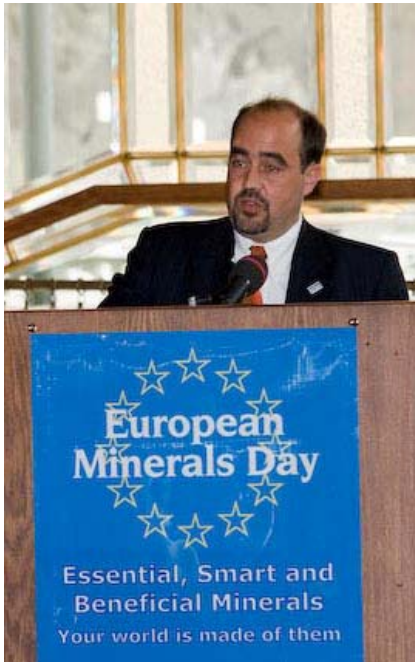




European Minerals Day – Launch Event
Prague, 14 May 2009

Speech delivered by **Sebastian Winkler**
Head of Countdown 2010



Distinguished Delegates, Dear Friends and
Colleagues,

It is a privilege to join you for the second European Minerals Days and in particular we are delighted that you have chosen biodiversity as the key theme for this year. With these events, you are ahead of the curve and already preparing for the UN International Year of Biodiversity in 2010.

The increased number of participating sites since last year indicates that your sector has something to show when it comes to biodiversity. This is even more respectable in these times of economic crisis. This crisis is aggravated by an energy, climate, biodiversity and food crisis also known as the 3 Fs crisis – food, fuel and finance. Every crisis brings

about new opportunities, but it also points to the fact that there is something rotten in the system. We cannot continue with business as usual. Europe and your sector can lead the way towards a green economy and we are on the right track with the 3 pillars of the EU Raw Material Initiative as indicated by Mr. Verheugen.

In light of this I will touch on your role and how through partnerships with the environmental sector we can jointly address these crises and move from words to action to bring about the much needed paradigm shift towards a green economy. I will briefly highlight the following four issues:

1. Biodiversity crisis

Biodiversity is the foundation for life on earth and is a key ingredient in addressing the 3 Fs crisis. Biodiversity requires proper stewardship if humanity wants a future on this planet. The TEEB Report (similar to the Stern Report) has found that the cost of inaction in the field of biodiversity will lead to a decrease of at least 6% of our annual global GDP. The recent health check of the EU Habitats and Birds Directive indicates that in Europe alone 50% of birds and 80% of habitats are in unfavorable conservation status.

2. Natura 2000

Natura 2000 sites are a key pillar in EU environmental legislation to reverse this trend of biodiversity loss and to sustain our future. It covers 17% of the EU terrestrial surface and much more still needs to be done for marine sites. With the launch of the EU Minerals Day focusing on biodiversity you are demonstrating that business is, and can play a leading role for biodiversity. The examples you show talk for themselves and I suggest you continue to explore the restoration of your sites as a contribution to society and biodiversity. The restoration sector today represents an economy amounting to almost USD 3 trillion annually and in Europe we can be a global leader in this green economy field providing green jobs. Your contribution to biodiversity is something you can be proud of and you should capitalize on it through events such as this one.

I often hear from your sector that neighborhoods around sites complain. Use the biodiversity story and move from NIMBY (Not in my Back Yard) to PIMBY (Please in My Back Yard). Quite a number of your sites are close to Natura 2000 sites and through restoration you are in fact building the initial stepping stones to allow climate change adaptation.

Natura 2000 is in fact not a network but rather a patchwork. You can help us create the necessary ecological corridors to allow species to migrate in light of climate change.

3. Green Infrastructure

This is still a recent concept - to equip our society and environments for climate change. The EC is now starting to work with ecologists and civil society to further develop this concept and I believe you can be a critical player in this dialogue of land use planning and management. Don't miss this opportunity to insert your agenda.

4. Role of partnerships

We have come a long way over the last number of decades moving from dialogue to partnerships - as demonstrated through the partnerships we have with IMA, UEPG or such as WWF has with Lafrage, CEMEX with Birdlife and IUCN with Holcim.

Let's build on this, as the minerals sector can not be an expert in all fields and biodiversity expertise is within our community we need to work together.

Finally, true competitiveness also comes from leading innovations in environmental technology and renewing the sector. With the EU Minerals Days your sector can demonstrate how it is cutting edge, innovative and overall essential and relevant for society. This will again attract the required new labor forces and make jobs attractive in your sector.

Both 2010 targets, namely (1) being the leading knowledge based economy by 2010 and (2) to halt biodiversity loss we, can only achieved through working together.

If it not now – when? If it is not us – who? If it is not together – how?

Thank you for your attention and we are in this together for a brighter future.