

# Conference

## Towards Fair Resource Policies for a Global Just Transition!



organized by



mattersburger kreis  
für entwicklungspolitik



universität  
wien  
Institut für Politikwissenschaft

OFSE  
Österreichische Forschungsstiftung  
für Internationale Entwicklung

in co-operation with

**BEYOND  
HOT NIR** Conversations around  
critical raw materials supply  
for the 'green' transition

**PAULO FREIRE ZENTRUM**  
für transdisziplinäre Entwicklungsforschung und dialogische Bildung

**VIDC** Vienna Institute for  
International Dialogue  
and Cooperation

## Why this conference?

The demand for mineral resources is currently increasing rapidly. Raw materials such as nickel, rare earths and lithium are experiencing an unprecedented boom due to their role in the energy transition and digitalization. While global decarbonization is undeniably necessary, there is hardly any public debate on the questions of where the needed raw materials come from and under what conditions they are mined. The EU now consumes 25-33% of the metals produced worldwide, while it accounts for only 6% of the world's population. At the same time, the EU is almost entirely dependent on imports from countries in the Global South or China for most metals.

In times of rising geopolitical tensions and global militarization, access to raw materials is also becoming a security issue. Aspects of social, economic and ecological justice relating to raw material extraction, processing and trade are in danger of falling victim to power and security interests. At the same time rising demand will increase pressure on mining regions and in many cases exacerbate existing inequalities, precarious working conditions and ecological destruction. In Europe, too, the creation of new mining and processing capacities should not be driven forward solely for supply security at the expense of people and the environment.

Thus, we want to place a fair raw materials policy and global just transition at the center of socio-ecological transformation debates. That is why we are addressing the following questions at the conference:

- What and who are the drivers of demand for raw materials in Austria and the EU?
- Where and under what conditions are the required raw materials extracted?
- What socio-ecological costs are associated with extraction? Who bears them?
- What role do trade and investment agreements play in accessing these raw materials?
- How can a social and ecological restructuring of industries, energy and mobility systems that is not at the expense of the Global South look like?
- How can a global just transition be achieved? How can raw materials policy be shaped in a fair and sustainable way?
- How can we connect ongoing struggles? And what new alliances need to be forged?

As parts of a global civil society, we are oriented towards social and ecological justice and global solidarity. From this perspective, we want to question the EU's race for raw materials, analyse various resource guzzlers such as mobility and digitalization, ask questions about the future of mining in Europe and the world and also address key geopolitical dimensions.

This conference is intended to contribute to a critical debate on these central issues.

### Registration

The conference will open with a panel discussion on Wednesday evening **January 29th, 18:00** titled "Greening the European Economy at the Expense of the Global South? Insights from Raw Material Exporting Countries"

Venue: ÖFSE (Sensengasse 3, 1090 Wien)

→ **Registration via e-mail:** [registration@oefse.at](mailto:registration@oefse.at)

The main conference will take place on Thursday, **January 30th, 09:00** and Friday, **January 31st.**

Venue: ÖGB Catamaran (Johann-Böhm-Platz 1, 1020 Wien)

→ **Registration [online](#)**



# Program Overview

## Wednesday, January 29th 2025 (ÖFSE)

18:00 - 19:30: Opening panel discussion

**Greening the European Economy at the Expense of the Global South?**

Insights from Raw Material Exporting Countries

→ Registration via e-mail: [registration@oefse.at](mailto:registration@oefse.at)

ab 19:30: Wine reception

## Thursday, January 30th 2025 (ÖGB Catamaran)

09:00 - 09:30: Arrival & Registration

09:30 - 10:30: Welcome address

10:30 - 11:30: Keynote Karin Küblböck (ÖFSE), followed by discussion:

**Global raw materials policy: Challenges and strategies for a just future**

11:30 - 11:45: Presentation of further agenda

11:45 - 13:00: Lunch

13:00 - 17:30: Parallel strands - solutions & alternatives

**Strand 1:** E-mobility and Digitalization as Raw Material Guzzlers & Approaches for a Socially Just Transformation

**Strand 2:** Raw Material Extraction and Processing in Austria and Europe

**Strand 3:** Rethinking raw materials policy: perspectives in the Global South and the EU

17:30 - 18:00: Break

18:00 - 19:00: Fish-Bowl on the interim results with representatives of the strands

19:00 - 20:00: Dinner

## Friday, January 31st 2025 (ÖGB Catamaran)

09:00 - 09:30: collective start of Day 2

09:30 - 12:30: Parallel strands – solutions and alternatives

**Strand 1:** E-mobility and Digitalization as Raw Material Guzzlers & Approaches for a Socially Just Transformation

**Strand 2:** Raw Material Extraction and Processing in Austria and Europe

**Strand 3:** Rethinking raw materials policy: perspectives in the Global South and the EU

12:30 - 13:30: Mittagspause

13:30 - 15:00: Harvesting of insights from the strands and further steps

15:00 - 15:30: Conclusion

## Details on the program & speakers

### Opening Panel Discussion (English only)

29. Jänner 2025, 6:00 to 8:00pm

Registration for the public panel discussion via e-mail: [registration@oefse.at](mailto:registration@oefse.at)

The discussion will take place in the Centrum of ÖFSE (Sensengasse 3, Vienna) and will be held exclusively in English.

#### Greening the European Economy at the Expense of the Global South? Insights from Raw Material Exporting Countries

The green and digital transformation of the European economies strongly increases the demand for raw materials. While the EU is intensifying efforts to enhance domestic extraction, it remains heavily reliant on imports from third countries. Although the EU portrays its raw material trade with the Global South as 'mutually beneficial', a closer examination of policy documents reveals that the primary goal is to secure a cheap and sustainable supply. The Critical Raw Materials Act includes commitments to respect 'human rights, indigenous peoples' and labour rights', alongside requirements to 'monitor, prevent and minimise environmental impacts.' However, the reality of raw material extraction is still characterised by the destruction of livelihoods, displacement, exploitation, and environmental degradation. Far from being a historical issue, these characteristics persist until today, driven by a new scramble for resources in the face of escalating geopolitical competition and the securitization of resource policies. The energy and raw material chapters in recent EU free trade agreements threaten to lock in countries in the Global South in their role as raw material suppliers, severely limiting their space for independent policymaking and economic diversification.

To better understand these growing contradictions in European raw materials policy, it is crucial to analyse it from the perspective of communities, workers, and activists in raw material-producing countries. Key questions are: What are the consequences of current EU's raw material policies for exporting countries? How does the recent securitisation of resource policies shape resource exploitation and trade? What are possibilities and limitations of alternative strategies to resource extractivism in the Global South?

#### Speakers:

- **Kania Guzaimi**, FAU Erlangen-Nürnberg
- **Glen Mpufane**, IndustriALL Global Union, Geneva
- **Johannes Knierzinger**, Institute of Development Studies, University of Vienna

#### Host:

- **Karin Küblböck** (ÖFSE – Austrian Foundation for Development Research)

#### Information on the speakers:

**Kania Guzaimi** is a doctoral researcher at FAU Erlangen-Nürnberg, specializing in business and human rights with a background in Political Science and International Relations. She has experience working with advocacy organizations and international NGOs. Her work focuses on human rights, corporate influence, and environmental policy in Indonesia and in this context, she also works on issues of nickel extraction and trade.

**Johannes Knierzinger** is a Senior Lecturer at the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Vienna and a board member of Mattersburg Circle for Development Policy. His research deals with raw material policy in Western and Southern Africa, currently with a focus on resource sovereignty and the growing resistance against investor-state dispute settlement.

**Karin Küblböck** is an Economist and Senior Researcher at ÖFSE, the Austrian Foundation for Development Research. Her research focuses on international raw material policies and stakeholder participation in research projects.

**Glen Mpufane** is the Director of Mining, Diamonds, Gems, Ornament and Jewelry Production (DGOJP) for IndustriALL Global Union. He has over 40 years' global experience in the mining industry that includes working in the mines and for the National Union of Mineworkers in South Africa. Glen serves on various ESG standard development initiatives.

### Keynote

#### Global Raw Materials Policy: Challenges and Strategies for a Just Future

In her introductory keynote speech, Karin Küblböck (ÖFSE) combines the key findings of the opening discussion of the previous evening with the key topics of the main conference, which will then be explored in greater depth in the various strands.

The keynote provides an insight into the field of global raw materials policy and places the growing demand for mineral raw materials in a broader historical context. It also deals with current strategies and challenges that are important for a global Just Transition.

It addresses the following questions, among others:

What does global raw materials policy involve and what instruments are available?

What are the consequences of the increasing demand for mineral resources?

Which conflicts and diverging interests exist?

How can a global Just Transition be shaped?

Building on the insights of our international guests from the evening before, we will also look at the impact of the exploitation of raw materials on nature and affected communities, particularly in the Global South. The subsequent discussion will provide space for further exchange.

#### Speaker:

- **Karin Küblböck** (ÖFSE – Austrian Foundation for Development Research)

**Karin Küblböck** is an Economist and Senior Researcher at ÖFSE, the Austrian Foundation for Development Research. Her research focusses on international raw material policies and stakeholder participation in research projects.

### The Strands

Apart from the common inputs and discussions, the main conference is divided into four strands with different topics. All of these focuses will be addressed on the basis of four common key questions:

- How can sufficiency be achieved/the demand for raw materials be reduced?
- How can extraction and processing be made socially and ecologically sustainable?
- How can a global Just Transition be implemented in this strand?
- How do we organize ourselves as a civil society to achieve this?

Participants can choose one of the following four strands for the course of the conference:

**Strand 1:** E-mobility and Digitalization as Raw Material Guzzlers & Approaches for a Socially Just Transformation

**Strand 2:** Raw Material Extraction and Processing in Austria and Europe

**Strand 3:** Rethinking raw materials policy: perspectives in the Global South and the EU

Strand 1 and 2 are only available in German, Strand 3 and 4 offer German-English translation. Details on strand 3 can be found on the following pages. Within the strands, **Thursday afternoon** will focus on problem analysis and **Friday morning** on finding solutions.

In the evening panel discussion on Thursday, insights from the different strands will be presented by one representative each, to share and connect the different impressions and perspectives together. On Friday morning, the conference will split up again into the individual strands in order to develop possible courses of action and solutions. After lunch, the results of the individual strands will be compiled and discussed together in a final harvesting session.

### Strand 1

#### E-mobility and Digitalization as Raw Material Guzzlers & Approaches for a Socially Just Transformation

**Hosts:**

**Alexandra Strickner** (Kompetenzzentrum Alltagsökonomie) and **Hanna Braun** (Attac Österreich)  
**Available in German only!**

The media repeatedly talks about the need for raw materials for the mobility and energy transitions. However, which players and products are driving the demand for raw materials in the mobility transition? Which mobility transition is being driven forward here? And what about raw materials demand for digitalization, which is also being hailed as a necessary solution to the climate crisis? How can we create a socially just mobility and energy transition that is not at the expense of nature and the living spaces of people in the Global South? How can we reduce the consumption of raw materials and ensure fair distribution? These are among the questions we want to explore in strand 1. We want to look at where there are already struggles around these issues and develop concrete perspectives on how to promote sustainable raw materials policies that are in line with planetary boundaries.

**Speakers:**

- **Willi Haas** is Senior Scientist at the Institute of Social Ecology at the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna. His research and teaching focuses on society-nature interactions in space (local-global) and time (historical, recent, future). A core focus is on barriers and leverage points of socio-ecological transformation. It examines both the biophysical options for a safe and fair continuation of societies within and fair continuation of societies within planetary boundaries as well as the question of which political strategies are suitable for shaping attractive conditions for a climate-friendly life.
- **Stefan Giljum** heads the “Global Resource Use” research group at the Institute for Ecological Economics at the Vienna University of Economics and Business. He conducts research into the use of raw materials in production and consumption and the ecological effects of globalization and international trade.
- **Anja Höfner** works on the topics of sustainability, digitalization and socio-ecological change, at the Konzeptwerk Neue Ökonomie. She was co-organizer of the two Bits & Bäume conferences in 2018 and 2022 and co-edited the two associated books.
- **Barbara Laa** has been researching and teaching at the Institute of Transport Sciences at TU Wien since 2018 with a focus on the socio-ecological transformation of mobility and sustainable urban development.
- **Elisa Thomaset** works for the development policy network INKOTA as a consultant for raw materials policy, business and human rights. She works on global issues relating to the transformation to the circular economy.

### Strand 2

#### Raw materials extraction and processing in Austria and Europe

**Hosts:**

**Julia Eder** (AK Wien und Johannes Kepler Universität), **Christian Rechberger** (PRO-GE) und **Lucia Steinwender** (Journalistin)  
**German with interpreting into English**

For several decades Europe has reduced the extraction of raw materials on its own territory and increasingly imported the raw materials needed for manufacturing from third countries. The Critical Raw Materials Act, an EU law adopted in March 2024, sets the goal that until 2030 at least 10 % of the yearly consumption should stem again from extraction in the European Union. Consequently, this raises several questions with which we will deal in strand 2:

## Details on the program & speakers

- Which raw materials should/could be extracted in Austria and Europe? - What are the perspectives for extraction in Austria – what, who, for which purpose? - How do we deal with potential civil society resistance? - How do we prevent that the social and ecological costs of mining are outsourced to Europe's peripheries? - To which extent can we recycle already extracted and processed raw materials as secondary raw materials in the framework of a circular economy? - In which fields can we reduce raw material consumption?

In the first part, we will engage with different case studies of European places where raw materials are currently extracted or where it is planned for the future. We will compare the specific challenges in Austria with those in Serbia, Spain, and Portugal. To this end, we invited works council representatives, academic scholars and activists. An anchor point will be lithium, which is relevant in all countries that we will focus on. In the second part, we will deal with possible solutions. Thus, we will discuss how we can implement socially and ecologically sustainable mining and how we can reduce resource use, e.g. by means of the circular economy.

### Speakers:

- **Čedanka Andrić** is the chairwoman of the trade union federation NEZAVISNOST as well as member of the Social and Economic Council of the Republic of Serbia. She is deputy chairwoman of the European Trade Union Federation (ETUC), and participates in the meetings of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC). She has extensive knowledge regarding all sectors in Serbia, including mining and manufacturing.
- **Nina Djukanović** is a researcher and an activist for environmental justice at the Balkans. Her special focus lies on the resistance against lithium extraction in Serbia and an alternative understanding of the green transition going beyond mining. Currently, she is finishing her dissertation on the same topic at the University of Oxford.
- **Felix Dorn** works as University Assistant (Post-Doc) at the Institute of International Development at the University of Vienna. His research focuses on the political ecology of resource extractivism and on the commodification of climate change commodities such as lithium and hydrogen.
- **Markus Geisler**, chairman of the blue-collar works council at Montanwerke Brixlegg
- **Eva Gerold**, Senior researcher at the Institute for Nonferrous Metallurgy, Leoben University of Mining and Metallurgy (Montanuniversität Leoben)
- **Karl-Heinz Klausner**, chairman of the central works council of Salinen Austria AG and chairman of the blue-collar works council at Salinen Austria AG Ebensee
- **Martin Kowatsch**, chairman of the company works council of RHI-AG Veitsch-Radex GmbH and chairman of the blue-collar works council at Veitsch-Radex GmbH in Radenthein
- **Herwig Pletz**, chairman of the works council at VA Erzberg GmbH
- **Adi Semlitsch**, deputy chairman of the blue-collar works council at Salinen Austria AG in Bad Ischl
- **Werner Walsler**, chairman of the company and the blue-collar works council at Wolfram Bergbau und Hütten GmbH in Mittersill

## Strand 3

### Rethinking raw materials policy: perspectives in the Global South and the EU

#### Hosts:

**Gabriel Eyselein** (Universität Wien), **Johannes Knierzinger** (Universität Wien), **Theresa Kofler** (Anders Handel), **Lisa Mittendrein** (AK Wien) und **Jakob Rammer**

**Languages: English & German (simultaneous translation)**

Raw materials policy is currently taking place against a backdrop of shifting global power relations and growing geopolitical tensions. And yet it is still characterized by an exploitative continuity, because even in the current wave of the raw materials rush, it is primarily "resource-rich" countries in the Global South that are becoming the focus of European politics and corporations. Conflicts of interest and resistance

## Details on the program & speakers

arise at various levels. While countries in the Global South are increasingly trying to increase their resource sovereignty and thus the local value creation from the extraction of raw materials, social movements are also growing and fighting against mining and for alternative visions to the extractivist economic model.

Although the EU is trying to promote domestic extraction [discussion in strand 2], this will only provide a fraction of the raw materials needed to end the fossil age. In order to meet its raw material needs, the EU has adopted the Critical Raw Materials Act at record speed and is attempting to conclude new strategic partnerships and trade agreements with “resource-rich” countries. However, in the context of this supposedly practical necessity, questions of social and ecological justice are being pushed even further into the background.

For this reason, we want to place the experiences and perspectives from the Global South at the center of the discussion and compare them with the relevant developments in the EU.

### Speakers:

- **Kania Guzaimi** is the
- **Glen Mpufane** is a doctoral researcher at FAU Erlangen-Nürnberg, specializing in business and human rights with a background in Political Science and International Relations. She has experience working with advocacy organizations and international NGOs. Her work focuses on human rights, corporate influence, and environmental policy in Indonesia and in this context, she also works on issues of nickel extraction and trade.
- **Ezio Costa Cordella** is an environmental lawyer and activist in Chile. He holds a Doctor of Law and is professor at the Faculty of Law of the University of Chile, where he also serves as Deputy Director of the Center for Environmental Law (CDA). Since 2012, Ezio is deputy director of the Chilean NGO FIMA, which promotes access to environmental justice in Chile.
- **and more** (tbc)

---

## Organisational Committee

- **Julia Eder** holds a doctorate in sociology and is currently employed in the department of European & International Affairs at the Vienna Chamber of Labor. Her work includes EU industrial policy and critical raw materials in the wider context of socio-ecological transformation. She is also a research associate at Johannes Kepler University, where she is involved in the project “Mobilitätswende produzieren” (Produce mobility transitions).
- **Gabriel Eyselein** works as a university assistant (pre-doc) at the Department of Political Science at the University of Vienna in the field of international politics. He conducts research on European raw materials policy and ‘critical raw materials’.
- **Theresa Kofler** coordinates the civil society platform Anders Handeln.
- **Jakob Rammer** is a student of International Development at the University of Vienna, a member of the editorial board of the Paulo Freire Center and works as a freelancer for the Austrian Chamber of Labor and as an external lecturer for Südwind. He researches the extraction and trade of raw materials and “green” hydrogen in Latin America and the associated conflicts and socio-ecological impacts.
- **Alexandra Strickner** is a political economist, co-founder and managing board member of the Competence Center for Everyday Economics (Kompetenzzentrum für Alltagsökonomie). She has been working for over 20 years on economic alternatives to neoliberal globalization and on processes for social change. She has also co-founded Attac Austria, Anders Handeln and fair sorgen! Wirtschaften fürs Leben, among others.
- **Hanna Braun** is a campaigner at Attac Österreich.
- **Johannes Knierzinger** is a Senior Lecturer at the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Vienna and a board member of Mattersburg Circle for Development Policy. His research deals with raw material policy in Western and Southern Africa, currently with a focus on resource sovereignty and the growing resistance against investor-state dispute settlement.