



Joint Statement on MEP Interest Group on CRMs

Critical raw materials are crucial to Europe's economy and essential to maintaining and improving our quality of life. However, securing reliable and unhindered access to them is a growing concern within the EU and across the globe. To address this challenge, in 2011, the European Commission compiled a list of fourteen critical raw materials, revised to twenty in 2014, which were selected based on their economic importance to the EU and increased supply risk.

The listing of these twenty critical raw materials was meant to not only highlight the growing importance of CRMs for a wide range of commercial and governmental applications: telecommunications, space exploration, aerial imaging, aviation, medical devices, micro-electronics, transportation, defence, and other high-technology products and services, but to also encourage political action at the European level.

Whilst the EU institutions, notably the European Commission, have started to recognise the importance of critical raw materials in certain policy areas, such as the circular economy, the defence strategy and in trade negotiations, to ensure the continued supply and access to these materials a specific critical raw materials policy is needed.

A European CRM policy should both underline the importance and dependence of the European economy on CRMs, as well as reinforce the Commission's original intention when it created the CRM list: stimulating the production of CRMs and launching new sustainable mining activities in Europe, negotiating trade agreements with third countries of interest for CRMs, removing unnecessary trade distortions, and strengthening industrial competitiveness.

Future legislation should also reflect the specific aspects of CRMs, notably that the EU has characterised them as essential and non-substitutable in many applications. With this in mind, the EU should minimise the adverse regulatory burdens that impede the advancement or the continued availability of CRMs by conducting a socio-economic analysis during the legislative process, increase recycling of CRMs by eliminating disincentives in the context of waste legislation, and push for the inclusion of provisions in trade agreements to ensure the free and fair trade of CRMs.

As these critical raw materials hold the key to many future applications, creating a European CRM policy is the only viable option to protect the EU's CRM and high-tech industry, move ideas from the research laboratory to products in commerce, and transform essential functions of government and civilian providers, whilst promoting resource efficiency and the need for enhanced supply.

In light of the above, we of the MEP interest group on CRMs hereby call upon the European Commission to create a European CRM policy and take into account the specific aspects of CRMs in all relevant future legislation.