

## PRESS RELEASE

### **An essential cooperation for environment, human rights and economy**

#### **EGS: A stronger partnership on raw materials between EU and Africa is now a need**

A better exploitation of African natural resources for the benefit of the environment across the continent, the human rights of its people and the economic growth of African countries.

It was the subject of the **High-Level Conference: EU-Africa Partnership on Raw Materials**, held today in Brussels by the European Commission, with the main theme of **“Translating Mineral Resources Wealth into Real Development for Africa”**: The event was attended by over 300 experts and scientists mainly from Africa and Europe, including **Antonio Tajani**, Vice-President of the European Commission and Commissioner for Industry and Entrepreneurship, **Mohamed Ibn Chambas**, Secretary General of the ACP (African, Caribbean and Pacific) Group of States and **Luca Demicheli**, Secretary General of EuroGeoSurveys, an organization of 33 European Geological Surveys.

Mr. Demicheli pointed out the urgency "to boost social welfare and development and enhance environmental protection in Africa by developing a geological knowledge base across the continent. The Geological Surveys of Europe (EuroGeoSurveys) are ready to work with the African countries towards this target, which would also make their governments more independent in the definition of more profitable mineral resources exploitation policies. It is essential to reinforce the role of geological surveys and, in particular, the Organisation of African Geological Surveys (OAGS). "

The geological knowledge base consists mostly of geological maps and other data sets, like geochemistry and geophysics, which are very important for the African countries, in order to take stock of their resources and attract investors. However it is also essential to provide practical training to young geologists, because without qualified public sector officer, African Countries will not be able to take informed decisions that are essential, adds Mr. Demicheli, "to ensure investors respect the environment and the rights of African people; something that today is not always done, since the mining methods can highly impact on ecosystems, wastes might not be stored according to international standards, and sometimes mining workers are exploited and deprived of rights, a problem that also involves a large number of children. In any case, informed and qualified African public officers certainly mean to get the most out of the commercial contracts, such as infrastructures for the citizens".

Cooperation is therefore an advantage for both parties, since European countries have a great need to import energy and raw materials, while the Africans have a need to make better use of their immense resources, in human, environmental and economic terms. From this point of view, Mr. Demicheli explains that most of the materials necessary to our development have a geological origin: through this science we can "identify and exploit sources of energy, from coal to natural gas and uranium, but also help identify alternative ones such as geothermal and hydropower, with a crucial role in the creation of a sustainable development model".

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