

EN

P-001239/2025

Answer given by Executive Vice-President Séjourné
on behalf of the European Commission
(30.6.2025)

The EU Strategic Projects adopted on 25 March 2025 as part of the Critical Raw Materials (CRM) Act¹ help ensure that European extraction, processing and recycling of strategic raw materials meet 10%, 40% and 25% of EU's demand by 2030. Independent experts assessed the applications against the criteria set in the Act, including environment, social and governance aspects. Should the Commission assess that a project no longer meets the criteria, the Commission could withdraw its status, taking into account the opinion of the CRM Board.

The Commission provided the CRM Board with its assessment of the applications and the Board issued an opinion agreeing with the proposed selection of projects. Strategic project promoters are required to update the Commission regularly on the progress of the project and of any changes affecting their fulfilment of the applicable criteria.

Strategic Projects in Natura 2000² sites are not *per se* prohibited. They must be screened and, where legally required, subject to an appropriate assessment in view of the site's conservation objectives. Competent national authorities can agree to the project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the site concerned. If, despite a negative assessment, and in the absence of alternative solutions, a project must be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, Member States must take all compensatory measures necessary to ensure the overall coherence of Natura 2000 and inform the Commission. If the site concerned hosts a priority habitat and/or a priority species, an opinion from the Commission may be required, in accordance with Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive³. The Commission has adopted guidance on this matter⁴.

¹ Regulation (EU) 2024/1252 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 April 2024 establishing a framework for ensuring a secure and sustainable supply of critical raw materials and amending Regulations (EU) No 168/2013, (EU) 2018/858, (EU) 2018/1724 and (EU) 2019/1020.

² https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/nature-and-biodiversity/natura-2000_en.

³ Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora.

⁴ https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/nature-and-biodiversity/natura-2000/permitting-procedure_en.