

P R E S S R E L E A S E

Circular Economy Plenary Vote: MEPs look beyond just targets with single measure of “real” recycling rates

Brussels, 14 March 2017 – In today’s Plenary vote on the EU Circular Economy waste legislation, MEPs have recommended that Member States start using a single method to measure more realistic recycling rates.

The European non-ferrous metals industry congratulates MEPs for their ambitious approach to pushing the Circular Economy forward. We now call on the European Parliament to prioritise this common measurement system in their negotiations with the European Commission and Council.

Guy Thiran, Eurometaux’s Director General, stated: “We applaud MEPs for looking beyond just numbers in today’s vote. Until we have a common method to measure exactly how much of our waste gets recycled, it doesn’t matter whether the EU’s headline recycling targets are 65 per cent or 70 per cent. The European Parliament now needs to make a strong calculation method its top priority for talks with other EU institutions. We can only gage the realism and ambition of recycling targets once we know what Member States will be measuring”.

National recycling rates are incomparable as long as Member States calculate them in different ways. Today, several Member States report only the amount of waste they’ve collected or sorted, instead of the amount they actually recycle.

Under the Parliament’s recommendation, all authorities would start using a single method defined at EU level, measuring recycling rates at “input to the final recycling process”. Their proposal runs counter to the Council’s less stringent draft approach, which includes a second conditional option for Member States to measure after first sorting operations.

Guy Thiran continued: “Current recycling rates overestimate Europe’s actual circular performance. This removes a critical incentive for Member States and industry to invest in more effective sorting plants and quality recycling facilities. MEPs have today voted to fix that distortion and measure what really matters. We now call on Member States to deliver a similar level of ambition and aim towards a single measurement. Europe will only achieve a true Circular Economy once all parties commit to tracking exactly what they recycle, even if that transition can’t be made overnight”.

“Elsewhere, we’re happy with the Parliament’s proposal to establish minimum operating conditions for final recyclers. This would guarantee high-quality recycling of electronics waste and other products. It’s only a shame that MEPs have not taken stronger action to address scrap leakage. We still need clearer guidelines on how exported waste should be recycled. Otherwise, safe and efficient European recyclers will continue to be disadvantaged against recyclers not held to the same high standards”.

ABOUT EUROMETAUX

Eurometaux is the decisive voice of non-ferrous metals producers and recyclers in Europe. With an annual turnover of €120bn, our members represent an essential industry for European society that businesses in almost every sector depend on. Together, we are leading Europe towards a more circular future through the endlessly recyclable potential of metals.

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