



**Fostering sustainable supply within the EU –  
Some thoughts from an Industrial Minerals perspective<sup>1</sup>  
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Members of the European Parliament,  
National Representatives,  
European Commission Officials,  
Industry Representatives, NGOs and Stakeholders,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

**1. What do Industrial Minerals stand for?**

All men are created equal – but for raw materials this is certainly not the case. There are enormous differences regarding mining, processing, uses and user industries. Not all non-energy extractive products go into the construction market, and not every raw material supply issue can be tackled by “urban mining”. It is therefore rather questionable whether “one raw materials policy” will fit all.

I represent a medium-sized family owned company with a history of more than 125 years and currently 23 sites in Europe, mostly in the EU, but also in Russia and in the Ukraine. Our products are industrial minerals, not aggregates: these products go into industrial uses, in particular glass, foundry, steel, ceramics, paints and plastics. Our customers are to a large extent, multi-national, sophisticated global players, in particular in automotive, chemical and high-tech applications.

Without industrial minerals there would be no glass, neither cars nor electric cars, no modern plastics, but also no clean water, no solar cells, no windmills, no flat screens, no high-speed trains. Resource efficiency works differently for industrial minerals as well: Whereas most minerals are not recycled as such, they are already today recovered to a high degree through recycling of their products like glass, paper etc.

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<sup>1</sup> Manuscript for speech held on the occasion of the European Minerals Forum, April 13, 2011 –  
The actual speech may differ from the manuscript.

## **2. What are the issues?**

The focus of the EU 2020 policy lies on a strong industry, qualified employment at a high rate and global competitiveness. The key prerequisites for this are well-known: skilled labour and innovation, infrastructure, and raw materials.

Whereas in general we have in Europe a free flow of goods and services, the same is not true for most non-energy raw materials: The price of the product is low compared to transportation costs, and mining activities are limited to natural deposits as determined by geology and cannot follow industry movements. In addition, we observe significant differences in law and practice of access to industrial minerals deposits among Member States: There is no common approach regarding land planning, mining laws, or the authorization process.

The only common observation regarding mining activities in the EU is the NIMBY-phenomenon. “NIMBY” means: You can mine everywhere, but “Not In My Back Yard”. This phenomenon, which can also frequently be observed in infrastructure and comparable projects, occurs largely despite all efforts and improvements of industry regarding low impact mining techniques and high quality, biodiversity-rich rehabilitation. This is why industry is regularly opening doors to the local communities, notably on the occasion of the European Minerals Day, and has started various projects, e.g. on biodiversity, with NGOs or local interest groups.

This development leads to protective measures by Member States: national states or even regions introduce tools like taxes on resource, water or land to discourage mining in certain areas or at least reduce mining to the local or regional demand. A good example is the introduction of a water tax, to be followed in the near future by an aggregate tax in North Rhine-Westphalia in order to discourage exports of gravel from Germany to the Netherlands.

NIMBY is absolutely detrimental for a sustainable supply of industrial minerals in Europe: Europe is rich in industrial minerals reserves, but these may become critical due to these national policies.

## **3. What can European policy do, despite these developments, to foster a sustainable supply of industrial minerals in Europe?**

The markets for products made from or with industrial minerals are European, if not global. EU policy should therefore scrutinize national policies which are - often in disguise - limiting the export of raw materials.

Strict decoupling goals like “x percent less of a certain industrial mineral per year” do not meet the requirements for a “green industry”: If we want more renewable energy production, we have to accept the use of more – not less – industrial minerals for solar panels, windmills and fuel cells.



A better co-operation of national geological authorities can help, but is insufficient regarding the protection of high-quality industrial minerals deposits: Mostly it is not the knowledge of deposits which is missing, but the known deposits must at least be treated on equal footing with other overriding public interests and land uses like housing, industrial estates, and “nature preservation”.

Extraction and processing is a very capital intensive industry. Projects are often calculated over 20 or 30 years. The business is one of long term vision and planning, and therefore needs a stable legal and planning environment. There is a strong need for an integrated and coherent approach of the Resource Efficiency and Raw Materials Strategy and a harmonised implementation by the Member States in order to avoid problems of interpretation (like in the case of Natura 2000).

European policy can help to secure a sustainable supply of industrial minerals by supporting industry to improve acceptance with local communities. The “NIMBY” attitude should be the focus of a European wide awareness campaign on the essential role of minerals for society.

European policy can also help the mining industry improving its rehabilitation efforts by providing sound benchmarks and combining high quality rehabilitation projects in a European wide network – financed by industry.

Ladies and Gentlemen, let me conclude:

The European Industrial Minerals industry welcomes the development of a European raw Materials Strategy and is prepared to deliver – with your help in the proper regulatory framework – on the EU objectives for a smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. No need to say that only a healthy and powerful industry can achieve this.

*Source: Speech at the European Minerals Forum Dinner Debate of 13 April 2011 in the European Parliament, Brussels, kindly hosted by Judith Merkies MEP.*

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*For more information: [www.ima-europe.eu](http://www.ima-europe.eu)*