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**PRESS RELEASE**

## **European Minerals Day is happening**

- **Industry and environmental groups working together to protect and enhance biodiversity**
- **EU outlines strategy to protect access to raw materials**

Brussels, 13 May – At a press conference this morning, media was given an advance briefing on European Minerals Day which will take place across Europe from 15-17 May with an official Launch Ceremony on 14 May. Thousands of people will visit quarry and mine sites across Europe and will learn how essential minerals are to our everyday life. The central event which will be attended by Vice-President Verheugen, Commissioner for Enterprise and Industry will take place in the Czech Republic, coinciding with the country's presidency of the European Union.

European Minerals Day aims at raising awareness of the absolute importance of the minerals sector. Minerals are all around us. Our mobile phones contain over forty raw materials, our PCs, sixty. Our cars, houses and domestic appliances all contain minerals.

“The 2009 European Minerals Day is an excellent way to inform, educate and enthuse European citizens about the importance of the minerals sector in providing raw materials that are essential for so many everyday products. The sector is vital for Europe's competitiveness and its success is built on sound principles of sustainability and innovation,” said Commissioner Verheugen.

Whilst industrial minerals play a vital and valuable role in providing products that meet the needs of today's society, the way they are extracted from the earth may influence biodiversity. A key focus of this year's European Minerals Day will be to explain what the EU is doing to ensure raw materials supply is sustainable, and how industry and environmental groups are working together to protect and enhance biodiversity.

“The significance of raw materials to every industry and every aspect of life cannot be overstated. The construction, chemicals, automotive, aerospace and machinery sectors, which provide a total added value of € 1 324 billion and 30 million jobs all depend on access to raw materials,” said Thierry Salmona, IMA-Europe President. “I would like to welcome the thousands of people due to participate in European Minerals Day. This day allows us to present the good practices of our industry to the public and to create awareness of the importance of minerals in all our lives.”

The European Commission has also acknowledged the importance of minerals by launching the recent Raw Materials Initiative. This is also backed by the European Council which has underlined the need for "immediate, coherent and coordinated action across different policy areas to deal with raw material challenges".

Speaking about the raw materials initiative, Abraão Carvalho Head of Unit of DG Enterprise said: “The world is facing unprecedented challenges on access to raw materials. This is not a short term issue but a structural one linked to the emerging of the new economies. The EU is also highly dependent on imports of strategically important raw materials. The raw materials initiative will ensure access to raw materials, set the right framework conditions and boost resource efficiency and recycling.”

**ENDS..**

European Minerals Day is coordinated at European level by IMA-Europe, the European Industrial Minerals Association, UEPG, the European Aggregates Association, CEMBUREAU, the European Cement Association, and EuroGeoSurveys, the European Association of Geological Surveys in Europe and at Member State level by several trade associations and/or geological surveys.

The programme of events and list of participating companies can be viewed at [www.mineralsday.eu](http://www.mineralsday.eu).