MINEX '26 EUROPE IRELAND

28-30 October 2026
Trim, Ireland

THE 10th MINEX EUROPE MINING AND EXPLORATION FORUM

"Europe's Mining: Investable, Sustainable, Essential"

2026.minexeurope.com

DRAFT AGENDA: 08/07/2026

VENUE: Knightsbrook Hotel Spa and Golf Resort, Dublin Rd, Iffernock, Trim, Co. Meath, Ireland

WEBSITE: https://2026.minexeurope.com

1 DAY 28 October (Wednesday)

08:30 – 09:00
Barbican Suite 1

Registration & Welcome coffee
Networking at the exhibition area

09:00 – 09:15

Keynotes

09:15 – 10:00
Barbican Suite 2

SESSION 1
Beyond Legislation — Can Europe Rebuild Its Mining Industry?

Europe has created a stronger policy framework for critical raw materials, but the gap between political ambition and industrial delivery remains wide. The Critical Raw Materials Act promised faster permitting and stronger domestic supply chains, yet many projects still struggle to advance. The central questions are no longer only about geology or legal frameworks, but about competitiveness, public legitimacy, financing and the ability to move projects from concept to production. How much can legislation really change? Where are the main bottlenecks now — permitting, energy costs, market conditions, public resistance, or lack of investor confidence? And what does "rebuilding an industry" mean in a European context where mining remains strategically necessary but politically contested? This opening session sets the intellectual and commercial frame for the Forum by examining whether Europe is entering a new phase of mining development or still operating mainly at the level of policy aspiration.

10:00 - 10:10
Barbican Suite 1

Technical break
Networking at the exhibition area

10:10 – 11:30
Barbican Suite 2

SESSION 2
From Designation to Delivery: What Strategic Status Is Really Worth

For a developer, the Critical Raw Materials Act's "strategic" label promises a great deal: expedited permitting, a single national contact point, priority access to the RESourceEU financing hub, UNFC classification for bankability, and the offtake certainty of public-interest status. The first wave tested that on 60 projects; a second wave of 161 applicants, due for designation around the time of this Forum, will roughly double the portfolio. This session asks the plain question facing anyone weighing that status: what is it actually worth? It looks at where designation has moved projects forward — plants now opening in Estonia, Sweden and France — and where the label has not been enough, as financing stays prospective, permitting still runs to years, and mine lead times collide with a 2030 deadline the European Court of Auditors already thinks the EU will miss. The frank questions: does strategic status change bankability, or mainly paperwork? What separates the projects that get built from those that stall? And where must the second wave concentrate to turn designations into operating capacity?

11:30 - 12:00
Barbican Suite 2

Coffee break
Networking at the exhibition area

12:00 – 13:00
Barbican Suite 2

SESSION 3
Ireland in Focus: Mining Opportunities, Geology and Strategic Potential

Ireland enters the 2026 Forum not only as host country, but as a jurisdiction with an important place in Europe's raw materials landscape. This session explores Ireland's geological potential, exploration opportunities, established mining tradition and relevance to European supply security. Key topics include the country's mineral endowment, brownfield and greenfield project opportunities, the role of Irish mining in European industrial supply chains, and the investment case for Ireland in a more competitive global market for exploration capital. Open questions include where Ireland's strongest opportunities lie today, how Irish projects can position themselves within Europe's critical minerals strategy, and whether Ireland is sufficiently visible to international investors compared with other European jurisdictions. The session also opens a broader discussion about the role Ireland can play in linking resource development with regional growth, industrial capability and long-term supply resilience.

13:00 – 14:00
Rococo Restaurant

Lunch
Networking at the exhibition area

14:00 – 15:00
Barbican Suite 2

SESSION 4
Social Licence as Industrial Policy: Why Legitimacy Is the Real Constraint

Europe does not only face a permitting challenge. It faces a legitimacy challenge. This session tackles the political and social dimension of mining head-on, asking why domestic projects continue to encounter resistance even when policymakers agree that critical raw materials are essential for climate, industry and defence. The discussion explores trust, local participation, consultation quality, land use conflicts, environmental credibility, benefits sharing and the limits of top-down policy. It also examines why some projects become symbolic political flashpoints and what developers can do differently from the earliest stages of engagement. This session stands out from a standard ESG panel by framing social licence as a core industrial variable rather than an optional communications issue. The objective is to show that no permitting deadline or strategic target will materially shift outcomes unless mining regains public legitimacy on the ground.

15:00 – 15:30
Barbican Suite 2

Fireside chat / Session 4
Beyond the Drill – The Ethical Architect of the New Social Contract

Following the 2025 discussion on "inclusivity", this chat focuses on the role of the "Social Architect" in mining. Using Ireland's collaborative regulatory and community models as a backdrop, this discussion explores how radical transparency and "digital product passports" can turn sceptical local communities into project partners. The focus is on moving from "managing opposition" to shared value creation, ensuring that the wealth generated from European soil benefits the people living above it

15:30 – 16:00
Barbican Suite 1

Afternoon coffee break (sponsored by Bara Consulting)
Networking at the exhibition area

16:00 – 17:30
Barbican Suite 2

SESSION 5
The Mid-Stream Revolution: Battery Materials and European Gigafactories

Europe's ambition for a net-zero future depends on the successful integration of its mining and mid-stream industries. This session focuses on the development of battery-grade lithium, nickel, and cobalt projects across Europe. Discussions will centre on the logistical "Green Corridor"—how raw ores are refined into battery chemicals within the EU—and the role of "Digital Product Passports" in ensuring that every kilowatt-hour produced in a European gigafactory is backed by sustainably sourced minerals.

17:30 – 18:00
Barbican Suite 2

Fireside chat / Session 5
Can Europe Compete on Battery Materials?

A discussion on whether Europe can realistically build projects, refining and downstream integration.

18:00 – 21:00
Rococo Restaurant

Networking drinks

2 DAY 29 October (Thursday)

08:30 – 09:00
Barbican Suite 1

Welcome coffee
Networking at the exhibition area

09:00 – 10:00
Barbican Suite 2

SESSION 6
The China Dilemma — Decoupling, Dependence and the Search for Credible Alternatives

Europe depends on a single country for effectively all of its rare-earth processing and around 90% of its permanent magnets — a dependence that, on the Commission's own RESourceEU projections, would still sit near 80% for magnets in 2030 even if every strategic project delivers. The binding constraint is not the mine but the mid-stream: separation, refining and magnet-making. Europe frequently has the rock — the same round-trip governs lithium and graphite, where European ore is shipped to China for conversion for want of domestic capacity — but not the step that makes it usable. Dependence is also changing shape: as Europe's own battery projects stall, Chinese firms are building the supply chain inside the EU and on its doorstep, from gigafactories in Hungary, Germany and Spain to a full cell-to-cathode chain in Morocco aimed at European carmakers under free-trade terms. And the timing is acute —just days after the Forum the suspension of China's expanded export controls falls due, forcing a decision on whether restrictions on magnets, precursors and rare-earth materials are eased, narrowed or reimposed. This session confronts the dilemma without slogans.

10:00 – 10:30

Fireside chat / Session 6
Strategic Autonomy or Strategic Illusion?

Are Europe's raw materials ambitions match economic reality? Where does diversification genuinely reduce risk, and where does it merely relocate dependence onto European soil? Is inbound Chinese investment the answer to Europe's battery gap, or a subtler form of the same dependence? Is China rival, partner, or both — and what would a mature European strategy look like: one that manages interdependence honestly rather than promising an independence it cannot yet build?

10:30 – 11:00
Barbican Suite 1

Mid-morning coffee break
Networking at the exhibition area

11:00 – 12:00
Barbican Suite 2

SESSION 7
Financing Europe's Next Generation of Mining Projects

Project finance remains one of the decisive tests of whether Europe's raw materials strategy can move beyond ambition. This session explores how mining and processing projects are being funded, what types of capital are available, and why many European assets still struggle to attract investment despite strong policy support. Key topics include equity financing, private capital, strategic investors, debt, public support instruments, offtake-backed funding and blended finance models. The session examines what investors are actually evaluating when they assess European projects: permitting uncertainty, cost inflation, timeline risk, commodity price exposure, power costs, technical complexity and political durability. Open questions include whether Europe's policy frameworks are bankable enough to reduce risk, whether strategic project designation can materially improve financing conditions, and what combination of capital is most likely to support project development in the current market. The broader issue is whether Europe can create not only political momentum, but also credible investment conditions for a new generation of mining assets.

12:00 – 13:00
Barbican Suite 2

SESSION 8
The Golden Thread – Precious Metals as a Catalyst for Critical Projects

While the focus is often on lithium and cobalt, traditional commodities like gold and copper remain the financial backbone of the industry. This discussion explores how precious metal by-products can de-risk and bankroll complex critical raw material projects. Speakers will analyse how "multimetal" projects in Ireland, Scandinavia, and Iberia provide the economic stability needed to attract long-term institutional investment in an era of volatile commodity prices.

13:00 – 14:00
Rococo Restaurant

Lunch
Networking at the exhibition area

14:00 – 15:00
Barbican Suite 2

SESSION 9
Designing Projects Europe Can Actually Permit: Innovation, Low-Impact Mining and Project Readiness

In Europe, project design is increasingly tied to political acceptability, environmental credibility and permitting success. This session focuses on the kinds of mine design, engineering choices and operational strategies that may improve the chances of project approval and long-term viability. Topics include underground mining methods, digital technologies, water stewardship, tailings design, progressive rehabilitation, biodiversity considerations, closure planning and "low-impact" approaches to mine development. The central issue is whether better-designed projects can reduce visible conflict, improve the quality of permitting applications and strengthen the overall case for mining in high-standard jurisdictions. At the same time, the session questions the limits of technical solutions: how far can innovation address opposition, and where do deeper issues of trust and legitimacy remain decisive? The discussion links engineering, ESG, feasibility and project readiness, highlighting the idea that in Europe the projects most likely to succeed may be those designed from the outset for a higher threshold of environmental and social performance.

15:00 – 15:30
Barbican Suite 2

Fireside chat / Session 9
Building Projects Europe Can Actually Permit

A conversation around design, impact reduction, environmental performance and permitting readiness.

15:30 – 16:00
Barbican Suite 1

Afternoon coffee break
Networking at the exhibition area

16:00 – 17:00
Barbican Suite 2

SESSION 10
Mine to Market 4.0: The AI-Driven Supply Chain

The final session examines how AI, Big Data, and Remote Sensing are revolutionizing both exploration and operations across the continent. By digitizing the entire value chain—from initial geological surveys to the final concentrate—companies can de-risk projects for investors and improve operational efficiency. The session will showcase how Irish and European tech firms are leading the way in "Sub-Surface Intelligence," providing the data needed to secure the next generation of mining finance.

17:00 – 17:30
Barbican Suite 2

CLOSING SESSION

MINEX Europe 2026 takeaways

Forum moderators will provide a high-level overview of their respective sessions, distilling the key discussion points, participant suggestions, and core feedback.

18:30 – 22:30

Gala Dinner (by invitation)

3 DAY 30 October (Friday)

09:00 – 16:30

VISIT TO BOLIDEN TARA

Boliden Tara Mines
Knockumber
Navan C15 NH63
Co. Meath

Tara in Ireland is one of Europe's largest zinc mines located just north of Dublin. Since mining began in 1977, more than 85 million tonnes of ore have been extracted. Boliden acquired the mine in 2004.

In recent years, Tara has focused on improving its cost position through productivity enhancing activities and cost savings measures. In Tara, both zinc and lead concentrates are produced mainly for the European market.