

To: President Ursula von der Leyen

14 May 2020

CC: Executive Vice President Frans Timmermans; Vice President Maroš Šefčovič;  
Commissioners Thierry Breton, Paolo Gentiloni, Phil Hogan, Janez Lenarčič

Dear European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen,

We write on behalf of Europe's collective metals industry to emphasise our sector's full support for two major focuses of your COVID-19 recovery programme towards the Green Deal: improving Europe's strategic autonomy for raw materials and furthering Europe's leadership in climate and digital technologies.

The International Energy Agency has this month warned that "[clean energy progress after the COVID-19 crisis will need reliable supplies of critical minerals](#)". Moving forwards, Europe must act to strengthen its own sustainable value chains for both mined and recycled metals, while securing a diversified supply from third countries. Leaders from Europe's metals industry would welcome the opportunity to virtually discuss with you how this ambition can be made reality, and what we can learn from experiences during the COVID-19 health crisis.

Our sector – with 500,000 employees across almost 1,000 European facilities - has a growing responsibility to supply and recycle the metals required in significantly higher quantities for the European Green Deal. An electric car and its battery require 5x more metals than a conventional vehicle, and an onshore wind turbine requires 8x more metals than a gas-fired plant. We also play a fundamental role in supplying value chains that have been essential throughout the health crisis: medical equipment, food packaging & critical infrastructure.

Across its strategic ecosystems, Europe has a rising materials dependence on other areas of the world. Our continent is highly reliant on imports of certain critical metals & minerals, but is also gradually losing its global share for those base & precious metals where it has industrial capacity. To improve EU strategic autonomy, we must prioritise Europe's value chains for all the base, precious and critical metals required in the energy transition, within a continued global approach.

1. **Invest into European raw materials:** Our sector gives its full support to the new Industrial Strategy's commitment to establish a Raw Materials Alliance and make Europe's resource security a top strategic priority. We recommend this initiative is now fast-tracked as part of your COVID-19 recovery plan, including an expanded Circular Economy agenda, new investments into sustainable mining and refining operations, and an analysis of global partners – for all the metals required in higher volumes by Europe's climate and digital goals.
2. **Maintain fair trade conditions:** As world regions begin their recovery from COVID-19 at different speeds, there is a real risk that Europe's import reliance further increases. Recovering economies like China will have a strong rationale to oversupply global markets or engage in strategic stockpiling while their domestic demand remains at low levels. Fair trade conditions must be maintained at a time when our companies are at their weakest and global metals prices at their worst levels in a generation.

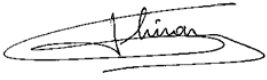
In the immediate future, Europe's metals industry will also – like others - require EU policy support for its economic recovery. We recommend a COVID-19 recovery package that includes urgent access to relief funds for key ecosystems including their raw materials supply, measures to stimulate demand across Europe, and an assessment of where sectors will now require additional support for making their necessary investments towards climate targets.

Once we weather this storm, Europe has an opportunity to put strategic autonomy and raw materials at the forefront of its post-COVID-19 economy. This will enable the success of the Green Deal, which should be supplied by metals & minerals from European companies when possible, where climate and environmental standards are highest.

COVID-19 is currently an existential threat for parts of Europe's metals sector, but we hope it can also be a turning point. We want to work with you to learn lessons from this crisis and turn sustainable raw materials into an EU strength.



Yours sincerely,



Guy Thiran, Director General, Eurometaux



Mikael Staffas, CEO Boliden & Eurometaux President

