



CRITICAL RAW MATERIALS FOR THE SUSTAINABILITY TRANSFORMATION: PROMISE AND PITFALLS IN THE CONTEXT OF LEGAL SYSTEMS

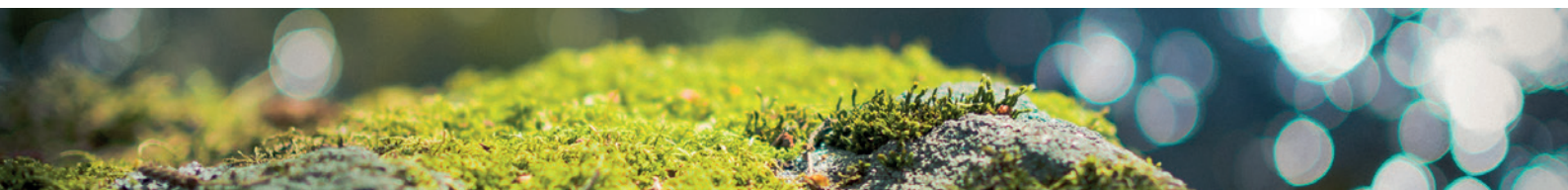


SEITA VESA
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The global race for CRMs is intensifying as governments aim for net-zero targets, facing challenges in sustainable sourcing and responsible governance. While circular economy strategies promote reuse and recycling, primary mining remains dominant, raising environmental and human rights concerns. This presentation explores two legal perspectives: increasing CRM availability sustainably and developing holistic regulatory strategies that balance climate goals without compromising sustainability. It addresses the immediate legal challenges in ramping up CRM production responsibly and examines the demands on law and regulation to create comprehensive solutions that avoid shifting from one unsustainable practice to another.

Dr. Seita Vesa is a Professor of Environmental Law (especially sustainability transition) at the University of Eastern Finland Center for Climate Change, Energy and Environmental Law (CCEEL) and a Research Professor at the Finnish Environment Institute's Climate Solutions Unit (SYKE).

Full bio available on <https://uefconnect.uef.fi/henkilo/seita.vesa/>





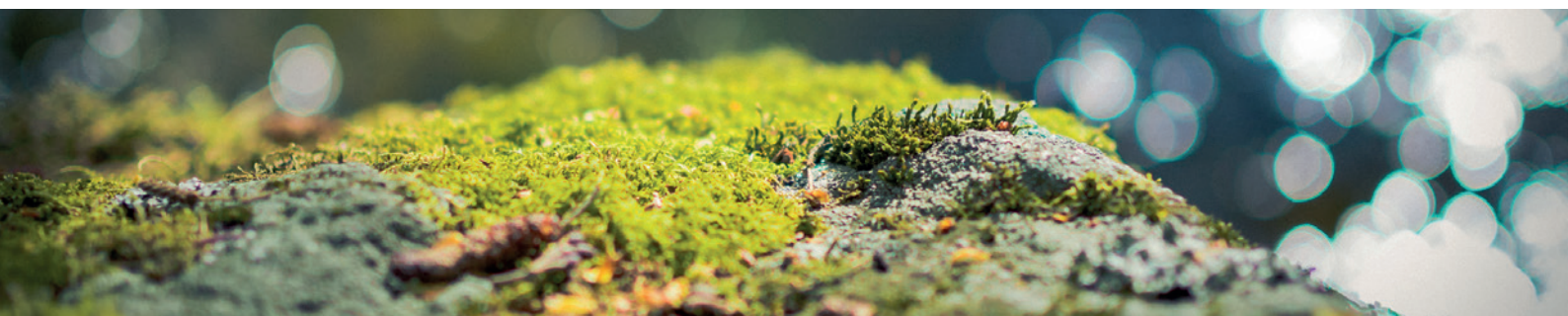
SOCIALLY SUSTAINABLE SOURCING OF CRITICAL RAW MATERIALS FOR THE GREEN TRANSITION: ACCEPTANCE AND THE ROLE OF CITIZENS' KNOWLEDGE AND AWARENESS



TUIJA JARTTI

**Postdoctoral Researcher,
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Tuija Jartti, Doctor of Social Sciences, is a postdoctoral researcher currently working on the SEMACRET (“Sustainable Exploration for Orthomagmatic (Critical) Raw Materials: Charting the Road to the Green Energy Transition”) project, funded by the EU’s Horizon programme, at the University of Eastern Finland. Her scientific background is in environmental sociology, with a particular focus on the social scientific research of mining. She has participated in several research projects addressing the social aspects of mining. Her research specializes in citizen attitudes towards mining, the acceptance of mining and other extractive industries, social licence to operate, and quantitative research methods. In her doctoral thesis, she examined citizens’ attitudes towards uranium mining, considering different demographic factors and moral economic views in three Finnish regions.





EU AND RECYCLING OF CRITICAL RAW MATERIALS: STUCK IN LEGAL LIMBO



TOPI TURUNEN

**Senior Research
Scientist, Syke, Finnish
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Many policy documents have called for a higher degree of circularity in the use of critical raw materials (CRMs). The presentation examines how this objective has been translated from EU policy to legislation. The analysis presents three regulatory strategies used in the current framework to promote the recovery of CRMs: indirect approach, direct regulation of single CRMs, and collective regulation of all CRMs. The indirect approach has struggled to effectively target CRMs. Direct regulation of single CRMs provides an alternative, but other than the new Batteries Regulation no legislation has introduced strong obligations requiring recovery of single CRMs. The proposed CRM Regulation would codify the main concepts relevant for governing and regulating CRMs collectively. While the legislation would create a solid foundation for these processes, its failure to put forward immediate or long-term solutions to CRM recovery remains a serious shortcoming. The present research indicates that the current legal obligations lack a focus on the recovery of CRMs, with concrete obligations to this end limited.

Topi Turunen (LL.D) is a senior researcher of environmental law at the Finnish Environment Institute (Syke). His research has mostly focused on legal questions regarding the circular economy. Currently, his research topics include the circular economy of critical raw materials and plastics.



THE GREEN TRANSITION – A RIGHT WAY TO SAFEGUARD OUR PLANETARY FUTURE?



HANNA HALMEENPÄÄ

**Chairperson of
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Nature Conservation**

What is the green transition? It probably means a transition to more sustainable energy sources, low-carbon economies and more environmentally friendly practices, with the aim of curbing climate change and loss of nature, thus avoiding the destruction of our living conditions on this planet.

Is it all really green and environmentally sustainable? What if we cause new problems when leaning strongly on green transition, that includes huge amount of new renewable energy and growing demand of mineral resources, without questioning its sustainability? What if we have not yet even focused on real core of our planetary problems? What if we would have to do it now?

From the point of view of nature conservation and keeping the earth viable, the most important and simplest thing is to look at the production and consumption of natural resources – that is, the huge imbalance that prevails in human activity in this regard.

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But has the talk about the green transition focused on overconsumption? I say it isn't. The green transition is dressed in the cloak of sustainability, which is promised to include new economic growth and business opportunities.

Socially, both in business and politics, it is a popular message that people's lives and everyday life will continue almost unchanged and will continue to improve, but in the future – thanks to the green transition – in an environmentally sustainable way. It is much more difficult and politically very unpopular to tell honestly that almost nothing in society can continue as it is, if the real problem – the overconsumption of natural resources – is tackled with the necessary seriousness. Let's face the problem.

Hanna Halmeenpää works in the field of nature conservation and environmental policy in the head of Finland's largest environmental non-governmental organization. Previously, she has worked as an expert in environmental management, as a biology and geography teacher and as a member of parliament.

