

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

Circular Economy waste deal: a step forward for metals recycling, if properly implemented

Brussels, 18 December 2017 – EU institutions today reached a preliminary agreement on new waste legislation to push Europe’s Circular Economy forwards. The European non-ferrous metals association (Eurometaux) welcomes new provisions to measure recycling rates more accurately and promote high-quality metals recycling.

However, we are concerned that EU institutions have decided on flexible recycling targets for aluminium and other packaging. This provides one of several potential loopholes for Member States to avoid the package’s overall ambition, which now depends on each government’s implementation.

Guy Thiran, Eurometaux’s Director General, stated: “What’s most important is that EU negotiators have today agreed on a singular vision for taking our waste legislation forwards. We congratulate the Estonian Presidency and other negotiators for their commitment to making progress”.

“Member States are now obliged to measure or estimate how much waste they really recycle. Although we had recommended a harmonised measure, we’re pleased governments will take a first step beyond only reporting what’s collected or sorted. The Commission now has a key role in making sure the new method works in practice, instead of becoming another loophole. Member States should be prevented from making estimations that continue overstating their recycling performance”.

Under today’s agreement, all authorities will be obliged to measure recycling rates at input to the last recycling process, or otherwise to estimate the losses occurring after first sorting operations. Europe’s metals industry is committed to support the European Commission in defining robust implementation guidelines that ensure accurate estimations.

Guy Thiran continued: “Europe’s waste legislation is judged by the ambition of its targets. By that measure, today’s deal falls short for aluminium packaging. A 50% recycling target for 2025 does not send a strong enough signal for Member States to invest in more efficient sorting technologies. Governments will also have flexibility not to meet targets for one or two materials of their choice. We’re concerned this complex derogation will give Member States a free pass to ignore individual packaging streams. A Circular Economy requires equal ambition in all areas”.

Looking ahead, Europe’s metals industry will continue to encourage further policy action to achieve a Circular Economy. Wider measures are needed to ease shipments of waste through Europe, to better control waste exports, and to champion high-quality metals recyclers. These measures are essential to capitalising on Europe’s urban mine, where valuable and critical metals can be recycled from cars, buildings, packaging, electronics waste and other applications.

ABOUT EUROMETAUX

Eurometaux is the decisive voice of non-ferrous metals producers and recyclers in Europe. With 500,000 employees and 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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