



**Statement by Ms. Keit PENTUS,
Estonian Minister of the Environment**
Ministerial Round Table 4

**„Creating an enabling environment for sustainable mining”
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Mr. Chairman,

I would like to align my statement with the statement of the European Union delivered by .

I would like to stress that a well-functioning mining sector is an essential prerequisite for sustainable development at all levels. Mining industry guarantees the basic mineral raw materials for production, and enables improvement of socio-economic conditions of a state.

Considering the significance of the mining sector in Estonia, I assure that good governance is the necessary precondition for decision-making on environmental, social and economic aspects. Implementation of good governance needs to be continuous and actively supported by stakeholders.

Our own experience shows that transparency, involvement of local communities and public access to the relevant information is essential for a successful mining policy. An environmental impact assessment is the main tool for proper consideration of environmental, social, economic and cultural aspects. Certain procedures are to be strictly followed to ensure the safety of people, property, the environment and sustainable use of all resources.

Estonia is convinced that increasing resource efficiency and reducing waste through modified patterns of production, together with reuse, recycling and converting waste into products, has a remarkable effect on sustainable mining and reducing its environmental impact.

In order to improve sustainable resource management, Estonia implements mineral resource usage tax as an economical instrument. Its purpose is to promote that mining companies continuously invest in best available technology and environmentally friendly mining methods as well as in efficient use of mineral resources.

This year Estonia approved the National Strategy of Construction Minerals, which further integrates the mining sector into national economy. Its other priority is to ensure the supply of local market with raw materials. An important goal is also to reduce the negative impact on environment. For example, one of its measures is to motivate companies to extract resources expeditiously, if it is economically sound, in order to reduce and shorten the effects of mining activities.

Management of environment and natural resources, as well as post mine transition period issues are of utmost importance. According to Estonian regulations mining companies have to reclaim the area disturbed by their activities before the expiration date of their mining licence. Several Estonian abandoned and orphan mines are afforested, which is an example of good practice currently implemented by the Estonian State Forest Management Centre.

Compared to the global level Estonia has no remarkable mineral resources. However, we have a resource – oil-shale – that is essential at national level, and will be of growing interest at global level. The Estonian oil-shale deposit is the largest commercially exploited and best-studied in the world, although there are huge similar formations elsewhere. We are ready to continue sharing our experience in this field.

In conclusion, I would like to confirm that integrated life-cycle approach, transparency of information and holistic planning are the key-words for Estonia in creating an enabling environment for sustainable mining.

Thank you for your attention!