

Special Issue

Development of New Processes for the Recovery of Metals from Waste Streams

Message from the Guest Editors

In 2011 and in 2018, both the European Commission and the USA, respectively, created a list of Critical Raw Materials that are not only essential for key technologies and industries but are also at high risk of supply disruption. Over a decade later, increased concerns about limited natural reserves, as well as geopolitical and ethical risks of supply chain disruptions, demonstrate the need for recycling these materials. This is particularly well illustrated in electronics, but despite over 50 million tonnes of electronic waste being generated globally each year, less than 20% is formally recycled, and a majority shipped overseas for disposal, where an estimated GBP 55 billion of rare metals are lost annually. In conventional recycling methods, which rely on high temperature and produce acid-waste, metal recovery can have poor yield, while exposing workers and ecosystems to toxic by-products. So recycling is essential, but novel more sustainable methods need to be developed.

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