NEWS RELEASE

U.S. Steps Up Critical Minerals Stockpiling, While EU Pushes Policy Reforms Amid Persistent Supply Vulnerabilities

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Critical Materials & Resource Dependency

U.S. Steps Up Critical Minerals Stockpiling, While EU Pushes Policy Reforms Amid Persistent Supply Vulnerabilities.

Recent policy shifts led by Donald Trump's administration underscore a growing reality: supply chains once treated as purely commercial are now being reframed as matters of economic security and national resilience. The same concern is taking hold across the European Union as Critical Raw Material (CRM) supply chains, helium included, exhibit mounting fragility.

Reporting from Reuters points to two parallel developments. Across the European Union, **efforts to diversify sources of critical raw materials have so far delivered limited progress**, with auditors warning that key targets remain unmet, despite the introduction of new policy frameworks, leaving the bloc exposed to concentrated import routes and geopolitical bottlenecks. Meanwhile, the United States is pursuing a more direct strategy: **Project Vault** combines approximately $12 billion in government-backed financing with private capital to acquire and hold strategic reserves of critical minerals, aiming to provide emergency access for U.S. manufacturers while supporting domestic processing capacity rather than operating as a traditional state-owned stockpile.

The direction of travel is clear: governments are moving to reduce raw-material uncertainty, reflecting heightened sensitivity to geopolitical and supply-chain risk. The inputs that power semiconductors, energy, aerospace, defence and digital infrastructure are now as vital to sovereignty as energy or food security.

Helium is "critical" for Europe

Helium holds a particularly important, and often overlooked position, and is officially designated as a Critical Raw Material under the EU's framework. This designation is based on a quantitative assessment against two core

criteria:

1. Economic Importance

A material scores highly when it underpins sectors that generate significant value for the EU economy or are essential to strategic technologies. Helium's importance stems from its irreplaceable physical properties and its integration across high-value industries:

- Semiconductor fabrication and advanced electronics
- Cryogenic cooling for quantum computing and research systems
- MRI scanners and medical diagnostics
- Aerospace, launch systems and defence technologies
- Fibre-optic and precision manufacturing

In many of these applications there are few practical substitutes at scale. Without reliable helium supply, production can slow significantly, or in some cases, stops altogether. That dependency elevates helium well beyond the status of a conventional industrial gas, positioning it as a strategic input to Europe's digital, healthcare and advanced manufacturing ecosystems.

2. Supply Risk

The second test measures how vulnerable the supply chain is to disruption. Here, helium also scores highly.

Europe has minimal domestic production and relies overwhelmingly on imports from a small number of non-EU producers. Global helium output is concentrated in a relatively small number of fields and jurisdictions, recycling rates are negligible, and once released, helium cannot be economically recovered. In practical terms, this means supply interruptions can quickly translate into shortages and price volatility.

The combination is what matters most: high economic dependence paired with concentrated external supply. That is precisely the profile the EU defines as critical.

What this signals to the market

Raw materials are moving to the centre of strategic planning. Governments are intervening earlier, allocating capital more directly, and treating secure and predictable access to critical inputs as a prerequisite for industrial growth and national resilience.

Materials that are scarce, non-substitutable and embedded in high-value technologies naturally command greater strategic and economic attention. Helium fits squarely within that category. Its demand profile is tied to some of the fastest-growing segments of the global economy, while supply remains limited and geographically concentrated.

For investors, the implication is increasingly viewed as structural rather than speculative. Exposure to critical materials like helium is being framed less as a cyclical trade and more as long-term positioning tied to industrial and policy priorities.

Pulsar Helium's shares trade on TSXV: PLSR | OTCQB: PSRHF | AIM: PLSR

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