

Policy and strategy for raw materials

Securing reliable and unhindered access to raw materials is important for the EU. In the EU, there are at least 30 million jobs depending on the availability of raw materials. The European Commission's actions to ensure a sustainable supply of these materials can be divided into 2 interlinked parts: the raw materials initiative and the European innovation partnership on raw materials.

The raw materials initiative

In 2008, the Commission adopted the [raw materials initiative](#) which set out a strategy for tackling the issue of access to raw materials in the EU. This strategy has 3 pillars which aim to ensure

1. [Fair and sustainable supply of raw materials from global markets](#)
2. [Sustainable supply of raw materials within the EU](#)
3. [Resource efficiency and supply of 'secondary raw materials' through recycling](#)

The strategy covers all raw materials used by European industry except materials from agricultural production and materials used as fuel. Ensuring sustainable access to these raw materials is crucial to the competitiveness and growth of the EU economy and to the objectives of the [Europe 2020 strategy](#).

The Commission also regularly publishes a list of [critical raw materials](#) in the EU.

A Commission expert group - the [raw materials supply group](#), with representatives from EU countries, European Economic Area countries, EU candidate countries, and organisations representing stakeholders - industry, research and civil society - advises the Commission and oversees the initiative's implementation.

Sustainable development goals and raw materials initiative

On 25 September 2015, the United Nations adopted 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs) to **end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity for all** as part of a [new sustainable development agenda](#). Each goal has specific targets to be achieved over the next 15 years.

The EU is committed to these goals. In its 2016 communication on [steps for a sustainable European future](#), the Commission pledged to apply the principles of sustainable development to all EU policies and initiatives. The Council of the European Union encouraged this in its [conclusions on sustainable development](#) in 2017.

A [report on mining and the SDGs](#) was published on 8 November 2016, illustrating how mining can contribute to the achievement of every SDG. The report was jointly issued by

- the United Nations development programme
- the World Economic Forum
- the Columbia Center on Sustainable Investments
- the sustainable development solutions network

The Commission helps to [implement the SDGs in non-energy extractive industries](#) through its policies derived from the raw materials initiative and through policies, programmes and actions related to

- trade
- environment
- research and innovation
- development
- fiscal transparency

The European innovation partnership (EIP) on raw materials

The [EIP](#) is the major EU initiative implementing the raw materials initiative stakeholder platform that brings together EU countries, companies, researchers, and NGOs to promote innovation in the raw materials sector.

The main objective of the partnership is to help raise industry's contribution to the EU's GDP to around 20% by 2020 by securing its access to raw materials. It will also play an important role in meeting the objectives of the Commission's flagship initiatives [innovation union](#) and [resource efficient Europe](#). It will do this by ensuring the sustainable supply of raw materials to the European economy whilst also increasing benefits for society as a whole.

The EIP developed its strategic implementation plan with 95 actions to foster innovative solutions. These may be technological or non-technological. Specific actions include research and development, addressing policy framework conditions, disseminating best practices, building a knowledge base, and fostering international cooperation.

Supporting information

- [EIT RawMaterials](#), knowledge and innovation community of European Institute of Innovation and Technology

Raw materials initiative

- [Communication: critical list and implementation of the raw materials initiative](#) - COM(2014) 297
- [Report: implementation of the raw materials initiative](#) (2014)
- [Report: implementation of the raw materials initiative](#) (2013)
- [Communication: commodity markets and raw materials](#) - COM(2011) 25
- [Communication: raw materials initiative 'Meeting critical needs for growth and jobs in Europe'](#) - COM(2008) 699
- [Staff working document accompanying Communication](#) - SEC(2008) 2741

European innovation partnership on raw materials

- [Strategic implementation plan: European innovation partnership on raw materials](#) (2013)
- [Communication: creation of the European innovation partnership on raw materials](#) (2012)