

UEPG Key Messages on the EU Roadmap: *Towards a resource-efficient Europe*

UEPG KEY MESSAGES:

- ▶ UEPG strongly supports the Commission's resource efficiency objectives through sustainable and efficient production of aggregates, thus supplying an essential building material for building and maintaining the infrastructure of Europe. Maximum resource efficiency is achieved through good aggregates planning policies and efficient permitting systems providing access to raw materials resources close to the major markets, thereby also optimising transport efficiency, together with minimisation of over-ordering by customers and effective end-use designs that remove any wastage.
- ▶ The industry embraces modern technology to ensure the most efficient extraction, crushing and screening, minimising its land footprint, minimising environmental impact including water usage, preserving and fostering biodiversity in both operating and restored quarries and pits, many of which are in or near Natura 2000 areas. The industry provides local employment, aims for the highest standards of employee health and safety, and regularly liaises with its neighbours and local communities.
- ▶ UEPG supports recycling of construction and demolition (C&D) materials to greatest extent that is technically, environmentally and economically viable, thus reducing usage of natural aggregates, while simultaneously minimising the amount of C&D materials going to be landfill. Several countries already recycle all suitable C&D materials, and the resulting recycled aggregates typically comprise 15-25% of those national markets. Other countries are developing recycling strategies, though progress is often hindered through unnecessary permitting bureaucracy and unclear end-of-waste criteria.
- ▶ UEPG considers taxation on primary materials extraction or resource use is not an appropriate tool to increase resource efficiency. In the current financially difficult climate in Europe, any positive stimuli will greatly assist the aggregates industry, while a further tax burden would be entirely the wrong signal for early recovery.

BACKGROUND

Aggregates are crushed rock, sand and gravel, used to construct Europe's essential infrastructure including homes, roads, railways, schools and hospitals. Extraction of aggregates is a purely physical (crushing and screening) process, with no chemical treatment or hazardous wastes. In Europe, some 3 billion tonnes per year of aggregates are produced by 14,000 companies (the majority of which are SMEs) in 24,000 extraction sites, providing jobs for more than 250,000 direct and indirect employees. UEPG now represents national aggregates associations and producers in 31 European countries, see www.uepg.eu.



Union Européenne des Producteurs de Granulats
Europäischer Gesteinsverband
European Aggregates Association

Aggregates are used in building houses, apartments, roads, schools, hospitals, in fact all types of infrastructure essential to modern society. The average consumption of aggregates per capita across Europe in 2010 was 5.5 tonnes/capita, down from 7 tonnes/capita in 2007. Aggregates demand in Europe has dropped by 20% since 2007, demonstrating the very negative impact of the financial crisis. A return to economic growth across Europe is essential to reviving the aggregates industry and maintaining its jobs.

The EU Roadmap to a resource-efficient Europe covers a range of tools and areas impacting on the aggregates industry:

Raw Materials Strategy & Access to Local Resources

The aggregates industry is experiencing increasing difficulties in accessing resources adjacent to local markets, these difficulties being caused by poor planning and permitting, competing land uses as well as unfounded NIMBY effects. These challenges need to be systematically and openly addressed in national, regional and local plans involving all stakeholders to ensure the future sustainable supply of aggregates.

Ecosystem Services & Biodiversity

Aggregates Producers have been recognised for their valuable contribution to biodiversity during and after extraction. Quarries and sand pits are often create new habitats and save havens for endangered species. The aggregates industry cooperates with NGOs at EU, national and regional level.

Water Management

The European Aggregates Industry minimises water usage through on-site recycling, as well as using industry good practice when working near or in surface and groundwater. The risk of water pollution from aggregates sites is minimal since no chemical processing is involved.

Stewardship of Air, Land and Soil

UEPG addresses dust emission to air, landscaping and soil management 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.

Marine resources

Marine Aggregates Producers can deliver aggregates into major urban and coastal areas playing a front-line role in replenishing beaches and protecting the coastline and coastal communities. A typical dredger will deliver the equivalent of 250, 20-tonne lorry loads offering a transport-efficient solution.

FACT & FIGURES

- ▶ Recycling of C&D materials now covers only 6% of the European demand (for aggregates) and the future potential is considered to be low. Sources UEPG and: [European Environment Agency](#)
- ▶ The land-use footprint of the aggregates industry makes less than 0.1% of the total surface of the EU. The industry restores/reinstates progressively, as and where practicable. Source: UEPG
- ▶ Aggregates production requires less than 10kWh/tonne of electrical energy and leads to less than 10kg of CO2 emission per tonne. The bigger impact can be caused by transport. Thus, local access to resources is key. Source: UEPG