

EXECUTIVE REPORT

New lithium-related legislation in Spain

NATIONAL

The Council of Ministers has approved a few days ago the Roadmap for the sustainable management of mineral raw materials. This Roadmap is in line with European policies on raw materials, such as the Action Plan for Key Raw Materials or the recent REPowerEU.

The Roadmap envisages four strategic orientations.

- 1) It seeks efficiency and circular economy in mineral raw materials supply value chains.
- 2) It presents an opportunity to promote and consolidate the sustainable management of mineral raw materials in the Spanish extractive industry.
- 3) It focuses on guaranteeing security of supply and compliance with environmental, geostrategic and social justice requirements in the import of mineral raw materials.
- 4) It will promote the industry of mineral raw materials of a strategic nature for the energy and digital transition.

In practice, this means a commitment to: strategic autonomy; and a more sustainable, circular, safe and efficient extractive activity. All of this will advance towards achieving the objectives of energy transition, climate neutrality and the demographic challenge.

REGIONAL

The Regional Government of Extremadura has approved the decree-law establishing urgent measures necessary to regulate the use of lithium mineral resources in Extremadura.

1. The exploitation of lithium mineral resources is declared to be of general interest.
2. It requires the development in Extremadura of the "metallurgical treatment and benefit" of lithium, which is defined as "the set of activities necessary to obtain lithium hydroxide, or a similar useful lithium compound".
3. The exploitation of lithium is also considered "of public utility and social interest for expropriation purposes".

4. The projects of concessions for the exploitation of lithium mineral resources in Extremadura referred to in this Decree-Law may be processed as business projects of regional interest under the protection of the applicable regional regulations, which facilitates the administrative processing and makes possible the granting of public aid.

CONCLUSIONS AND ARGUMENTS

Both in Spain and in Extremadura new regulations are being approved to address the problem of the current foreign dependence on lithium. To this end, the extraction and transformation of lithium is being pursued under the principles of environmental sustainability and commitment to the territory.

The Extremadura New Energies project in Cáceres is perfectly adapted to this model to which both Spain and Europe aspire, and to achieve this it has incorporated all the demands of Cáceres society:

- It includes a unique battery-grade lithium hydroxide production plant in Europe that reduces energy dependence.
- It is the first lithium hydroxide plant that uses renewable energies throughout the process, with the clear objective of achieving '0 emissions'.
- It incorporates an innovative production process that avoids the use of sulfuric acid in the processing of lithium.
- The extraction will be done subway to avoid environmental impacts on the territory.

Extremadura New Energies is a company that offers the first short-term opportunity to reduce the dependence on lithium hydroxide from abroad, thus improving the energy autonomy of the European Union and reducing the impact of the carbon footprint of the current model.