

Innovative European partnership to stimulate responsible mineral trade

On 12 May, a number of EU member states, the European Commission, businesses and NGOs announced the launching of an initiative to set up the European Partnership for Responsible Minerals. The partners have decided to work together to support the socially responsible extraction of minerals, especially in conflict zones and other high-risk areas. Together they can make a difference on the ground in vulnerable regions and in the supply chains connecting EU businesses and consumers. ‘Legislation alone will not enable us to directly improve the situation of miners in conflict areas, but this public-private partnership will!’ according to Mr Rebergen, Director General of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The acting director general for Development Cooperation of the European Commission, Mr. Rudischhauser, director general for International Cooperation of the Netherlands’ Ministry of Foreign Affairs Mr. Christiaan Rebergen, a senior UK Government official, frontrunner companies Philips and INTEL, the Conflict-Free Sourcing Initiative and NGOs IPIS and Solidaridad all were present when a declaration of intent was signed and committed themselves to support the setting up of the **European Partnership for Responsible Minerals**. The aforementioned parties aim to have the partnership operational within six months and are inviting all interested parties to join and enforce our efforts in improving the sustainability of our minerals and metal supply chains.

During the Netherlands Presidency of the Council of the EU, talks are currently under way on a conflict mineral regulation aimed at breaking the link between conflict and mineral extraction. The partners in the European Partnership for Responsible Minerals support the regulation but believe that more action is needed to improve circumstances in and around the mines in conflict and high risk areas. They also want to further increase the sustainability of the supply chains connecting the EU to these mining areas. This public-private partnership has therefore been set up in parallel to the ongoing regulatory process, so as to encourage responsible mining by increasing demand in Europe and increasing supply from local mines. The partnership will invest in conflict and high risk mining areas to make mineral extraction sustainable. In this partnership businesses, NGOs and governments will exchange experiences on the responsible procurement of minerals and metals. The aim is to increase knowledge on and the application of due diligence in the supply chain, especially by small and medium enterprises (SMEs) along the entire supply chain.

The **European Partnership for Responsible Minerals** will be a unique European public-private partnership aimed at making mineral supply chains sustainable and making a difference on the ground in conflict and high risk mining areas and in the EU industry sourcing minerals. All partners are convinced of the added value of this multi-stakeholder initiative to support responsible sourcing of minerals and to promote the sustainable development of mining across the mineral supply chain.

We invite all parties that are interested to become part of the **European Partnership for Responsible Minerals** to get in contact with the parties already involved, mentioned hereunder.

A press release by:

- European Commission – Directorate General for Development Cooperation, The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office
- Conflict-Free Sourcing Initiative
- Philips, INTEL
- IPIS, Solidaridad

Note for editors:

- The commitment letter was signed prior to the Foreign Affairs Council meeting on development in Brussels on 12 May at the Permanent Representation of the Netherlands to the EU.