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Thank you for the invitation to participate in the briefing session, I've registered for the Monday session.

Further to your request for comments pertaining to the submission of comments in regard to the draft policy on the Mineral Exploration and Mining industries.

A) There remains a certain ambiguity in regard to the fact that in Ireland and most of the 'western' countries, which have a "mining sector", that it consists of two distinct industries, the "minerals exploration industry" and the "mining industry". This distinction is very apropos to Ireland and whilst by-and-large the distinction is regularly made in the document, nonetheless on occasion it incorrectly conflates the two industries. This is a very important distinction because the philosophy and economics underpinning both is very different, as are the personnel and the interaction between individuals and the public is also distinctly different.

B) The other matter is one with which I am greatly concerned is the publication of named respondents. Given that the initial consultation allowed individuals to 'not have their name published', I'd like to know why that is not being allowed herein. As you know, I'm not usually shy about my name being published but for reasons set-out below, I am quite concerned about the proposed system.

Excepting individuals like myself, all other persons, be they public servants, company executives, members of organisations, for example professional bodies and NGOs, will be able to maintain their anonymity. I think that it is grossly unfair and indeed discriminatory that people like myself will be named and it may also be in breach of GDPR.

The context is two-fold. The policy document will by its very nature focus on international trade and a number of countries, which are heavily involved in the international trading of metals and minerals and who do not take kindly to criticism, have been known to imprison people on spurious charges.

Secondly, a number of State bodies, not directly involved in geological matters, effectively black-list people who have the temerity to question their statements in regard to their incorrect assertions on geological matters and downright untruths in regard minerals exploration and mining matters. I have a somewhat lesser concern in regard to the Department itself, although I will be drawing attention to its reluctance to use and promote the use of Irish explorationists on multi-lateral and multi-agency bodies and on research projects.

This is all in the context of what I believe to be a reasonably positive document and one which with amendments could be a very powerful tool for the Minister.

Regards,

