



“We need to create the right conditions for our industry and create win-win situations,”

Paul Rübzig MEP

On Monday 13 May 2013, **MEP Paul Rübzig** hosted a high level dinner in the European Parliament in Brussels in the framework of the European Minerals Day 2013. The event received the support of the European Commission and evolved around the European Innovation Partnership on Raw Materials (EIP RM). The event was co-hosted by **MEPs Jo Leinen, Prof Vladko Todorov Panayotov, Roger Helmer, Konrad Szymanski** and was also attended by **MEPs Vittorio Prodi and Sean Kelly**.

Paul Rübzig MEP warmly welcomed the guests and stressed the importance of sustainable sourcing of raw materials. He stated that non-energy raw materials for approx. 200 billion EUR are being imported every year into Europe. He also called for giving value to Europe’s citizens, generating income across the whole value chain.

Mattia Pellegrini, DG Enterprise and Industry emphasised that “We need to explain to the general public that we cannot have a green economy without raw materials.” “There is a need of changing the public perception of the industry, of providing legal certainty to investors, and of policies actually being implemented. Benchmarking Member States to create positive competition was also one of the tools being looked at by the European Commission.

Daniel Reuss (*IMA-Europe President and CEO Europe, Omya*) mentioned that these were exactly the aims of the European Minerals Day: raising public awareness on the role of mineral raw materials in creating a sustainable future. The sector welcomes the combined efforts from policy makers and other stakeholders. Vice-President Tajani would participate in person in the European Minerals Day launch event on 24 May in Vipiteno (Northern Italy) and inaugurate the more than 120 events taking place all over Europe. (www.mineralsday.eu)

The introductory speeches were followed by a Roundtable on the EIP RM. **Koen Coppenholle** (*CEO CEMBUREAU*) mentioned that each individual in Europe consumes around 460 tonnes of minerals over his/her lifetime. In order to improve industry-driven competitiveness, he stated that we need to look at the whole supply chain. Today, Europe is still missing the focus on a single integrated industrial policy, which should offer a more predictable and stable environment.

Jean-Luc Deleersnyder (*CEO Sibelco Group and member of the EIP RM HLSG*) highlighted that minerals are part of an industrial value chain. “To foster technological development and research in Europe, and allow Europe to continue to benefit from product added value, we need an extractive industry in Europe, as well as a fair level playing field for downstream industries.”

Corina Hebestreit (*Chair ETP SMR and member of the EIP RM HLSG*) expressed there is a need for more excellence and developing Europe into a smart innovation society by strengthening cooperation with the customers, the downstream industries. Additional institutional support is needed – the implementation of the research agenda goes not far enough.

Philippe Gothier (*Vice-President Aurubis Belgium, Sherpa on the EIP RM HLSG*) called for improving access to primary and secondary raw materials. “We need to give birth to new raw materials with coherent technical measures and an improved legislative framework. There are yet substantial quantities of resources and materials available in Europe.

Mr Guy Thiran (Eurometaux) concluded that we need to define today positive conditions for economic development to allow industry to help shape a sustainable future for Europe. He then opened the floor for discussions:

Vittorio Prodi MEP raised the issue of scarcity of natural resources and the right for every person to have fair access to them.

“Human beings tend to think from the past but they have to act for the future”, quoted **Jo Leinen MEP**, raising the need for common rules and a common understanding. “Today, we cope with different implementations in each of the 27 Member States.”

Sean Kelly MEP asked what was needed to rebuild the European economy, starting from the foundations: Could we substantially reduce European import bills? How much? Do we have raw materials in Europe? Do we not explore them because of legislation or because of what it would cost? What could EU policy makers do about it?

Luca Demicheli (EuroGeoSurveys): “raw materials are far from being finite. In Europe, there is a huge potential for exploration and extraction; it all depends on the existing mining technology and on the geological knowledge.” He also mentioned the need for sustainable exploitation including other media, such as groundwater and soils, in the greater monitoring and assessment picture, and referred to innovative mining techniques being researched under FP7 project I2Mine.

Corina Hebestreit (Euromines / ETP SMR) confirmed the considerable potential for extraction in Europe. “Self-sufficiency however, will not be achieved anytime soon; what can be improved are the ratios in terms of quantity and quality and making better use of what we have. For the extracting industries, access to land and permitting are central issues; a faster implementation would greatly improve competitiveness. And finally, current energy prices are inhibitive of competitiveness.”

Michelle Wyart-Remy (IMA-Europe): To tackle resource efficiency, a one size fits all solution is not applicable – what is important is coherence while acknowledging specificities, and a full value chain approach.

Philippe Gothier (Aurubis): Large quantities of copper metals are currently being exported to third countries; keeping them in Europe would help improve the trade balance.

Johannes Drielsma (Euromines): we stopped extracting due to societal choices. Can we afford this luxury in the future as more products are demanded by emerging economies and as we need more jobs?

Prof. Vladko Panayotov MEP: “It is not possible to foster unlimited development with the limited resources we have on our planet. We need to start changing the way we think about the resources we have at our disposal and to make a transition to a model of balanced development. We need to develop new advanced technologies and methods to recycle more efficiently waste materials and products. Key enabling technologies such as nanotechnologies can be instrumental in enabling more efficient recovery of precious metals from waste and thus in providing more raw materials for Europe. We are at a new age of scientific research: we need to step-up the investments in the development of new types of more energy- and resource-efficient models and technologies and to transform our scientific potential into real outputs. We need to step up as leaders, and to foster investments and cooperation in the field of scientific research, and we need to do this now.”

Paul Rübzig MEP concluded that communication is essential. We need to be careful not to lose competitiveness in Europe. We have to compete with countries where labour and energy is cheap, and where people do not pay the same taxes. There is a real risk that a lot of our industries will move there, and that we lose sectors and competitiveness in Europe. It is crucial that we start rethinking the re-industrialisation of Europe. This debates help to get a clearer picture.

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The European Minerals Day is a pan-European, bi-annual awareness raising event organised by the mineral raw materials industry, which receives personal support from both **Vice-President Antonio Tajani**, Commissioner responsible for Industrial Policy & Entrepreneurship, as well as from **Commissioner Janez Potocnik**, responsible for the Environment. *See video messages* at <http://www.mineralsday.eu/media>.

The European Minerals Day 2013 is organised by the European salt, metals, mines, industrial minerals producers, the European Geological Surveys and European Technology Platform for Sustainable Mineral Resources (ETP SMR), with the support from European trade union IndustriAll, the European Federation of Geologists (EFG), the European Bureau for Conservation and Development (EBCD), Cerame-Unie, ELO and UEPG.

See Image library at <http://www.ima-europe.eu/library/media/gallery/european-minerals-day-exhibition>