

Mr. Gert Jan Koopman

Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations
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Ms. Kerstin Jorna

Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (GROW)
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Mr. Emanuele Giaufret

The delegation of the European Union in Belgrade
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24 February 2023

Dear Mr. Koopman, Ms Jorna and Mr. Giufret,

We are writing with concern for the way mining company Rio Tinto is communicating with EU Commission departments about its work in Serbia. We wish to point out inconsistencies between what they have informed the departments and what we observe in Serbia itself. Our letter references meeting minutes from the 14th February 2022 between Rio Tinto and departments DG NEAR and DG GROW¹.

Firstly, we seek to understand under what premise departments of the EU met with a company whose project in Serbia is canceled, and under what premise the commission gave that company time to present possible next steps and even talk about the state of Serbia's accession?

We also wish to inform you of what we believe is a misrepresentation of the situation in Serbia based on what the company has told you in that meeting.

Detail number three of the meeting minutes states: *"Asked about media reports on continued purchases of land by Rio Tinto in the Jadar Valley, Rio Tinto explained that cases of those land sales had been agreed upon prior to the prime minister's announcement. Three such decisions are still to be implemented but no further purchases of land is taking place."*

However, yesterday's investigative report from BIRN² publicly confirmed that since that meeting there were a total of not three, but **seven** separate cases of land purchases valued at 1.2 million euros. We have concerns about the ethics of any purchases taking place, but even more so now that the company seems to have given you different information from what has been confirmed in the cadastre. We are concerned about the legitimacy of the methods used not only to purchase land, but also in the company's general approach to the local community, and particularly confused about the mining company's ongoing work in the area without a social license to operate, while the mining project is canceled³. We ask that you please

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https://www.dropbox.com/s/vbg16c3nwfofd7a/04.%20Flash%20report_%20Call%20between%20Rio%20Tinto%2C%20DG%20NEAR%20and%20DG%20GROW%20%3F%2014%20February%202022.pdf?dl=0

² <https://balkaninsight.com/2023/02/23/rio-tinto-spends-million-euros-on-serbian-land-since-mine-cancellation/>

³ <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/ztygwe99pyy4whp/AACCyDorgSuQ88laOkLns5TEa?dl=0>

clarify the matter of land purchases with the company, since they spoke about it with you directly, and inform members of our coalition of the company's explanation, and your evaluation of the same.

We thank you in advance for your consideration and look forward to your response,

Sincerely,

Jovana Amidzic

Milica Damnjanovic Zantvort

Ivan Nikolic

Bojana Novakovic

Marš sa Drine