



Preface

European Commission Vice President Antonio Tajani

I would like to welcome the publication of the Austrian Mineral Resources Plan of the Federal Ministry of Economy, Family and Youth and more particularly of its methodological approach for safeguarding minerals in land use planning.

Europe's manufacturing and construction industries are heavily dependent on the non-energy extractive industries for essential raw materials. Indeed globalisation and demographic change increase the pressure on demand for raw materials and highlight the need for the EU industry to secure undistorted access to raw materials.

Its 2008 strategic raw materials initiative was confirmed and reinforced by the European Commission in February 2011. This strategic initiative sets out targeted measures to secure and improve access to raw materials both within the EU and globally. It identifies a range of factors which could potentially influence the competitiveness of industry. One of these factors relates to the difficulties which non-energy extractive industries sometimes face in having access to land. This has led to situations where individual plans and projects have come into conflict with competing land uses or broader societal interests, including nature conservation. Identifying and safeguarding mineral resources to meet the demand of society for raw materials, while taking into account other land uses is an essential part of a national land use policy for minerals. An appropriate national minerals policy and a land use planning policy ensure accessibility of mineral resources for the next generations. The Commission has confirmed that it is important for Member States to adopt and implement a land use planning policy for minerals in order to promote investment in extractive industries.

The recommendations were fully endorsed by the Council of Ministers in March 2011. They are also in line with the

recent report of the European Parliament which calls upon the Commission to support the development of strategic land use planning in all Member States in order to balance raw materials extraction with other land use demands.

In 2010, the European Commission presented a report which was prepared by an ad hoc group established under the Raw Materials Supply Group that assembles experts and stakeholders from various fields and EU Member States. This report highlights best practices on land use planning, permitting and improving geological knowledge. I was pleased to see that the Working Group has selected the Austrian Mineral Resources Plan as a "best practice" example of a national land use policy for minerals. This shows the leading role Austria is taking, in the implementation of actions relating to land use planning and more particularly in the development of a clear and transparent methodology for the identification of mineral resources for future generations. The example of Austria shows a sense of responsibility which could also be followed, in full respect of national competences in this area, by other Member States' authorities through the exchange of best practices.

I am confident that this publication will give the opportunity for an open discussion among stakeholders and the society at large on how best to ensure the future supply of raw materials for achieving a sustainable economy in the EU.

In conclusion, the Commission believes that innovative solutions are the only way to move forward in the future. This is why I am calling for Austria's support for a European Innovation Partnership on Raw Materials, which will address the increasing pressure on raw materials supply and will give the right impetus to actions and solutions to the entire value chain of raw materials.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Antonio Tajani".

Commissioner Antonio Tajani
European Commission

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