

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000898/25
to the Commission
Thierry Mariani (PFE)
(4 March 2025)

Subject: Memorandum of Understanding between the EU and Rwanda

Since the signing of the memorandum of understanding between the European Union and Rwanda on critical raw materials, numerous independent reports and analyses have demonstrated its lack of reliable guarantees on mineral traceability. It is now clear that this agreement has not prevented the trade in minerals looted from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and that it proven to be a failure.

Furthermore, in its resolution of 13 February 2025 on the escalation of violence in the eastern DRC, the European explicitly called for the agreement to be terminated.

Against this backdrop, does the Commission intend to grant Parliament's request and cancel this agreement? If so, what will be the time frame?

Submitted: 4.3.2025

Answer given by Mr Sikela on behalf of the European Commission
(25 June 2025)

The EU-Rwanda memorandum of understanding (MoU) ⁽¹⁾ is a tool to help the EU address illicit trafficking and to promote a sustainable and responsible sourcing and processing of raw materials.

The MoU was negotiated by the Commission on the basis of a mandate by the Council of the EU and is in line with the EU's renewed Great Lakes Strategy ⁽²⁾.

The MoU has provided a platform to encourage Rwandan authorities to adhere to the Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative ⁽³⁾. Its cancellation would remove the basis for this engagement with Rwanda on improving transparency and traceability. The MoU and the Conflict Minerals Regulation ⁽⁴⁾ are coherent and have the potential to reinforce each other.

The main objective of the regulation is to ensure that EU importers of tin, tantalum, tungsten buy from responsible sources only, in line with the standards set by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development ⁽⁵⁾.

The EU has been financing the European Partnership for Responsible Minerals ⁽⁶⁾, an accompanying measure to the Conflict Minerals Regulation, while also aiming at improving mineral resources management.

The programme 'Peace and Security for Stability in the Great Lakes region' ⁽⁷⁾, which supports the implementation of a regional certification mechanism, also aims at reducing mineral resources impact on conflict.

The Commission takes note of the call expressed by the European Parliament in its plenary resolution of 13 February 2025 ⁽⁸⁾.

Following the Foreign Affairs Council meetings of 24 February and 17 March 2025, several measures have been taken, including the adoption of additional restrictive measures, the suspension of the EU security and defence consultations with Rwanda. The MoU regarding critical raw materials was put under review ⁽⁹⁾.

In line with the calls from African partners, the EU fully supports the mediation efforts aiming at ending the atrocities and finding a peaceful resolution to the conflict.

⁽¹⁾ <https://ec.europa.eu/docsroom/documents/58035>.

⁽²⁾ <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-6631-2023-INIT/en/pdf>.

⁽³⁾ <https://eiti.org/>.

⁽⁴⁾ Regulation (EU) 2017/821, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32017R0821>.

⁽⁵⁾ <https://mneguidelines.oecd.org/an-international-standard-oecd-due-diligence-guidance-for-responsible-mineral-supply-chains.htm>, https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/oecd-guidelines-for-multinational-enterprises-on-responsible-business-conduct_81f92357-en.html.

⁽⁶⁾ <https://europeanpartnership-responsibleminerals.eu/>.

⁽⁷⁾ Details of this programme are available at this link: <https://mirego.bi/applications/views/UE.php>.

⁽⁸⁾ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-10-2025-0020_EN.html.

⁽⁹⁾ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/fac/2025/02/24/>.