



EU Policymakers and EIT RawMaterials CEO say Raw Materials will be Critical for the Renewable Energy Transition Needed to Offset Reliance on Russia

BERLIN, May 23 – The RawMaterials Summit 2022, hosted by EIT RawMaterials, which is funded by the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT), a body of the European Union, opened today with EU leaders and EIT RawMaterials’ CEO, Bernd Schäfer, warning that Europe is at an epochal turning point to drive forward a full-scale, clean energy-driven industrial transformation. Following the REPowerEU Plan announced by the EU Commission last week, Schäfer, was both confident that the raw materials demands can be met, but warned that to meet the EU Green Deal objectives, the minerals and metals equation must be re-validated and redefined.

In his opening remarks, Schäfer stated that the impact of the Russian invasion of Ukraine has made it clear that now is the time to take full advantage of Europe’s single market. “The time has come to rapidly assemble highly innovative and sustainable supply chains between Member States and to diversify international supply sources. The concept of circularity must continue to be supported by policy leaders, industry and civil society and recycling must become a major pillar of society rather than a side stream,” Schäfer said.

Pointing to the International Energy Agency (IEA)’s estimate that the EU imported 155 billion cubic metres of natural gas from Russia in 2021, Schäfer said that “in order to replace this, Europe has no alternative but to produce vast amounts of renewable energy. The production of renewable energy requires wind turbines, photovoltaic panels, fuel cells, solar panels, heat pumps, batteries – all of which require raw materials, which available volumes are today off the chart”.

EU Vice-President Maroš Šefčovič for Interinstitutional Relations and Foresight says: “Given their importance, it is imperative that we step up our efforts to secure a stable, long-term and sustainable supply of critical raw materials for Europe’s economy. It will require all stakeholders to throw their weight behind these efforts. For our part, I am pleased to say that the REPowerEU communication - adopted by the Commission last week - laid out the preparation of a legislative proposal on critical raw materials to help Europe take the necessary action.”

EU Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth, Mariya Gabriel – within whose political mandate EIT is embedded – highlighted the role of the EIT RawMaterials community in driving innovation and empowering talent to develop a world-leading raw materials sector.



“The EIT RawMaterials Innovation Community is building a pan-European Innovation Ecosystem on raw materials that are essential for Europe’s open strategic autonomy. Raw materials are essential components of chips, windmills and in most industrial processes. Ensuring global leadership on innovation in raw material is the foundation for making Europe the leader in the new wave of deep tech innovation.”

In a written statement, Commissioner for Internal Market, Thierry Breton, added: “Our goal is to reduce dependency on raw materials. Otherwise, the green and digital transitions will not be possible. We have already perused an ambitious agenda in the area of raw materials. It combines more circularity and increased sustainable domestic production with reliable partnerships across the globe, which share our environmental and social standards. Now, we need to give a new impetus to this approach. With the REPowerEU Plan, the Commission announced that it will prepare a legislative proposal and intensify the work on the supply of critical raw materials. This is a signal of Europe being absolutely determined to defend its strategic interests.”

The renewed urgency brought about by the war in Ukraine was reiterated by Philippe Varin, Head of French Governmental Mission on Critical Materials, whose governmental task force is currently dealing with the impact of the Ukrainian war on metals supplies to industry.

“This topic is less visible than the energy challenge or the food one. But the supply of Titanium, Palladium, Nickel or Neon is a matter of concern. It seems that no significant short-term disruption of supply is anticipated in the current situation of sanctions or retro-sanctions. But the supply is hampered at least by huge logistics disruptions.”

Varin also highlighted the huge role electric vehicles play in the EU’s Fit For 55 objective and the related demand for raw materials - 70% of which are expected to come from outside Europe. To address the challenges for this industry Varin welcomes the EC intention to prepare a Raw Material legislative initiative, which should include incorporating related mining facilities into the taxonomy, the set up and the means to securely and quickly open new mines under a responsible mining European standard, and to develop a metals diplomacy with resource-rich countries.

EIT RawMaterials’ CEO Bernd Schäfer reiterated the importance of building a robust and resilient supply chain, with aligned industry standards and compliance requirements.

Europe’s first Rare Earth Magnets and Motors action plan was launched in 2021 by the European Raw Materials Alliance (ERMA), managed by EIT RawMaterials. The stakeholder process involved hundreds of industry partners.

“Europe proved its global power when it came to the vaccine production. Likewise Rare Earth Magnets and Motors supply chain represents one of the biggest investment opportunities of the



decade. Up until now, for example, we import 16,000 tonnes of rare earth permanent magnets from China, which is 98% of the EU market and yet Europe has the potential to supply at least 20% of Europe's permanent magnets needs by 2030," says Schäfer, EIT RawMaterials.

Bernd Schäfer also said that Europe must define a raw materials roadmap, which outlines the industry sector specific volume needs of minerals and metals that is needed, and by when.

"We need a new mentality in Europe, we must be very clear about strategic partners and, we must push harder for the right measures on the legislative side to achieve a level playing field. Lastly, we have to shorten permitting times drastically to enable important mining projects to be fast tracked."

To view the full programme, visit eitrmsummit.com/programme

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For more information

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About

EIT RawMaterials is the leading European raw materials partnership established in 2015 with the purpose to advance Europe's transition into a sustainable economy. EIT RawMaterials overarching mandate is to support securing the supply of critical raw materials to European industry by driving innovation, education and technology along the raw materials value chain. EIT RawMaterials builds on the world's largest network partners in raw and advanced materials – strong in large industry, academia and research presence, needed for innovation in the sector, and integrating start-ups and SMEs that play an important role as innovators, suppliers and customers to large industry actors. eitrawmaterials.eu

RawMaterials Summit now in its fourth year will take place at the BCC in Berlin from May 23-25. The Summit is the largest raw materials conference of its kind in Europe, attracting over 100 speakers, reaching over 1000 attendees from over 400 companies, who are all making great strides towards the building of a thriving green economy. Hosted by EIT RawMaterials, the Summit



provides unparalleled access to leaders of industry, government, NGOs, R&D, start-ups and education, providing invaluable connections to those transitioning to the greening of all aspects of supply chains.

The 2022 summit speakers range from Member State politicians, companies such as Rio Tinto, Anglo American, Airbus, Boliden and ERAMET, as well as investors such as BNP Paribas, and organisations such as the World Materials Forum and WWF. The Summit will also spotlight Europe's most promising start ups from the sector and entrepreneurs to showcase the disruptive ideas needed to produce a world leading raw materials sector in Europe.