The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has ratified International Labour Organisation (ILO) Conventions 138 and 182 on Child Labour, and the EU follows up on these commitments. The EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy promotes zero tolerance on child labour: the EU includes labour rights in trade relations and supports due diligence in supply chains. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) suitable Due Diligence Guidance provides a framework for responsible supply chain management of the cobalt supply chain.

The Commission proposal for a regulation on batteries and waste batteries introduces a requirement for supply chain due diligence to ensure responsible sourcing of certain raw materials. Cobalt is included therein, and the requirements address risks such as probability of child labour based on both ILO and OECD standards and guidance.

Combating child labour is one of the objectives of the EU Human Rights and Democracy Strategy 2021-2024 for the DRC. The EU is considering using thematic funds such as ‘Human Rights and Democracy’ to step up its fight against child labour in the DRC, notably in the cobalt and copper (2C) artisanal mining sector.

European public-interest entities must report on their human rights policies. The EU, in discussions with the private sector, strongly encourages initiatives to improve conditions at mine sites, including for cobalt, in third countries.

The EU supports the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, which contributed to the revision of the DRC Mining Code, making exploitation and trade of minerals using child labour illegal and requiring annual disaggregated data on employment in mining.

---

1 Council 12848/20.
3 COM(2020)798/3.
5 https://eiti.org/