As I was planning to visit Oslo for the Norwegian mineral sector’s conference on 28 March, I contacted the Norwegian authorities to see if they would like to have exploratory technical talks about raw materials and batteries following the various high-level NO Government-EC meetings in February (ref. EU-Norway Press Statement on Climate). They confirmed their interest. At the request of Norway, the agreed agenda covered many aspects of the EU-Norway Green Alliance: raw materials, batteries, decarbonisation of energy-intensive industries, hydrogen, offshore wind and CCS.

The EU Delegation and I attended the 29 March meeting physically. On the EU side, EEAS, ENER, CLIMA, TRADE and GROW colleagues joined online. On Norway’s side, the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Fisheries was joined by colleagues from the MFA, Ministry of Petroleum and Energy as well as from the Ministry of Climate and Environment.

The Norwegian side stressed that the Russian invasion of Ukraine makes close EU-NO cooperation even more vital for both sides and introduces a security dimension to what was previously about Green Deal alignment. Norway recalled that it is a reliable energy provider to help with the EU’s energy security. Norway is already well integrated into EU energy and climate activities through the EEA. Both sides agreed that it would be good to focus on some concrete areas and deliverables within the overarching Green Alliance framework. One such area was critical raw materials and another the production and deployment of hydrogen.

On raw materials, we discussed specific areas for cooperation and investment such as rare earths, titanium, battery raw materials and magnesium. We shared the strategic partnerships agreed with Canada and Ukraine as a potential inspiration for one between the EU and Norway. Norway also expressed interest in closer integration with the EU on the batteries value chain, noting that it had sent Minister Espen Barth Eide to the EU Battery Ministerial on 23 February (first time Norway was invited). Norway’s batteries strategy should be ready by the summer. Minister Vestre plans to meet VP Sefcovic in Brussels on 12 May and VP Sefcovic should be invited to Oslo in mid-June for the 2022 EV summit.

Norway intends to organise a series of Green Alliance thematic workshops when Ministers are in Brussels. They proposed to organise one on critical raw materials and to invite a broad range of stakeholders.

Two other points that came up:

- the Commission is currently working with EU Member States and with industry to develop a magnesium value chain following the disruption caused last year when China stopped production (EU is 100%
import dependent and 93% dependent on China). Magnesium is critical for aluminium, steel, packaging and die-casting and is of strategic importance for developing EU defence capabilities. Norway used to produce magnesium and agreed to explore possibilities for contributing to a resilient European value chain now.

- Norway is making large windfall gains on energy due to high gas prices. **Norway will reflect on the possibility of contributing financially to a possible European investment fund for sustainable critical raw material projects.** Norway, like the Commission, has been invited to join the US-led Minerals Security Partnership which seeks to improve market intelligence and to co-invest with like-minded countries in metal and mineral resources before China gets its hands on them.

On **hydrogen**, both sides confirmed the ongoing good co-operation on the energy dialogue managed by DG ENER, and with DG GROW and others on the deployment of large-scale hydrogen projects (cooperation in Hydrogen Alliance and on hydrogen IPCEIs).

N.B. Norway asked who is the **political coordinator and lead service on the EU side** for the EU-Norway Green Alliance. We promised to find out get back to them on this. I presume it would be EVP Timmermans, but who is in the lead at cabinet and services levels? **Could the cabinets please advise how to answer Norway’s question?** On their side, the responsibility for coordination lies with Minister Vestre and the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Fisheries. MFA, energy and climate are part of the team.