

Question for written answer E-002602/2025
to the Commission
Rule 144
Maria Ohisalo (Verts/ALE)

Subject: Compliance with the EU's Extractive Waste Directive and the treatment of mining waste in Finland

In the EU, the management of waste from the extractive industries is governed by legislation based on the Extractive Waste Directive, under which Member States must ensure that extractive waste is managed without endangering human health and without using methods which could harm the environment, in particular water, air, soil, fauna and flora – also after mining has ceased¹.

In Finland, hazardous waste from mines is often dealt with inadequately and the long-term effects of mining waste are not properly assessed. For example, Terrafame's mine has produced huge areas of waste rock, which pose a risk of major accidents² – hazardous substances could leach into watercourses when it rains on the masses of waste rock³.

Extractive waste can be hazardous for the environment over hundreds of years. Although the masses of waste rock at Terrafame's mine are set to be covered in summer 2025, the plans for the safe treatment of mining waste once mining activities have ceased are inadequate, and in this respect are in breach of the EU's Extractive Waste Directive.

In addition, mines are increasingly being established in areas with fewer mineral deposits, meaning that mining generates more waste rock and waste in general and may not even be economically viable. This problem is a relevant one because the expansion of Terrafame's mine has been selected as a strategic project under the Critical Raw Materials Act⁴.

How will the Commission ensure that the Member States comply with the Extractive Waste Directive, especially after mining activities have ceased?

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¹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32006L0021>

² <https://yle.fi/a/74-20168383>

³ https://www.sll.fi/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/kaivosjateraportti_natunensll_2022.docx-1-1.pdf

⁴ https://single-market-economy.ec.europa.eu/sectors/raw-materials/areas-specific-interest/critical-raw-materials/strategic-projects-under-crma/selected-projects_en