



8 June 2010

**INTERVIEW WITH MEP MICHAEL THEURER****HOSTING BUSINESSEUROPE'S BREAKFAST MEETING ON RAW MATERIALS****9 JUNE 2010****BUSINESSEUROPE - Secure and affordable access to raw materials is vital for industrial competitiveness in the EU. What can the European Parliament do to promote it?**

**Michael Theurer** - In May 2008, the European Parliament adopted a resolution on trade in raw materials and commodities by a large majority. This report and other non-legislative efforts since then highlight what I as a Member of the European Parliament together with my colleagues am concerned about: we are anxious about the implications of an increasing demand for raw materials on world markets; we are worried about the trend towards restricting free access to raw materials in third countries by trade-

distorting measures and we note with concern that the European Union does not provide an integrated, coherent, cross-policy strategy to face the challenges for the competitiveness of its economy due to enhanced competition in access to raw materials.

The European Parliament has the responsibility to ensure that the European Commission and the EU as a whole approach these challenges as soon as possible in order to safeguard the competitiveness of our European industry.

**How should the EU counter the proliferation in export restrictions?**

The EU should tackle the illegal trade barriers most harmful to the EU economy and industry by pursuing three objectives:

- 1) Reaching out to third countries to exchange views and analysis in order to favour a coordinated approach amongst all relevant actors and in order to achieve a multilateral elimination of trade-distorting measures. The issue of free and fair access to raw material markets should therefore be of central importance in the framework of the World Trade Organization (WTO).



- 2) Using all current and future bilateral negotiations on free trade agreements or WTO accessions to negotiate non-discriminatory access to raw material markets.
- 3) Promoting investment in research and development in technologies for the recycling of raw materials and the efficient and economic use of raw materials.

**How can other EU policies, such as external relations or development policy, be used to facilitate supply of raw materials?**

In order to most competently implement an EU "raw materials diplomacy" better and more effective coordination and coherence among EU external policies (external relations, trade, and development) is needed. This means coordination at EU level and the creation of long-term strategic partnerships and policy dialogues with third partner countries, emerging economies and their regional groupings, following "mutual interest" principles. After all, the EU has a lot to offer to those countries which are rich in raw materials to secure a sustainable cooperation: research and technology exchange, development aid and access to one of the world's greatest markets.

**Is the EU raw materials initiative the right policy instrument to address access to raw materials?**

The EU raw materials initiative is a first step but has to lead to practical policy results in the end. I therefore call on the European Commission to present a coherent cross-policy strategy by the end of 2010 in order to help facing the challenges in the competitiveness of our industry due to enhanced competition in access to raw materials. A comprehensive approach to this subject is badly needed.

Instead of individual member states pursuing their respective raw materials policy, for example by establishing their own national raw materials agencies, we should combine our efforts on a European level. Individual member states do not have sufficient clout to go against actors like China or Russia. A raw materials strategy therefore has to be conducted on a European level on behalf of all member states and their industry.

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