EU secures access to diversified, affordable, and sustainable supply of critical raw materials

Brussels, 23 May 2024

Today marks the entry into force of the European Critical Raw Materials Act, which aims at ensuring a diverse, secure, and sustainable supply of critical raw materials for the EU's industry. Secured access to critical raw materials is essential for strategic sectors including clean technologies, digital, defence and aerospace industries.

Europe now has a regulatory framework to strengthen domestic capacities and consolidate the sustainability and circularity of critical raw material supply chains in the EU, while continuing to pursue its diversification agenda. With this Act, the EU will strengthen domestic supply and reduce reliance on single suppliers. As highlighted in the aftermath of Covid-19 and Russia's invasion of Ukraine, strategic dependencies exposed the European industry to supply chain disruption risks.

The Act establishes benchmarks to increase capacities for extraction, processing, and recycling of critical raw materials in the EU and guide diversification efforts. In addition, it creates a framework to select and implement Strategic Projects, which can benefit from streamlined permitting and enabling conditions for access to finance; as well as sets out national requirements to develop exploration programmes in Europe. Moreover, the Regulation will improve the circularity and the efficient use of the critical raw materials by creating value chains for recycled critical raw materials. To ensure resilience of the supply chains, the Act allows the monitoring of critical raw materials supply chains, and information exchange and future coordination on strategic raw materials' stocks among Member States and large companies.

First Critical Raw Materials Board Meeting

Today, Executive Vice President Šefčovič opened the first meeting of the Critical Raw Materials Board. Commissioner Breton also addressed the High-Level representatives of the Critical Raw Materials Board. The Board will play a significant role in implementing the new policy framework, supporting the Commission in the selection and implementation of Strategic Projects, in exchanging on permitting procedures and circularity initiatives, and in facilitating international cooperation and Strategic Partnerships pertaining to raw materials. Representatives from all Member States and the Commission meet today to discuss the implementation of the Regulation.

Opening of the Call for Strategic Project Applications

At the occasion of the first meeting of the Board, the Commission has opened the Call for Strategic Projects Applications. The first cut-off date for the submission of applications is 22 August 2024 12:00 CET. Detailed information, including the Application form and the Guide for Applicants, is available on the Strategic Projects website.

Demand aggregation and matchmaking for strategic raw materials

The Commission has prolonged a survey addressed to companies and other relevant parties interested in pooling demand and connecting supply and demand for critical raw materials. The replies to the survey will contribute to the set-up of this new mechanism. The survey is now open for contributions until 31 May 2024.

Background

As part of the Green Deal Industry Plan, the Commission presented the proposal for the Critical Raw Materials Act on 16 March 2023. The measures build upon the 2023 criticality assessment, a foresight report focusing on strategic technologies, as well as the actions initiated under the 2020 Action Plan on critical raw materials.

For More Information

Questions and Answers
European Critical Raw Materials Act
Strategic Project Website
Demand Aggregation and Matchmaking Survey
Factsheet
Critical Raw Materials and Trade – Infographic
Actions on Four Critical Raw Materials - Infographic
Raw Materials Information System
JRC Foresight report
The Critical Raw Materials Act – video animation

IP/24/2748

Quotes:

"This first session of the Board is an important step in making the Critical Raw Materials Act a reality, just 14 months after it was first proposed by the Commission. So, we can safely say that we are serious in our ambitions and are not losing a single day. The Critical Raw Materials Act sets out ambitious targets to accelerate the production of primary and secondary raw materials, while meeting the highest social and environmental standards, as well as establishing strategic partnerships with third countries. The goal of this Board is to make sure that we are all working together in the same direction for full and speedy implementation of the Act."

Maroš Šefčovič, Executive Vice-President for European Green Deal, Interinstitutional Relations and Foresight - 23/05/2024

"Today, with the entry into force of the Critical Raw Materials Act, Europe starts a new industrial chapter. In a volatile geopolitical context, Europe is accelerating its efforts, domestically and in partnership with third countries, to achieve a secured, abundant and sustainable supply of raw materials vital for our climate, digital, defence and security needs. I have full confidence that the implementation of the Critical Raw Materials Act is on the right track, to quickly identify and support strategic projects, facilitate demand aggregation and increase the number of skilled workers in our new industrial projects in mining, refining and recycling of critical raw materials."

Thierry Breton, Commissioner for Internal Market - 23/05/2024

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