

EN

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Answer given by Mr Síkela
on behalf of the European Commission
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To address illicit trafficking of raw materials the EU is stepping up efforts to promote the sustainable and responsible sourcing, production, and processing. The Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) are a tool in this regard, in line with the objectives of the EU's renewed Great Lakes Strategy¹. The MoU signed with Rwanda² is a further step and echoes the one the EU signed with the Democratic Republic of Congo³ in October 2023.

The MoU with Rwanda places particular emphasis on increased traceability and transparency, to fight against illegal trafficking of minerals. Rwanda's adhesion to the Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative (EITI)⁴ shall be an essential element for the implementation of other MoU components. In the framework of the MoU, the Commission is ready to support Rwanda's accession to the EITI.

The EU also complements the bilateral engagement with Rwanda on critical raw materials with its ongoing support to the Regional Certification Mechanism of the International Conference of the Great Lakes Region.

The EU is taking measures to ensure full application of the Due Diligence Directive⁵ and to support compliance with the obligations under the Conflict Minerals Regulation⁶. As an example, the EU is financing since 2018 the European Partnership for Responsible Minerals⁷, a multi-stakeholder partnership and accompanying measure to the Conflict Minerals Regulation. Responsible sourcing and alignment on environmental, social and governance standards constitute one of the five pillars along which all MoUs are structured.

¹ <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-6631-2023-INIT/en/pdf>

² <https://ec.europa.eu/docsroom/documents/58035>

³ https://single-market-economy.ec.europa.eu/publications/memorandum-understanding-eu-democratic-republic-congo-sustainable-raw-materials_en

⁴ <https://eiti.org/>

⁵ Directive (EU) 2024/1760 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 June 2024 on corporate sustainability due diligence and amending Directive (EU) 2019/1937 and Regulation (EU) 2023/2859, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2024/1760/oj/eng>

⁶ Regulation (EU) 2017/821 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 May 2017 laying down supply chain due diligence obligations for Union importers of tin, tantalum and tungsten, their ores, and gold originating from conflict-affected and high-risk areas, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2017/821/oj/eng>

⁷ <https://europeanpartnership-responsibleminerals.eu/>