of life and territories.**

In Europe and beyond, mineral exploitation is, unfortunately, occurring too frequently without the Free, Prior and Informed Consent of Indigenous Peoples – a situation that can result in the desecration of sacred sites, the killing of human rights advocates protesting against this exploitation, and the threat to the lands, waters, and livelihood resources of those already being affected by climate change.

Without the right safeguards, transition mineral extraction will continue to pose a threat not only to Indigenous Peoples and their territories but also to the lands that have an important role to play in biodiversity protection and carbon capture, which are at the core of the political agenda you have established for the EU in the Green Deal.

As long as Indigenous rights are not upheld, this unacceptable situation will persist. As part of the EU's efforts to ensure sustainable raw materials sourcing in recent years, several important initiatives have been introduced; however, explicit alignment with Indigenous rights has not yet been achieved in such proposals as the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD) or the Critical Raw Materials Act (CRMA).

As President of the Commission, we ask that you guide proposed legislation to incorporate strong tools to protect Indigenous Peoples' rights. Also, we ask you to urge States together with companies and the EU and its representatives to engage concertedly in open, fair, and equitable dialogue with Indigenous communities in accordance with international agreements and standards.

The SIRGE Coalition sincerely hopes that you and your Cabinet will make it a priority to ensure European legislation reflects explicit and unequivocal alignment with international legislation and agreements to safeguard Indigenous rights, such as the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), ILO Convention 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples (c169), as well as the implementation of Indigenous Peoples' right to Free, Prior and Informed Consent.

The SIRGE Coalition would welcome the opportunity to meet with you and members of your Cabinet to discuss your Political Guidelines, particularly the ambitions you have regarding the sourcing of raw materials and your efforts to ensure that it is done with respect for human rights, Indigenous Peoples' rights and the environment.

Yours sincerely,

The Securing Indigenous Peoples Rights in the Green Economy (SIRGE) Coalition:
Christoph Wiedmer, Co-Director, the Society for Threatened Peoples, Switzerland
Galina Angarova (Buryat), Executive Director, Cultural Survival
Payal Sampat, International Mining Program Director, Earthworks
Kate R. Finn (Osage), Executive Director, First Peoples Worldwide
Pavel Sulyandziga (Udege), President, Batani Foundation

Leadership

Comprising 16 people, the SIRGE Coalition Steering Committee includes two representatives of Indigenous Peoples from each of the seven socio-cultural regions across the globe, the Chair of Steering Committee, and the Chair of Executive Committee (see the full list).

Leadership from the following organizations comprise the coalition's Executive Committee:



BATANI FOUNDATION

The International Indigenous Foundation for Development and Solidarity «Batani» was created as an initiative of Indigenous Peoples in 2004 to organize development projects for Indigenous Peoples in Russia. It has implemented several successful programs of Indigenous Peoples' economic development in Primorsky Region, Sakhalin, and other regions of the Russian Far East. The Foundation also developed tools and mechanisms for negotiations between Indigenous communities and private businesses.



CULTURAL SURVIVAL

Cultural Survival advocates for Indigenous Peoples' rights and supports Indigenous communities' self-determination, cultures and political resilience since 1972. Cultural Survival envisions a future that respects and honors Indigenous Peoples' inherent rights and dynamic cultures, deeply and richly interwoven in lands, languages, spiritual traditions, and artistic expression, rooted in self-determination and self-governance. We support Indigenous communities through Advocacy, Communications, Capacity Building, and Grantmaking.



EARTHWORKS

Since 1988, Earthworks has helped communities secure protections of their health, land, water, and air from extractive industries. We are the only national organization in the U.S. to focus exclusively on preventing the destructive impacts of the extraction of oil, gas, and minerals. Earthworks protects communities and the environment from the adverse impacts of mineral and energy development while promoting sustainable solutions.



FIRST PEOPLES WORLDWIDE

First Peoples Worldwide is a leader in deploying strategies to move the market towards respect for the rights of Indigenous Peoples. We translate on-the-ground impacts of investment to corporate decision-makers, and increase corporate accountability to Indigenous Peoples at the intersection of business, law, and finance. Our strategies to build the business case for Indigenous Peoples include: Corporate Engagement, International Advocacy, Capacity Building, Network Facilitation, and Research & Tools.



SOCIETY FOR THREATENED PEOPLES

The Society for Threatened Peoples (STP) is an independent voice for the cause of minorities and Indigenous Peoples. We support local efforts to strengthen the human rights of minorities and Indigenous Peoples, and work both nationally and internationally with organizations and individuals who pursue similar goals. Today's thematic focus is on the impact of the mining of raw materials on Indigenous Peoples and minorities, the restriction of their rights in different regions of the world and the fight against impunity.



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