

To: EEAS – EURCA.EAST.1  
And: MARE

Stockholm 01 December 2020

## **Roadmap regarding Arctic matters and the Northern Dimension – Update of the EU Arctic Policy (Ref. Ares (2020)6292991 – 03/11/2020)**

Svemin is the national industry association for mines and for mineral and metal producers in Sweden, representing around 50 companies which employ about 13,000 people in production, exploration and mining.

The aim of the initiative to update the EU Arctic Policy is to take full account of Arctic-relevant priorities within the EU's ambitions under the European Green Deal. The Swedish mining and minerals industry endorse this aim. With this roadmap, we take the opportunity to contribute with relevant information to the EEAS' and DG MARE's attention since Sweden is one of the Arctic states, and since Sweden is also one of the EU's most significant mining countries and with the majority of the operating mines located in the Arctic region.

A crucial part of the context of the New Green Deal is that raw materials, and not least metals, are recognized as key to manage the technological transition to a climate neutral and sustainable society," *Access to resources is also a strategic security question for Europe's ambition to deliver the Green Deal. Ensuring the supply of sustainable raw materials, in particular of critical raw materials necessary for clean technologies, digital, space and defence applications, by diversifying supply from both primary and secondary sources, is therefore one of the pre-requisites to make this transition happen.*"<sup>1</sup>

The Swedish mining industry finds that it is of great importance with a close collaboration between all relevant actors (European Commission, Member States and stakeholders including industry) to adapt a sound and harmonized application of the different policies to be able to meet the objectives of the European Green Deal. We underline the importance of policy coherence, not only including the Arctic Policy and environmental policies like the Biodiversity Strategy 2030 and the Zero Pollution Action Plan, but also other related policies like the Industrial Strategy and the list of Critical Raw Materials identified by the Commission and supplemented by an action plan to secure access to critical raw materials. Raw materials are crucial to Europe's economy and reliable and unhindered access to certain raw materials is a growing concern within the EU and across the globe. These different policies must be coherent, and they must be coherent with European legislation, making sure that conflicting interests are taken care of with deepest consideration.

The parts of Arctic policy that are most important to the Swedish mining industry concern indigenous peoples, climate change and biodiversity.

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<sup>1</sup> Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions; The European Green Deal.

## **Climate change and environmental protection**

The Swedish mining and minerals industry have already started to make big investments and commitments to become carbon neutral, and to reduce the climate and the environmental impacts from its operations. Digitalization, automation and electrification of the mining processes are part of the transformation that is currently ongoing to meet the new requirements on safety and climate-neutral processes.

To emphasize the seriousness of the ambitions in the Swedish mining industry we would like to highlight that last week, the Swedish mining company LKAB launched its initiative to create a new world standard for mining, producing carbon dioxide-free sponge iron with hydrogen technology, and to extract critical minerals from mining waste.<sup>2</sup> The strategy will require massive investments of around 10 – 20 billion SEK a year during a period of about 15 – 20 years for LKAB alone. This unique initiative is linked to the roadmap for a competitive and fossil-free mining and minerals industry, which expresses the united ambitions in the industry that the Swedish mining and minerals industry submitted to the Swedish government in 2018.

Mining inevitably brings a footprint from its land use. The Swedish mining and minerals industry work constantly to reduce this footprint. We are very proud to inform that the Swedish mining industry recently launched a road map for increased biodiversity, available in English at Svemin's webpage.<sup>3</sup> The road map is based on the mitigation hierarchy, to avoid, minimize, restore and compensate for the impact on biodiversity. The roadmap has a strongly stated goal that the Swedish mining and minerals industry by 2030 shall contribute to increased biodiversity in all the regions where mining and minerals exploration and extraction are ongoing. As far as we know, we are the first industry, not only in Sweden but also internationally, that has publicly committed to such an objective for biodiversity improvements. Feel free to share it and inspire others.

## **Socio-economic aspects**

In Sweden, most of the operating mines are situated in the Arctic region, often operating in sparsely populated areas. Since the mining industry by nature is site-specific to where mineral deposits can be extracted, existing mines create long-term stable conditions for the surrounding communities. The Swedish mines are creating jobs in areas where it otherwise can be difficult to find work opportunities, thereby being of great local and regional socio-economic relevance. Additionally, the Swedish mining industry are frontrunners in developing world leading mining technology, with heavy investments in research and innovation. From a socio-economic perspective, the mining industry to a large extent becomes a backbone for the societies where it is established.

A large proportion of Sweden's well-known mineral deposits are located in areas designated for reindeer husbandry, which is a part of the Sámi culture and livelihood as indigenous people. In Sweden, the practice of both reindeer husbandry and mineral extraction are documented dating back to prehistoric times. Access to land is of crucial importance to both mining and reindeer husbandry. Traditional reindeer husbandry requires land that stretches from the coast in the east to the mountain areas in the west and that are geographically connected to meet the need for functionality for the reindeers. However, such functionality can be impacted by an aggregated pressure stemming from various forms of land use and not only mining. The Swedish mining industry is working actively to establish well-functioning and appropriate ways of co-existence, built on trust and mutual understanding to achieve good conditions both for reindeer husbandry and the

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.lkab.com/en/about-lkab/lkab-in-brief/strategy-and-goals/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.svemin.se/en/news/news/roadmap-biological-diversity/>

fulfillment of indigenous rights, and for the mining industry. This work is far from finished, but at least it is underway, and the hope is that the outcome will be functional and respected by all concerned parties.

## **Concluding remarks on the update of the EU Arctic Policy**

The Swedish mining and minerals industry operate under high environmental requirements and supplies metals and minerals to important value chains. The examples described above of the ongoing work clearly shows that the Swedish mining industry is well aware of its responsibility and carries it with great respect, which in many ways contributes to the foundation for a safe, stable, sustainable and prosperous Arctic region in Sweden and in other countries. As much as we endorse the aim of the Green Deal, we want to underline that some of the challenges that are specific for the Arctic region cannot be governed by the EU without due respect for its particular nature and for the need of flexibility for the Member States.

Being an industry with long term experience of operating in the heart of the Arctic region, the Swedish mining industry is keen on being part of upcoming consultations, networks and stakeholder involvements as we can share knowledge that is important for the setting of the regulatory framework.

With best regards,

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