

Brussels, 25 March 2026
(OR. en)

7520/26

LIMITE

COMPET 352
POLCOM 106
IND 198
RELEX 398
COTRA 22

NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Permanent Representatives Committee
Subject:	Memorandum of Understanding to establish a Strategic Partnership on Critical Minerals with the United States, and EU-US Action Plan for Critical Minerals Supply Chain Resilience <i>- Preparation for the authorisation to sign 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. 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 States. The Committee supported authorising the Commission to launch the negotiations for this non-binding instrument.

¹ WK 17634/2025.

² WK 1147/2026.

3. On 29 January 2026, the Council authorised the Commission to negotiate, on behalf of the Union, a Memorandum of Understanding to establish a Strategic Partnership on Critical Minerals with the United States³.
4. In a joint press statement of the European Commission, the United States Government and the Japanese Government issued in connection with the Critical Minerals Ministerial Meeting on 4 February 2026 in Washington, the EU and the United States signalled their intention to strengthen transatlantic cooperation on critical minerals, including by negotiating a Memorandum of Understanding aimed at boosting critical minerals supply chain security, and by developing an EU-US Action Plan to explore a possible plurilateral trade initiative with like-minded partners on trade in critical minerals.
5. On 20 March 2026, the Working Party on Competitiveness and Growth (Industry) received an information note from the Commission on the Memorandum of Understanding to be signed on behalf of the Union to establish a Strategic Partnership on Critical Minerals with the United States, and on the EU-US Action Plan for Critical Minerals Supply Chain Resilience, with the draft texts of the Memorandum of Understanding and the Action Plan attached⁴.
6. The Memorandum of Understanding between the European Union and the United States of America on a Strategic Partnership on Critical Minerals and the United States - European Union Action Plan for Critical Minerals Supply Chain Resilience, set out in document 7521/26, would constitute non-binding instruments. They set forth the intentions of both partners. They are not legally binding upon the partners.

³ 5770/26.

⁴ WK 4398/2026 + ADD 1 + ADD 2.

7. Given shared challenges, both sides agree to cooperate on areas of mutual interest and to establish a structured bilateral engagement to enhance transatlantic cooperation in strengthening the resilience and diversification of critical minerals and derivatives supply, as well as to coordinate their respective demand-side measures. The Memorandum of Understanding covers cooperation across the critical minerals value chain, addressing both supply- and demand-side aspects, while ensuring a mutually beneficial approach consistent with international commitments. The Action Plan is intended to express support for an exploratory plurilateral process and ensure EU participation in shaping the process and the discussions. These two complementary tracks aim to ensure coherence and complementarity between the bilateral work reflected in the Memorandum of Understanding and joint efforts for effective plurilateral action, which the Action Plan aims to facilitate.
8. The Working Party on Competitiveness and Growth (Industry), at its meeting on 23 March 2026, examined the draft Memorandum of Understanding to establish a Strategic Partnership on Critical Minerals with the United States, and the draft EU-US Action Plan for Critical Minerals Supply Chain Resilience. Delegations generally welcomed the Memorandum of Understanding and the Action Plan and indicated overall support to the Commission's proposal to sign them on behalf of the Union. However, some Member States stated that they had not had sufficient time to examine the Commission's documents and therefore raised scrutiny reservations. The Presidency consequently announced an informal silence procedure and asked Member States that were unable to agree to the Commission's proposal to submit their objection by 25 March 2026 at 14:00 hrs. No Member State raised any concerns by this deadline.

9. The Permanent Representatives Committee is asked to:

- confirm its agreement on the text of the Memorandum of Understanding and the Action Plan as set out in document 7521/26;
 - recommend that the Council authorises the Commission to sign, on behalf of the Union, the Memorandum of Understanding to establish a Strategic Partnership on Critical Minerals with the United States and the EU-US Action Plan for Critical Minerals Supply Chain Resilience, as set out in document 7521/26, as an ‘A’ item on the agenda of a forthcoming Council meeting.
-