



**European Minerals Forum 2010, Brussels 2 December:**

**“The EU Raw Materials Initiative – What next?”**

**Answer to Mr Pelligrini, Member of Commissioner Tajani’s Cabinet, address by Michelle Wyart-Remy IMA-Europe General-Secretary**

Dear Mr Pellegrini,  
Dear Colleagues,  
Ladies and Gentleman,

IMA-Europe represents 500 companies (685 mines & quarries, 750 plants), who employ 42.500 people producing in the EU, Norway, Switzerland, Turkey and Ukraine more than 180 million tpa industrial minerals, for a value exceeding EUR 10 billion.

IMA-Europe and its Members welcomed the Raw Materials Initiative and are anxious to see the new Raw Materials Policy taking shape. Among the three pillars of the Raw Material Initiative, I would like to focus on Resource Efficiency. The industrial minerals which IMA-Europe represents are very often described as non-recyclable. It is true that industrial minerals have in common that they stand for a small portion of the financial and environmental costs of the products they help making, whilst providing important functionalities. The flip side is that industrial minerals are so embedded in the products they contribute to improve that recycling in the strict sense of the term is merely possible. Does this mean that Industrial Minerals have no role to play in the global resource efficiency improvement effort? **The answer definitely is yes, they do have a role to play!** Let me give you a few reasons why.

**First of all, Industrial minerals participate to improving resource efficiency by replacing other scarcer, more expensive and less environmentally friendly resources.**

With a carbon footprint well below organic compounds, they are valuable choice for developing low carbon footprint products.

A few examples:

- Various types of plastics are increasingly being replaced by easily recyclable mineral-reinforced polypropylene (PP). Talc improves the stiffness of PP, enabling down-gauging of the end product and decreasing the PP consumption. Mineral-reinforced PP is used, for instance, in automotive applications, enabling overall vehicle weight to be reduced, leading to fuel savings.
- Silica in tyres saves synthetic rubber, but all the more reduces petrol consumption of the cars allowing the development of a new generation of energy saver tyres.

**Secondly, the European Industrial Mineral industry improves the quality of the products to permanently help their customers increase efficiency through intensity of usage.**

As an example, the EU consumes only 10 kg magnesia per tonne of steel, while 23 kg of magnesia is used per tonne of steel produced in China, and the mean consumption of magnesia is 15 kg per tonne of steel worldwide.

**Industrial Minerals Association Europe aisbl, in short “IMA-Europe”**

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**Thirdly, the industrial mineral industry permanently strives for sustainable mining and processing, the first step in resource efficiency.**

Since ever, the efficient management of the resource is one of the utmost priorities of the owners and managers of a deposit. While sometimes, due to the mix of grades requested by application some excavated rocks remain unused, the goal of every minerals company is to mine most of their deposits, minimising waste and upgrading recovery.

**Making the best of the resource in a sustainable manner is for sure a driver of any economically viable mineral company. The environmental concerns have generally enhanced the quest for higher energy and CO<sub>2</sub> efficiency, not initiated it.**

In that respect, in the case of limestone, one may regret the decision taken in the Emission Trading Scheme rules not to permit for differentiating technologies in benchmark setting. The horizontal kilns which are beneficial for the valorisation of the resource allowing for calcination of the smaller limestone pebbles and which are greater CO<sub>2</sub> emitters than the vertical kilns would have indeed deserved a specific benchmark.

**As a fourth reason one may mention that if Industrial minerals may not be recyclable strictly speaking, they are highly recoverable.**

Most of their end-applications are themselves recycled, in that way industrial minerals are recovered through the recycling of the products which contain them. This recovery is generally not properly acknowledged and quantified. For instance, whilst feldspar and silica sand are not directly recycled from used glass, the large consumption of recycled glass as secondary material is a true example of their hidden recycling.

**Finally a fifth reason is that industrial minerals are available and will continue to be available as long as the industrial minerals industry will be healthy.**

Many industrial minerals are ubiquitous and for some they are still wide reserves in comparison with other mineral resources. Feldspar is the most common mineral on Earth forming up to 60% of the Earth crust and Silica is the second mineral forming 12% of the Earth crust. The visible abundance of certain minerals masks a critical aspect of their usage, the adequacy of their chemical and physical properties to the functionalities required by the manufacturing industry. The key issue is geological exploration and selection of the grades which fit for the applications, not scarcity. In that respect access to resources is essential and the industrial minerals industry, as other extractive sectors, compete with other land uses, and need equal treatment in planning policies.

**So I hope I have proven that Industrial Minerals are not left on the side of the road when it comes to resource efficiency. On the contrary, they are in the centre of the game and using more industrial minerals, may mean being more efficient for the global use of resources. This means resource efficiency should be approached in a holistic way and not through the exclusive, narrow view of mass flows and recycling.**

**Mr Pellegrini, Ladies and Gentlemen we face many challenges. This will require a lot of efforts and more commitment from industry. No need to say that only a healthy and powerful industry can achieve this.**

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