

## Land Use and the Aggregates Industry

### KEY MESSAGES

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- ▶ UEPG, the European Aggregates Association, believes that planning policies and permitting procedures need to be clearly addressed to ensure the sustainable supply of aggregates in Europe, with continued access to resources close to the major markets. Aggregates can be extracted only where geological resources exist, so those land areas need to be designated to take into account future aggregates extraction. Ineffective planning policies or permitting procedures for such areas can lead to sterilization of the resources or other land-uses that are inefficient for society.
- ▶ The Aggregates Industry addresses water management, landscaping and soil management during extraction of aggregates through best available technologies and exchange of good practice. Worked-out quarries and pits are restored after use or converted to other uses beneficial to the local community. The network of aggregates sites (24,000 quarries and pits) actually contributes to the development of green infrastructure, creating “stepping stones” for biodiversity.
- ▶ The Aggregates Industry has therefore only a limited and temporary impact on land-use. The land-use footprint of the aggregates industry during extraction makes up less than 0.1% of the total surface of the EU. Aggregates extraction being a temporary activity, land is returned to nature or diverse community uses typically after 10-50 years of extraction.

Therefore the Aggregates Industry has very specific needs in respect of (see links to associated position papers):

- ▶ **Resource Efficiency:** Maximum resource use efficiency is achieved through good aggregates planning policies and efficient permitting systems providing access to raw materials resources close to the major markets, also by taking into account the quality of the deposits.
- ▶ **Transport Efficiency:** Maximum transport efficiency is achieved through strategic planning of rail and water networks so that more aggregates may in future be transported by these media. Road transport is optimised through enhanced access to resources as close as possible to the major markets.
- ▶ **Ecological Offsets:** Rehabilitation is the best method for the industry to restore biodiversity. The Industry supports the principle that there should be no net loss of biodiversity. Restoration of biodiversity should be achieved both through actions of mitigation and progressive restoration during operations and final restoration.
- ▶ **Water Management:** The Aggregates Industry has a proven record of best practices in water management and there are mechanisms of water management and control at all project stages.
- ▶ **Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA):** The Industry needs:
  - A ‘simplified or lightweight procedure’ for middle-tier projects.
  - A one-stop shop EIA procedure in the Members States, better and more timely adherence to the procedures defined in the EIA Directive itself.
  - Better coordination between the EIA and other EU directives and policies, particularly with SIA (Strategic Impact Assessments) and AA (Appropriate Assessments), the overlapping complexities of which are described in the Natura 2000 Guidelines.



Union Européenne des Producteurs de Granulats  
Europäischer Gesteinsverband  
European Aggregates Association

## BACKGROUND

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Aggregates are crushed rock, sand and gravel, used to construct Europe's essential infrastructure including homes, roads, railways, schools and hospitals. Some 3 billion tonnes per year of aggregates are produced by 14,000 companies (the majority of which are SMEs) on 24,000 extraction sites (quarries and pits), providing jobs for more than 250,000 direct and indirect employees. UEPG now represents national aggregates associations and producers in 31 European countries.