



For immediate release

Estonia hosts the 10th Anniversary European Minerals Day Launch Event!

Brussels, 25 September 2017. From 22-24 September, more than 130 quarries and plants in 27 countries opened their doors welcoming around 30.000 children and adults to celebrate European Minerals Day and have the rare opportunity to explore the world of minerals and experience how they are sustainably extracted. Typical activities include school visits, guided tours, workshops, exhibitions, biodiversity projects, and many more. See <http://www.mineralsday.eu/events/map/> or follow @MineralsDay on Twitter and Facebook.

For the participating companies, it represents a good opportunity to show its commitment to sustainability and how this is applied into daily operations, notably in the areas of health and safety, resource efficiency, innovation, regional development and biodiversity.

The 2017 European Minerals Day Launch took place on 21 and 22 September, hosted **under the Estonian EU Presidency**, kindly hosted by Nordkalk and Kunda Nordic Tsement at their operations in Kurevere and Kunda. It welcomed representatives from the European Commission, Estonian government, partnering sectors, academia, NGOs, media and local administrations. The balanced and insightful presentations by the guest speakers was complemented by visits of both quarry operations, the cement plant and port in Kunda, a blasting in Kurevere and introduction to the local biodiversity projects on birds and orchids. <http://www.mineralsday.eu/opening-event/>

The Launch event told the story of the minerals industry's **contribution to sustainable regions** and well-being of the local communities, while making the link to the EU Industrial Policy Strategy and EU Action Plan for People, Nature and the Economy.

The sector is important to the EU jobs and growth agenda as it directly employs around 1 million people across 30,000 active mines, quarries and plants in Europe, and has an annual turnover of more than €150 billion. The minerals sector forms an integral part of the European value chain with 70% of EU manufacturing depending on the minerals, metals and raw materials mined.

Statements by key note speakers:

*“We need to keep jobs, growth, investment and innovation in Europe”, stated **Peter Handley** from DG Growth, European Commission, “The Commission's recent Communication on a renewed EU Industrial Policy Strategy recognises the essential role of raw materials for the EU industrial value chain, and their contribution to a low carbon economy. European*

Minerals Day plays an invaluable role in enhancing public awareness, acceptance and trust and promoting the sector's sustainable practices and value to society."

*"European Minerals Day also promotes the importance of addressing biodiversity conservation at extractive sites. There is increasing good practice to be shared and very significant opportunities to create high nature value areas through careful planning", added **Mr Micheal O'Briain** from DG Environment, European Commission.*

*"It is a fact – when a new school or shopping centre is built in one place, a hole is made in some other place. The question is how wisely we are managing this hole. Are we able to create new habitats for other species or recreational areas for ourselves? International relations help to obtain knowledge in this field," stated **Marko Pomerants**, Member of Parliament, previous Environment Minister of Estonia.*

*"The Estonian industrial strategy foresees the building of 400.000 new homes, a high speed train between Tallinn and Warsaw and a tunnel connecting Tallinn with the Finnish mainland – substantially increasing demand for minerals", announced **Ando Leppiman**, Deputy Secretary General for Energy at the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communication of Estonia. "Initiatives such as the European Minerals Day help to enhance public understanding of those essential minerals that constitute our modern life."*

Kalev Kallemets, Advisor to Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communication on mineral policy commented: *"European Mineral Day 2017 in Estonia was a very practical experience to see the workings of extraction and learn how, at European and local level, efforts in reaching both sustainability and economic benefits to people are succeeding. Remarkable thing is to see how European level regulations and efforts are working in concert with member state solutions and how cooperation of practice sharing improves the mineral industry and the environment."*

Andres Rammul, Managing Director Nordkalk AS commented:

"Nordkalk has participated in the European Minerals Day since its launch in 2007. Resource efficiency, biodiversity, and a sustainable future are some of the core themes of the EMD and guidelines for our work. Prerequisites for operating at the heart of the local community are good relations with the neighbours and good cooperation with the local community, which the key note speakers from the local community brought up at the launch event in Kurevere. It was an honour to host the 10th anniversary Launch of European Minerals Day."

*"As one of the hosts we are glad to see that the EMD launch event brought together representatives from the European institutions, regional and local authorities, environmental professionals and producers all having one goal - to find a balance between environmental protection and minerals extraction," says **Meelis Einstein**, Managing Director of Kunda Nordic Tsement. "It is obvious that quarrying and manufacturing of minerals is the foundation of a strong economy and social well-being. And it is also self-evident that all responsible companies are taking measures and making investments to decrease the environmental impact to a minimum when extracting raw materials and enhancing biodiversity on quarries. I believe that collaboration is the key for finding better solutions."*

Notes for Editors:

- Minerals are crucial for the development of modern, environmentally-friendly technologies and downstream products as well as energy-efficient housing and infrastructure. Minerals are essential raw materials in most manufacturing sectors, including: paint, electronics, appliances, metal casting and foundry, paper, plastics, glass, ceramics, detergents, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, construction materials and agriculture. They are also used as processing aids or supplements in the food and feed industries, and have an increasingly important role to play in environmental engineering such as water treatment and filtration, in gas treatment, and in renewable energies, such as photovoltaic solar cells, wind turbines and electric cars.
- The countries participating in European Minerals Day, include Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Germany, Spain, Estonia, Finland, France, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Serbia, Sweden, Slovenia, Turkey, United Kingdom, Ukraine, as well as North America, Brazil, Malaysia and South Africa.
- Multiple stakeholders are joining forces to boost awareness on mineral raw materials. The EMD is currently led by a consortium of 10 European partners: IMA-Europe, CEMBUREAU, EuSalt, EuroGypsum, Eurométaux, Euromines, EuroGeoSurveys, the European Technology Platform on Sustainable Minerals Resources, UEPG with the support of IndustriAll and the European Federation of Geologists – representing the European industrial minerals, cement, salt, gypsum, aggregates, metals and mining sectors as well as the European geological surveys and trade unions.
- Since 2014, the EMD is a commitment under the European Innovation Partnership on Raw Materials.
- Did you know? A family house contains up to 150 tons of minerals - A car contains up to 250kg of minerals. Up to 50% of paint and paper are made up of minerals - Ceramics and glass are 100% made out of minerals
- For more information visit : <http://www.mineralsday.eu/opening-event/>
- Follow European Minerals Day on Twitter @MineralsDay and on Facebook.

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