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## MINING INDUSTRY

### Minerals and non-energy extractive industries

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Minerals are raw materials essential for modern society. They are used to build roads and houses, and to produce cars, computers, and household appliances. The mining and quarrying industry which extracts these minerals is very important to industrial, social, and technological progress in the EU.

#### Division of non-energy extractive industries

This non-energy extractive industry is usually divided into three main sub-sectors, based on the different characteristics of the minerals, their use, and the downstream industries they supply:

- [Construction minerals](#)
- [Industrial minerals](#)
- [Metallic minerals](#)

#### Why the industry is important

- **EU Economy** – in 2006, the industry generated a turnover of about EUR 45 billion and provided about 295 000 jobs.
- **Downstream users** – the [construction](#), [chemicals](#), [automotive](#), [aerospace](#), [machinery](#), and equipment sectors all depend on raw materials. These sectors provide a total value added of about EUR 1.324 billion and employment for 30 million people.

#### Industrial minerals

Industrial minerals such as barytes, kaolin, or salt are extracted within the EU to supply a wide range of industries. For some minerals such as magnesite, fluorspar, kaolin, and potash, Europe is among the major global producers. More on [industrial minerals](#).






#### Metallic minerals

The EU metallic minerals sector produces a wide range of ores yielding metals or metallic substances. The EU is an important producer of chromium, copper, lead, silver, and zinc. In order to fully supply the EU metals industry however, most metallic minerals need to be imported. More on [metallic minerals](#).

## Construction minerals

Most common construction minerals are aggregates (sand, gravel, and crushed natural stone), various brick clays, gypsum, and natural ornamental or dimension stone. The demand for construction minerals is high. The sector mainly consists of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) operating over 20 000 extraction sites that supply local and regional markets. More on [construction minerals](#).

## Supporting information

- [National Minerals Policy Indicators](#)  (357 kB) - the report assesses how the policy impacts on the performance of the extractive sector and the development of well-managed mining projects;
- [Exchange of good practice for the sustainable supply of raw materials within the EU](#)  (1 MB) with [Annex](#)  (2 MB);
- [Minerals Planning Policies and Supply Practices in Europe](#)  (211 kB) - the study provides information on the different approaches to mineral planning policies and practices of EU countries;
- [Improving Framework Conditions for Extracting Minerals for EU: Exchanging best practise on land use planning, permitting and geological knowledge sharing](#)  (2 MB) ;
- [Recommendations on the framework conditions for the extraction of non-energy raw materials in the European Union" – Report of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Exchange of best practices on mineral policy and legal framework, information framework, land-use planning and permitting](#) was adopted by the Raw Materials Supply Group on 6 November 2014.

## Construction minerals

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Among the non-energy extractive industries, the construction minerals sector is the largest one. It has the highest tonnage of extracted minerals, the greatest number of companies and employees, and the largest turnover. Typical construction minerals are aggregates (sand, gravel, and crushed natural stone), various brick clays, gypsum, and natural ornamental or dimension stone. The demand for construction minerals is generally high. The sector mainly consists of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) operating over 20 000 extraction sites that supply local and regional markets.

Eurostat records data on construction minerals can be found under NACE codes CB14.1 and CB14.21.

## Competiveness and trade

- **Demand** - demand for aggregates, gypsum, and dimension stone is closely related to the level of new house building, maintenance, renovation, and civil engineering projects.
- **Aggregates** - Europe is self-sufficient in its aggregates production. Imports are limited with the exception of Belgium and the Netherlands.
- **Gypsum** - the EU is the largest producer of mined gypsum in the world, accounting for about 25% of the global total. Spain, France, and Germany are the biggest producers in the EU.
- **Natural stone** - approximately 35% of global natural stone production is in Europe, of which over 80% is in Italy, Greece, Spain, and Portugal. The sector has been facing increasing competition from countries such as China, India, and Brazil.


## Sustainability

- **Land management** – the extraction of construction minerals has an unavoidable impact on land use. Modern working methods, including progressive extraction and rehabilitation, strive to minimise the area of land being worked. Careful landscaping operations such as using trees can limit the visibility of sites.

- **Environmental impact** – the industry has an environmental impact through changes in groundwater flow patterns, loss of biodiversity, dust, and noise. Managing these impacts requires that activities are in line with legislation.
- **Industry initiatives** - industry has made large strides to improve its environmental performance, and companies aim to reconcile their activities with sustainable development and environmental concerns:
  - the European Aggregates Association UEPG has joined the [Countdown 2010 Initiative](#) of the World Conservation Union (IUCN) to contribute to halting the loss of biodiversity by 2010;
  - the International Council of Mining and Metals has produced guidelines for the mining industry to incorporate biodiversity considerations into corporate strategies and practices.

## Supporting documents

Almost all the European legislation affecting the industry was not developed with the specific requirements of the extractive industry as a key objective. The only policy communications developed specifically for the extractive industry are:

- [Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee on the Processing and exploitation of industrial and mining waste deposits in the European Union \(2011\)](#);
- [Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee on the Communication on 'Tackling the challenges in commodity markets and on raw materials' \(2011\)](#);
- [Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee on the Access to secondary raw materials \(2011\)](#)  (148 kB);
- [Communication on commodity markets and raw materials \(2011\)](#);
- [Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee on the Non-energy mining industry in Europe \(2009\)](#);
- [Staff Working Document: "Analysis of the competitiveness of the non-energy extractive industry in the EU" \(2007\)](#);
- [Directive 2006/21/EC on the management of waste from extractive industries](#) (which entered into force in 2008);
- [Directive 92/91/EEC concerning the minimum requirements for improving the safety and health protection of workers in the mineral-extracting industries through drilling](#);
- [Directive 92/104/EEC on the minimum requirements for improving the safety and health protection of workers in surface and underground mineral-extracting industries](#);
- [Communication on the Raw Materials Initiative - Meeting our critical needs for growth and jobs in Europe](#);
- [Staff Working Document accompanying the Communication](#).

## Contact

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# The European Single Market

The Single Market refers to the EU as one territory without any internal borders or other regulatory obstacles to the free movement of goods and services. A functioning Single Market stimulates competition and trade, improves efficiency, raises quality, and helps cut prices. The European Single Market is one of the EU's greatest achievements. It has fuelled economic growth and made the everyday life of European businesses and consumers easier.

### News




- 02/12/2015  
[Commission adopts ambitious new Circular Economy Package](#)
- 02/12/2015  
[Commissioners Bieńkowska and Cretu issue statement on public procurement](#)
- 20/11/2015  
[New EU procurement rules: Better quality, value for money, simplification and benefits for SMEs](#)

[More news](#)

## In the spotlight: The Single Market Strategy

On 28 October 2015, the European Commission presented a new Single Market Strategy to deliver a deeper and fairer Single Market that will benefit both consumers and businesses. In 2016, the Commission will take measures to:

- modernise our standards system
- strengthen the single market for goods
- reduce barriers in key sectors such as business services, construction and retail
- prevent discrimination against consumers based on nationality or place of residence
- strengthen preventive enforcement by reforming the notification procedure
- enable the balanced development of the collaborative economy.


The full Single Market Strategy and underlying analysis are now available. See the [communication](#)  (458 kB), [staff working document](#)  (2 MB), [press release](#), [fact sheet](#)  (266 kB) and [supporting economic analysis](#) for more information.

## The main objectives of the Single Market

The Commission's main objective is to improve the functioning of the Single Market by:

- providing a regulatory framework that fosters the [free movement of goods](#) and the [free movement of services](#), and enhances competitiveness;
- removing existing [barriers to intra-EU trade](#) and preventing the creation of new ones;
- promoting a business and consumer-friendly environment based on transparent, simple, and consistent rules offering legal certainty and clarity.

## What the Commission does:

- monitoring new legislation proposed by EU countries to ensure that it does not create unjustified [technical barriers to trade](#);
- working at [completing the single market](#) by tackling gaps in certain sectors, missing legislation, and administrative obstacles;
- applying the Treaty rules prohibiting quantitative restrictions ([Articles 34 to 36 TFEU](#) , 2MB);

- developing and applying common rules for placing industrial products on the EU market;
- monitoring the application of EU law and the [functioning of the Single Market](#).

## On this website

### Single Market for goods

The EU Single Market accounts for 500 million consumers and 21 million [small and medium-sized enterprises](#) (SMEs). Learn more about the building blocks of the single market, the New Approach legislation, harmonised and non-harmonised sectors, and the international dimension in the [Single market for goods](#) section.

### Single market for Services

Services are crucial to the Single Market. They account for over 70% of all economic activity in the EU and a similar proportion of its employment. EU companies have the freedom to establish themselves in other EU countries and the freedom to provide services in countries other than the one in which they are established. Learn more about the EU's Services Directive, the free movement of professionals, postal services, retail, and other topics in the [Single market for services](#) section.

### Standardisation

Standards are documents setting out requirements for specific items, materials, components, systems, or services. These voluntary technical specifications help reduce costs, improve safety, and enhance competition, and the acceptance of innovations. Learn more in the [Standardisation](#) section.

### Public procurement

Public procurement is the acquisition of goods and services by public authorities such as national, regional, or municipal governments. The EU works to ensure that public procurement is fair, competitive, and conducive to the Single Market. Learn more about EU rules for contracting authorities and other aspects in the [Public procurement](#) section.

# Industry

Industry is the backbone of the European economy, accounting for 80% of Europe's exports and private innovations, and providing high-skilled jobs for citizens. However, the recent economic crisis has led to a further decline in manufacturing to 15% of GDP.

## News

- 02/12/2015  
[Commission adopts ambitious new Circular Economy Package](#)
- 30/11/2015  
[Galileo Open Service Signal In Space Interface Control Document \(OS SIS ICD\), v1.2 released](#)
- 25/11/2015  
[These are the winners of the 2015 European Social Innovation Competition](#)

[More news](#)

## What the European Commission is doing

The Commission is working towards an '[industrial renaissance](#)' that requires the modernisation of Europe's industrial base across all industrial sectors.

Therefore EU [Industrial policy](#) aims to stimulate growth by:

- enhancing industrial [competitiveness](#) by implementing a range of measures and policy actions. Of particular importance are the [EU Competitiveness Report](#) and [Member State Competitiveness Report](#) - which assess competitiveness at EU and Member State level;
- promoting [innovation](#) through the [Horizon 2020](#) programme and targeted policy action to support high-potential sectors such as [Key Enabling](#) and digital technologies, [advanced manufacturing](#) and smart specialisation;
- generating Single Market policies and proposals of legislation on [protection and enforcement of industrial property rights](#) and coordinating the EU position and negotiations in the international intellectual property rights (IPR) system (namely at the World Intellectual Property Organization), as well as assisting innovators on how to effectively use IP rights, fundamental for ongoing global and increasingly knowledge-based competitiveness;
- promoting [sustainability](#) objectives for the European economy;
- emphasising the need for cooperation and coordination between the Commission and EU countries, as well as [international aspects](#);
- promoting [corporate social responsibility](#) in the EU and encouraging enterprises to adhere to international guidelines and principles.

# Entrepreneurship and Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)

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Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are the backbone of Europe's economy. They represent 99% of all businesses in the EU. In the past five years, they have created around 85% of new jobs and provided two-thirds of the total private sector employment in the EU. The European Commission considers SMEs and entrepreneurship as key to ensuring economic growth, innovation, job creation, and social integration in the EU.

## News

- 02/12/2015  
[Commission adopts ambitious new Circular Economy Package](#)
- 01/12/2015  
[Flash Eurobarometer on SMEs: Resource efficiency pays off](#)
- 01/12/2015  
[Business Planet: Copernicus brings down-to-earth opportunities for SMEs reaching for the stars](#)

[More news](#)

See the [SME definition](#).

## What the EU does for SMEs

### 1. Creates a business friendly environment

At the centre of the Commission's action is the [Small Business Act for Europe](#) (SBA) that provides a comprehensive SME policy for the EU and EU countries. The SBA promotes the 'Think Small First' principle and promotes entrepreneurial spirit among European citizens. More on a [business friendly environment](#).

### 2. Promotes entrepreneurship

The Commission promotes entrepreneurship through the [Entrepreneurship Action Plan](#), supports entrepreneurship education, and provides support tools for aspiring entrepreneurs. More on [promoting entrepreneurship](#).

### 3. Improves access to new markets and internationalisation

The Commission's priority is to ensure that enterprises can rely on a business friendly environment and make the most out of cross border activities, both within the EU Single Market and outside the EU. More on [SME internationalisation](#).

### 4. Facilitates access to finance

Access to finance is the most pressing issue for many small enterprises. The Commission works on improving the financing environment for SMEs and provides information on funding. The Late Payment Directive strengthens businesses' rights to prompt payment. More on [access to finance](#).

### 5. Supports SME Competitiveness and Innovation

Promoting [competitiveness](#) and [innovation](#) are key aspects of EU policy in relation to industry and enterprise, in particular for SMEs.

### 6. Provides key [support networks](#) and information for SMEs

- the [Your Europe Business Portal](#) is a practical guide to doing business in Europe. It provides entrepreneurs with information and interactive services that help them expand their business abroad;
- the [Enterprise Europe Network](#) helps SMEs and entrepreneurs access market information, overcome legal obstacles, and find potential business partners across Europe;
- the [SME Internationalisation Portal](#) provides information on foreign markets and helps European business internationalise their activities;
- the single [portal on Access to Finance](#) helps SMEs find finance supported by the EU.