



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

PRESS RELEASE

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Raw materials sector: university day illustrates new work opportunities

The European Commission launched today in Sapienza University of Rome the first of a series of "Raw Materials University Days", to educate students about the potential for interesting careers in the raw materials sector and encourage them to take up studies in the relevant branches of science and engineering. Raw materials are very important for our modern society. Many innovative products that are now part of our daily lives, such as mobile phones, PCs, flat screens, and hybrid/electric cars, cannot be produced without the use of certain raw materials. Such raw materials are not only used to produce our modern consumer products, but they are also becoming increasingly important for emerging technologies and in environmentally-friendly energy applications. At least 30 million jobs in the EU depend upon access to raw materials.

European Commission Vice-President Antonio Tajani, responsible for Industry and Entrepreneurship and a leader of the Commission's High Level Steering Group on Raw Materials, commented in Rome: "*Innovation in raw materials – be it in mining, processing, recycling, or substitution – holds the key to future growth and jobs. We need our young people to take up the challenge help to create a sustainable supply and use of raw materials in the EU*".

Representatives from all parts of raw materials sector will meet students

Today's event in Sapienza University – held two days after the feast of Saint Barbara, the miners' patron – will include the launch of a [video on raw materials](#), a high level debate and open discussion, a workshop and exhibition.

The debate will include representatives from:

- **Research bodies:** Giovanni Lelli, High Commissioner, National Agency for New Technologies, Energy and Sustainable Economic Development (ENEA); Bernardo De Bernardinis, President of the Italian National Institute for Environmental Protection and Research (ISPRA); and Luca Demicheli, Secretary General, EuroGeoSurveys
- **Academia:** Giuseppe Bonifazi, Professor of Raw Materials Engineering at Sapienza University of Rome and the Interuniversity Consortium for GeoResources Engineering (CINIGeo)

Contacts :

[Carlo Corazza](#) (+32 2 295 17 52) [@ECspokesCorazza](#)

[Sara Tironi](#) (+32 2 299 04 03)

- **Industry:** Marco Sertorio, Chairman of the mining sector of the Italian Petroleum and Mining Industry Association (Assomineraria); Aurelio Regina, Vice-President of Confindustria; and Danilo Bonato, Director General, ReMedia
- **National government:** Franco Terlizese, Director General for Mineral and Energetic Resources, Ministry for Economic Development.

To allow participants to meet with companies working in the primary and secondary raw materials sectors a workshop will be held and the companies will also host exhibition stands.

Next steps

From 2014 until 2020, the Commission will organise a series of Raw Materials University Days four times per year, in different universities across Europe. To date, 16 universities from 12 countries have expressed interest in participating.

Background

The aim of the Raw Materials University Days is to highlight the benefits and attractiveness of work opportunities in the raw materials sectors. The target audience is young people who are about to choose their third level studies, as well as future university graduates who have already specialised in raw materials and other related fields.

Raw Materials Initiative

In 2011 the European Commission adopted a strategy document which sets out targeted measures to secure and improve access to raw materials for the EU. Based on a three-pillar approach, it aims at improving access to raw materials for Europe by:

1. Organising a fair and sustainable supply of raw materials from international markets
2. Fostering sustainable supply within the EU
3. Boosting resource efficiency and promote recycling

European Innovation Partnership on Raw Materials

The Raw Materials university days are organised in the framework of the communication strategy of the [European Innovation Partnership \(EIP\) on Raw Materials](#), which aims to promote sectorial competitiveness, sustainable growth and employment by drawing attention to the huge potential of European raw materials. Its objective is to bring Europe to the forefront in raw materials sectors while also mitigating the sector's negative environmental and social impacts.

Strategic Implementation Plan

In September 2013 the EIP released a [Strategic Implementation Plan](#) (SIP) to establish how we can act to ensure a sustainable supply of raw materials to the European economy and also make Europe a world leader in raw materials exploration, extraction, processing, recycling and substitution by 2020. The SIP outlines detailed actions which the parties involved - EU countries, companies, researchers and NGOs – can use to foster innovation in our raw materials value chain, as well as in the international arena. These include a wide range of initiatives such as new cost-effective exploration concepts and technologies, better recovery and recycling of demolition waste and finding substitutes for critical raw

materials such as the indium used in touch screen technologies. For more information on the SIP see [IP/13/863](#) and [MEMO/13/92](#)

It is clear that EU institution actions and funding alone will not be sufficient to ensure the success of the EIP on Raw Materials - despite the encouraging fact that raw materials have been identified as one of the most crucial societal challenges under the new Horizon 2020 funding programme. A large number of partners across the EU and the entire raw materials value chain must be involved in the [Strategic Implementation Plan](#) to ensure it succeeds. This is why yesterday at the [EIP's on Raw Materials' 2013 Annual Conference](#) an open [call for commitments](#) was launched to encourage stakeholders in the private, public and non-governmental sectors - including academia - to take actions to help achieve the EIP's objectives.

Horizon 2020

The importance of the issue of raw materials at EU level is clearly shown by its inclusion in the new EU funding program for research and innovation: "Horizon 2020". The first calls for the program, with a budget of around €70 billion for the next seven years, will be launched by the European Commission on the 11th of December. The projects in the field of raw materials that will be funded by this program will maximize the impact of the actions identified by the Partnership on Raw Materials.