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To all MEPs signatory to the letter on the situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo

Dear Honourable Members of the European Parliament,

Thank you for your letter of 27 January on the question of corruption and the activities of Mr Dan Gertler in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

Corruption not only seriously hinders sustainable development, including through the erosion of the business climate, but also contributes to social, economic and political tensions.

The EU strongly believes that the exploitation of natural resources should be legal and sustainable and the benefits of this exploitation to citizens should be maximized. Any link between trade in natural resources and insurgency, corruption or human rights abuses should be broken. These priorities are particularly relevant in the context of the Great Lakes region, that is why they are already enshrined in numerous United Nations Security Council Resolutions and they are part of distinct international commitments. Countries of the region and their partners should therefore continue to work towards fulfilling these objectives.

In order to contribute to these aims, as you well know, the EU adopted Regulation (EU) 2017/821 laying down supply chain due diligence obligations for Union importers of tin, tantalum and tungsten, their ores, and gold originating from conflict-affected and high-risk areas, and which has come into full force this year. I take the opportunity to commend the active support of the European Parliament in that regard, as well as its commitment to contributing to better regulating the exploitation of natural resources. By ensuring that EU importers of tin, tungsten, tantalum and gold meet international responsible sourcing standards, we will contribute to break the link between conflict and the illegal exploitation of minerals and to put an end to the exploitation and abuse of local communities.

That is why the European Union also supports the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) through funding to the EITI International Management as well as to local programmes in its implementing countries.

Let me also take the opportunity to reiterate that our political commitment to fight corruption in the DRC is clear. In its conclusions of 9 December 2019, the Council clearly identified the main challenges in terms of governance, particularly the persistence of corruption, money laundering, infringements of property rights and misappropriation of public funds, and their impact on the mobilisation of the resources needed to achieve the country's development goals. Since then, the EU has noted the commitments taken by President Tshisekedi to a national recovery based on

respect for the rule of law, promoting and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms, combating impunity and corruption. The EU will therefore ensure maximum political encouragement to the DRC authorities to accelerate their efforts, inter alia, by looking into the activities of Dan Gertler in the country.

In this context, it is also relevant to highlight the support provided by the EU to programmes for structural reforms and the strengthening of institutional governance in the sectors of public finance, justice, security and the environment. As well as the EU contribution to activities developed by the civil society, including the media, in their participation in democratic life and contribution to the management of the common good. All these being fundamental in the fight against corruption.

The EU Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime signals the EU's strong determination to stand up for human rights, and to take more direct and tangible action against human rights violations around the world. It covers a wide range of serious human violations and abuses although the framework agreed unanimously by Council does not include corruption per se as a specific criteria for designation. The Council has recently adopted the first listings under the regime and I expect further proposals for listings to be made in the period ahead.

Yours faithfully,



Josep Borrell Fontelles