



“Linking raw materials and resource efficiency – what SMEs contribute, fear and expect”

Organised as part of European SME Week 2011, the **Nickel Institute** supported the public debate on 23rd November in the European Parliament on the contributions, fears and expectations of SMEs to the ongoing policy discussion on raw materials and resource efficiency.



Hosted by **Member of the European Parliament Dr Paul Rübige** in co-operation with the **Nickel Institute** and the UK Surface Engineering Association (UK SEA), the event focused on the challenges facing SMEs in the current EU and global discussions on these important issues. In particular, the event highlighted the importance of linking the discussions on raw materials and resource efficiency, as well as the high level debates on other related issues such as green transport, energy efficiency and REACH in order to ensure parity of goals and outcomes.



Opening the debate, **MEP Rübige** called for a “win-win” approach to the resource efficiency/raw materials debates both for industry and consumer, one that addresses the environment, societal challenges and competition issues. He urged all parties to get proactive and creative and not wait to see what the rest of the world does.

Participating in the event, **President of the Nickel Institute Dr Kevin Bradley** called for a “balanced and realistic resource efficiency road map, one that takes into account the needs of all interests, is based on latest research, applies true life cycle thinking, is aligned with ongoing work in related areas and sets goals that are both realistic and achievable”.



Representing the SME sector, **Dave Elliot, CEO Surface Engineering Association, UK** highlighted the everyday function of surface coating materials and the contribution of these materials to a wide range of industry sectors. He cautioned against over-regulation that would drive industry outside Europe. *“We operate in a global market, so we need global solutions”*, he concluded. **Georg Rath, CEO of the Rath Group, Austria** likewise called for solutions that address the whole picture and don’t simply focus on single issues such as REACH. Furthermore, Mr. Rath underlined the point that although the ceramic industry is an energy-intensive industry, the customer has a longer life time for their products in return.



European Commission **Head of Unit, Metals, Minerals, Raw Materials, DG Enterprise Abraao de Carvalho**, endorsing this global approach, invited all stakeholders to discuss openly the relevant issues, for example, in the context of the Innovation Partnership on Raw Materials. **Ms Carina Vopel, Head of Unit, Chief economist, Impact Assessment & Evaluation, DG Environment** said that leadership on resource efficiency had to come from business. The Commission’s initiative on resource efficiency was a starting point, and encouraged “front runner” companies to shape the program and come up with ideas for how to move forward.

Coordinated by the European Commission, the annual European SME Week aims to promote small and medium enterprises across Europe by providing a platform for best practices of SME-related and hosted events throughout Europe.

The Nickel Institute views on Resource Efficiency can be found in the [Position Statement Section of the Nickel Institute web site](#) in a [Position Paper on Resource Efficiency](#) which was updated in August 2011 in view of the upcoming release of the Resource Efficiency Roadmap. Further Information: Mr Mark Mistry, Tel: +32.(0)2.290.32.08, mmistry@nickelinstitute.org

The Nickel Institute is a non profit organization that represents the interests of 27 companies which together produce more than 75% of the world’s annual nickel output. We promote on behalf of our members the production, use and re-use (through recycling) of nickel in a socially and environmental responsible manner.