

Brussels, 23 November 2023

Ethical Sourcing of Critical Raw Materials, a Key Aspect for Sustainability

Responsible Sourcing and Traceability of minerals are pillars of Europe's energy transition.

EU Raw Materials Week, Brussels — As a satellite event to the EU Raw Materials Week 2023, a workshop on *Responsible Sourcing and Traceability of Critical Raw Materials (CRM)* was organised by the International Raw Materials Observatory, the Initiative on Forensic Geology at the IUGS, and the European Federation of Geologists.

Driven by the energy transition and global security, future demand for critical geological raw materials will increase significantly in the near future and their specific criticality will be driven by scarcity and political, economic, technological, and natural factors. Armed conflicts, criminal activities, formation of alliances, climate change, civil unrest, labour issues, social acceptance of mining, and market demand will be the forces decision-makers need to address the criticality of these materials.

The workshop focused on the entire value chain of minerals Europe needs to make the energy transition. It attracted renowned speakers from industry, civil society, agencies, and law-enforcement entities, who addressed critical aspects along the whole resourcing value chains. Speakers Dr Fabiana Di Lorenzo, Mr Nathan Williams, Dr Jean-Claude Guillaneau, Dr Laurance Donnelly, Dr Christopher Keane, Dr Mieke Thierens and Dr Ludivine Wouters discussed the role of investors and industry in responsible sourcing, the challenges they face and solutions to the effective traceability of extracted minerals with modern technology and with crime-fighting methods with a view to achieve a balance between criticality and responsibility in mineral value-chains. The event sparked a dynamic and lively discussion among participants in the concluding part of the event.

Participants agreed that responsible sourcing is the only viable avenue for fair and sustainable resourcing of mineral raw materials for Europe to achieve the green energy transition. To this end, full efforts must be made to achieve transparent, traceable and ethics-based practices along the whole mineral value chains, from the first steps of an exploration project to the final products, such as smartphones, wind turbines, or electric vehicles.



Mieke Thierens, International Peace Information Service (IPIS), and Ludivine Wouters, Latitude Five.



With this event, the co-organising entities – the International Raw Materials Observatory, the Initiative on Forensic Geology at IUGS, and the European Federation of Geologists aim to start a broad regular discussion on green transition resourcing that will thoroughly address challenges of ethical, responsible, fair and sustainable resourcing of CRM on multiple levels and in wider societal areas. The organisers agreed to pursue opportunities at future international events to continue the discussion momentum.

About the organisers:

The **International Raw Materials Observatory (INTRAW)** is a not-for-profit international association, created to support worldwide cooperation on mineral raw materials research & innovation, education & outreach, industry & trade and recycling, and management & substitution of strategic raw materials (intraw.eu).

The **International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS) Initiative on Forensic Geology (IFG)** was established at UNESCO headquarters in Paris, France on 22 February 2011. The aim of the IUGS-IFG is, ‘to develop forensic geology internationally and promote its applications’ (geoforenses.com).

The **European Federation of Geologists (EFG)** is a professional organisation representing geoscientists all across Europe. Its main aims are to contribute to a safer and more sustainable use of the natural environment, to protect and inform the public and to promote more responsible exploitation of natural resources (eurogeologists.eu).

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