

Brussels, 28 January 2026
(OR. en)

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LIMITE

COMPET 103
POLCOM 36
IND 64
RELEX 111
COTRA 7

'A' ITEM NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Council
Subject:	Memorandum of Understanding to establish a Strategic Partnership on critical minerals with the United States <i>- Authorisation to negotiate a non-binding instrument</i>

1. On 19 December 2025, the Commission informed the Working Party on Competitiveness and Growth (Industry) in writing about its intention to enter into discussions to draw up a Memorandum of Understanding to establish a Strategic Partnership on critical minerals with the United States¹. On 26 January 2026, the Commission provided additional written information on the EU-US cooperation on critical minerals².
2. Given common challenges, such as strategic dependencies in the area of critical minerals and recent export restrictions by third countries on rare earths, the Commission agreed with the United States government to establish a structured bilateral engagement to enhance transatlantic cooperation. The objective is to address the shared need for strengthening the resilience and diversification of critical minerals and derivatives supply as well as addressing certain demand-side measures.

¹ WK 17634/2025.

² WK 1147/2026.

3. The Working Party on Competitiveness and Growth (Industry), at its meetings on 12 and 26 January 2026, examined the Commission's intention to negotiate, on behalf of the Union, this non-binding instrument, and expressed overall support to the launch of negotiations with the understanding that the Commission will inform and consult the Working Party on the advancement of those negotiations with the US and will revert to the Council at the end of the negotiation process to seek the Council's authorisation in due time for the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding on behalf of the Union.
4. On 28 January 2026, the Permanent Representatives Committee examined the Commission's intention to negotiate, on behalf of the Union, a Memorandum of Understanding to establish a Strategic Partnership on critical minerals with the United States³. The Committee supported authorising the Commission to launch the negotiations for this non-binding instrument.
5. The Council is asked, as an 'A' item on the agenda of a forthcoming Council meeting, to authorise the Commission to negotiate, on behalf of the Union, a Memorandum of Understanding to establish a Strategic Partnership on critical minerals with the United States.

³ ST 5088/26.