

Closing the loop: Next steps critical for Europe's Circular Economy

Brussels, 2 December 2015: The European Commission's proposal is a pivotal step towards a resource-efficient economy based on best-in-class collection, sorting and separation technologies. It is vitally important to now build on momentum to secure Europe's status as a leader in recycling and driver of sustainable growth in the global marketplace.

European Aluminium Director-General Gerd Götz issues the following statement on the proposal:

"To build a European circular economy, we have to think global. Every year, about one million tonnes of aluminium scrap leave Europe to be recycled in other parts of the world. This is an economic waste that makes us reliant on imports and could be avoided through greater investment in collection and sorting infrastructure. Exporting scrap is also exporting the energy embedded in the metal. Recycling these one million tonnes of aluminium scrap in Europe would be equivalent to saving the annual energy consumption of countries such as Latvia or Luxembourg." [Listen to quote.](#)

In addition to a global mind set, achieving a real Circular Economy requires a clear and ambitious EU legal framework. European Aluminium supports the Commission's consistent recycling definitions and its proposal to move the measurement of recycling to after the sorting phase rather than at the point of collection. This is essential to ensure that Member States report real recycling results.

The proposal to progressively phase out the landfilling of recyclable waste is an important step, even though the Commission fell short of completely banning landfills, still accepting a maximum of 10%.

"It is disappointing that recyclable waste still ends up in landfills in Europe. Recyclable materials such as aluminium must stay in the loop. Landfilling clearly belongs to the linear economy. It should be phased out and replaced with efficient collection and sorting systems as soon as possible." Götz added. [Listen to quote](#)

The Commission could have been more ambitious for the target on Construction & Demolition Waste (CDW), for which the present 70% encompasses all material recovery operations, including backfilling. With less than 10% of all CDW being recycled today (all materials), specific re-use and recycling target for this waste stream would boost our overall progress towards a Circular Economy.

Europe is currently the world leader in aluminium recycling, with over 90% of aluminium recycled in the construction and automotive sectors and 60% in packaging. Aluminium can be recycled again and again without any loss of quality and is already a key contributor to the Circular Economy. European remelting and refining companies have the capacity to recycle even more aluminium scrap in the EU, if collection processes were improved and unnecessary exports reduced.

"We want Europe to stay the world leader in aluminium recycling. The aluminium industry can strengthen Europe's circular economy and has the capacity to recycle even more. However, waste markets are global and we are facing unfair competition for aluminium scrap. The EU has a responsibility to ensure that when aluminium scrap is exported to facilities outside Europe, these facilities apply equivalent health, safety and environmental standards as in Europe." Götz concluded. [Listen to quote](#)

Download our full position paper on the Circular Economy [here](#)

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/ About European Aluminium:

European Aluminium, founded in 1981, is the association that represents the whole value chain of the aluminium industry in Europe. We actively engage with decision-makers and the wider stakeholder community to promote the outstanding properties of aluminium, secure growth and optimise the contribution our metal can make to meeting Europe's sustainability challenges. Through environmental and technical expertise, economic and statistical analysis, scientific research, education and sharing of best practices, public affairs and communication activities, European Aluminium promotes the use of aluminium as a permanent material that is part of the solution to achieving sustainable goals, while maintaining and improving the image of the industry, of the material and of its applications among their stakeholders.

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