

## ***Mineral Meltdown, not Economic Meltdown, says ProMine***

In these times of economic downturn, it is encouraging to find a positive response to the situation, an industry looking ahead with vigor and confidence. The European Mining Industry is doing just that. Funded largely by the EU under the Seventh Framework Programme, **ProMine** “Nano-particle products from new mineral resources in Europe” a groundbreaking research and development initiative, will revitalize the industry, and foster new growth across the Union. The project will be developing nano-particle products from new European mineral resources, and is coordinated by the Geological Survey of Finland (GTK). ProMine will be bringing together a consortium of 27 partners, from Finland, France, Germany, Sweden, Poland, Greece, the UK, Netherlands, Spain, Portugal and Malta, all of whom will be gathering for the project launch in Espoo, Finland on the 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> May.

**ProMine** will produce a cutting edge web-based information system, an invaluable tool for strategic forward planning’ says Prof. Gabor Gaál, Project Scientific Coordinator of GTK, adding ‘we are looking at economic benefits topping 100 billion Euros, with new resources and processes being partnered by new product development, right through to end user testing. An example is nano-silicas, which would be used in the production of a new range of coatings for ink jet papers. This added value component will have far reaching benefits for balance sheets Europewide, and will lead to much needed job creation within the Union’.

Highlighting its association with European Minerals Day (EMD), the **ProMine** launch will take place in tandem with the Czech EMD event in May. The link between the projects goes beyond mineral resources, however, with **ProMine** reflecting EMD’s current focus on biodiversity and sustainability. By placing these considerations at the heart of the project, **ProMine** shows the mining industry is moving with the times and appreciates that these concerns are inextricably linked with long term economic viability.

To reduce environmental impact, **ProMine** will be developing innovative methods of extraction, and reducing processing wastes by 10 to 20%. Waste products themselves will be utilized as raw materials, and new processes will work towards zero waste status. This will revolutionize the industry, addressing the primary concerns of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, both in terms of resource supply and good practice.

In addition to enhanced job security, local communities will be actively involved through the consultative process embodied in **ProMine’s** objectives. Throughout the project, community views will be considered, reflecting **ProMine’s** firm commitment to ensuring the funds will reap far reaching and sustainable benefits, both economically and socially.

Professor Gaál, adds, ‘As a backdrop, it is worth considering that the European Union currently consumes 30% of metal production worldwide, and in a climate of soaring mineral and ore costs, **ProMine** aims to reduce the EU’s reliance on imports through increased output. The benefits are self evident, but can perhaps be highlighted by the example of zinc, which rose in cost by 300% between 2004 and 2007.’ So, in addition to new job opportunities and renewed job security within the industry, increased self reliance will have considerable other economical and political benefits for the Union as a whole’.

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