



EU 2020 Critical Raw Materials List and Action Plan

How will the EU build resilient raw materials supply chains



Webinar: EU 2020 Critical Raw Materials List and Action Plan

On 23 September, the Critical Raw Materials Alliance hosted its second virtual annual conference with great success. The ‘How will the EU build resilient raw materials supply chains?’ webinar discussed the EU 2020 Critical Raw Materials List and Action Plan aiming to make the EU less vulnerable to risks related to imports from third countries.

Raw materials markets have never faced so many challenges simultaneously: COVID-19, the decline of multilateralism, climate change, just to name a few. During the webinar, EU experts analysed the current state-of-play and provided answers to these rising challenges.

The Expert Panel included Milan Grohol from the European Commission, Martyna Perek from the Permanent Representation of Poland and Roland Gauß from EIT RawMaterials. This panel offered different perspectives on the update of the CRM list and the introduction of a new Action Plan for raw materials in Europe.

The panel was moderated by CRM Alliance Secretary General Maurits Bruggink.

Expert Panel

Milan Grohol – European Commission

Milan Grohol of the European Commission is a policy officer working for the Directorate-General Enterprise and Industry in a unit specialized in raw materials, metals and minerals. During his presentation he elaborated on the new CRM list and Action Plan.

Mr. Grohol first started by explaining the impact of EU’s new important policy developments on raw materials. The EU is entering a new phase with its Green Deal and its objective to transform the EU into a carbon neutral economy. This new vision for Europe, along with EU’s new Industrial Strategy and Recovery Plan, comes with an increased need for raw materials as they are closely linked to clean technologies.

Furthermore, Mr. Grohol, also presented the results of the foresight report on raw materials for strategic technologies and sectors, which is based on the EU’s 2050 climate neutrality scenarios, and their use will increase “up to 10 times more compared to the current consumption”. Consequently, the methodology used to update the CRM list has been affected by these changes and the assessment of raw materials now takes into account the green transition and its impact on demand, the recycling potential of raw materials and their dangerousness.

Moreover, Mr. Grohol also argued that the increased demand for raw materials is a great opportunity for the EU. Indeed, the EU has a domestic potential for sourcing these materials. Thus, regions in transition could benefit from this boom and reskill people and become an integrant part of the green transition.

Regarding the Action Plan, Mr. Grohol clearly explained that it has been designed to encourage the sourcing of raw materials in Europe; diversify external supply sources; modernize the sector and build a more sustainable, resilient and circular economy.

Martyna Perek – Permanent Representation of Poland to the EU

Martyna Perek is a Diplomatic attaché at the Permanent Representation of Poland to the EU. During her presentation, Ms. Perek offered her perspective on EU's raw materials policy developments with a special focus on the case of Poland.

First, Ms. Perek highlighted the need to increase raw materials policy visibility and public acceptance. She explained the importance of increasing public acceptance on raw materials policies to support Europe's green transition. In that regard, she extensively defended the case of mining. Indeed, she considers that mining should be better perceived and understood by the public because mining does not necessarily relate to coal. In fact, she explained that to reduce Europe dependency on third countries raw materials, mining in Europe is part of the solution. In Poland, reskilling workers in the coal regions is undergoing but she insisted on the fact that this is a long-standing exercise and that it is not necessarily possible everywhere.

Furthermore, regarding the geopolitical aspect of raw materials policy, Ms. Perek rightly noted that "raw material policy is a branch of geopolitics, it is also a part of trade and industrial and energy policies, it needs a task force for diplomacy at all level". In this line of thought, she called for a solid international cooperation and Europe's consistency in its policies. She considers that it would allow the EU to compete with China, which, from her perspective, is disturbing the level playing field. Indeed, she denounced the fact that many enterprises receive foreign states subsidies that are not allowed in Europe, therefore she also very much welcome the White Paper dealing with the distortive effects caused by foreign subsidies in the Single Market.

Roland Gauß – EIT RawMaterials

Roland Gauß represents EIT RawMaterials, a large innovation community on raw materials that aims to boost innovation and education on raw materials.

Mr. Gauß started by once again reminding the importance of resilient and sustainable supply chains of raw and advanced materials to carry out the green transition as part of the EU Green Deal. He also noted that EU leaders have recognized the importance of the matter. Moreover, Mr. Gauß explained that by 2030, the EU needs to import an increased share of strategically relevant materials from various countries, particularly China and Russia, which raises the question of how to compete with prices.

According to Mr. Gauß, it is important to explain to consumers that green sustainable vehicles or other technologies are more expensive than the same products produced in China or other third countries. Indeed, this is an interesting point to note, because in Europe the costs of production are higher due to the respect of higher standards than in any other part of the world. Thus, Mr. Gauß believes that communicating on this reality and proceed to a strategic awareness of prices is essential. In Europe, "people should be aware and it will be easier to sell them these more expensive products".

About us

The Critical Raw Materials Alliance (CRM Alliance) has been created by industry to advocate the importance of CRMs for the European economy and to promote a strong European CRM policy. It is the representative body of primary producers, traders and associations of CRMs.

Through its membership, the CRM Alliance represents almost all of the 27 listed critical raw materials and we are steadily growing. We also oversee a MEP interest Group on Critical Raw Materials to connect industry with policy-makers through bi-annual political luncheon events.

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