



## Circular Economy and the Critical Raw Materials Act



### OVERVIEW

This interactive session aimed to raise awareness about critical raw materials (CRMs) and the associated challenges from a circular economy point of view, explore how EU circular economy policy can contribute to EU objectives on CRMs, such as boosting the secondary raw materials market (e.g. list of strategic materials for the EU Green Deal), and showcase good practices in Europe employing circularity strategies to optimise resource efficiency for critical and strategic raw materials, as well as hear from the European Commission about how it is approaching these challenges.

The session was opened by **Ignacio Calleja**, Senior Advisor, EIT Raw Materials and featured keynote speeches by **Constantin Ciupagea**, Head of Unit, JRC, **Emmanuel Katrakis**, Secretary General, EURIC and **Chris Heron**, Eurometaux. **Constantin Ciupagea**, **Chris Heron**, **Emmanuel Katrakis** and **Antoine Oger**, Head of Global Challenges and SDGs Team, IEEP took part in the panel discussion. They covered topics such as recycling and recovery of CRMs, security of supply, the list of CRMs and the definition of "strategic", and prices and their impact on the market.

### CHALLENGES

- The EU needs to be less dependent on third countries for CRMs: these materials are scattered across the globe, meaning that the EU is at a disadvantage.
- The CRM Act will need to include clear actions and a definition of what constitutes "strategic".
- New legislation must be consistent with existing legislation, such as the waste framework legislation and chemical legislation, and market players must be able to anticipate future targets.
- The Member States need to build up strategic reserves of CRMs.
- With a view to recovery, standards should be mandatory for some electronics and shipment rules should prevent the EU's scrap being sent abroad.
- Pragmatic content targets are needed as it is paramount to establish a market for recovered materials.

- The list of CRMs is lengthy and needs to be geared to the EU's future needs.

### KEY MESSAGES

- Sustainable accessibility of CRMs is a cross-cutting issue for the energy, digital and green transitions.
- The EU has been slow to react to China's semi-monopoly of many CRMs, but Russia's invasion of Ukraine has forced it to take action.
- Recycling contributes to risk prevention in the supply chain, but there are a number of barriers: collection rates, the ability to recover CRMs, and technical and financial feasibility.
- Other parts of the world are very keen to get hold of the EU's scrap which is essentially an urban mine.
- Given the security of supply issues, priority must be given to resource efficiency and designing for reuse at end-of-life.
- If secondary products are more expensive than ones made using virgin materials, the market will not opt for them.