



Conclusions of the conference on the sustainable supply of aggregates in the European Union on 17th November 2017 in Tallinn, Estonia

Connecting Europe Facility funds with €22.4 billion will allow to develop high performing, sustainable and efficiently interconnected trans-European transport networks. EU Member States are nationally developing motorways, railways and airports to improve passenger safety, improve environmental standards and enable better connection of people. In addition, the EU Construction Industry builds European homes, offices, industrial facilities and transport infrastructure worth €93 billion and giving jobs to 18 million people. To meet that demand 2 700 million tons of aggregates are produced from 25 000 aggregates extraction sites by 16 000 companies around Europe. Roads, aqueducts, theatres and homes have been built from rocks and stones in Europe for more than 2000 years, high population density and ever stricter environmental standards, make supply of aggregates ever more challenging. To meet these challenges and enable the construction in Europe this Estonian EU Presidency Conference addressing the “Sustainable Supply of Aggregates in EU” draws the following conclusions:

1. Member states should develop regional or national aggregates utilization plans that would prioritize supply and access to aggregates given demand projections from sites that allow for acceptable environmental impact and not too long transportation routes, adjusted to means of transport. To enable developing aggregates utilization plans, easily accessible aggregates reserves and resources databases should be developed.
2. A permitting system should allow efficient and timely permits, to ensure the sustainable supply of aggregates, applying a reasonably balanced approach for environment, social aspects and the economy. When granting permits, duration of permits should always be in line with the lifetime of the deposit, as sustainability requires extraction of the total deposit.
3. Construction and demolition waste should be recycled where technically, environmentally and economically feasible. The available amount of recycled aggregates of the appropriate quality, would not allow for the complete substitution of natural aggregates. At the same time recycling of all construction and demolition waste would potentially cover up to fifth of the current total demand of aggregates. National studies on potential of recycling of demolition materials and mining waste should be carried out to optimize extraction.
4. Rehabilitation of quarries is the responsibility of the extraction permit owners. Rehabilitation mechanisms of member states should ensure that every aggregates extraction site in Europe is restored. Financial mechanisms should be developed to ensure rehabilitation in case that the extraction permit owner is insolvent. The establishment of the rehabilitation requirements will consider the area and the surrounding landscape as a whole. The development of the rehabilitation requirements will involve local residents and take into account regional development plans, the trends specified in the spatial plans and biodiversity considerations. Rehabilitation should take place during extraction. The best practices for rehabilitation of land impacted by extraction will be identified and promoted.