

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

COVID-19 recovery plan: a vital catalyst to improve Europe's strategic autonomy for metals and minerals

- Europe's metals industry welcomes today's COVID-19 Recovery Plan and its focuses on improving strategic autonomy for raw materials and establishing climate and digital leadership
- Recent [World Bank](#) & [International Energy Agency](#) reports have confirmed the post-COVID-19 energy transition will need reliable supplies of metals and minerals, where Europe has growing import reliance
- Urgent measures are needed to recover Europe's metals industry and its ecosystems, alongside an ambitious programme for bringing new investment into EU raw materials within a global approach

Brussels, 26 May 2020: "Today's Recovery Plan sets the foundation for Europe's economic comeback after the COVID-19 pandemic. We must now improve our continent's resilience against future shocks and establish strategic autonomy in key areas – including the metals and minerals required in higher volumes for the green recovery", Guy Thiran, Director General of Eurometaux (European metals association) stated in response to the European Commission's COVID-19 recovery plan, published today.

"Tackling the COVID-19 health crisis has exposed Europe's overdependence on key strategic raw materials from other regions. We should now learn lessons and prevent supply vulnerabilities from derailing EU climate and digital ambitions during its recovery. The Green Deal will require massively higher volumes of metals and minerals for its batteries, electric vehicles, wind turbines, solar panels, and energy-efficient buildings. But Europe has a significant and increasing import reliance at all levels".

The International Energy Agency this month warned that "[clean energy progress after the COVID-19 crisis will need reliable supplies of critical minerals](#)". An electric car and its battery require 5 times more metals than a conventional vehicle (non-structural), and an onshore wind turbine 8 times more metals than a gas-fired plant. Europe is already highly reliant on imports for its critical metals including lithium, cobalt and rare earths. But since the 2008 financial crisis, Europe has also lost global market share for the base metals required in higher volumes for strategic and climate technologies - aluminium, copper, nickel, lead and zinc.

Guy Thiran continued: "The metals sector has three clear recommendations for Europe to re-establish metals strategic autonomy and enable its climate and digital leadership: advance the Circular Economy, invest in sustainable European mining and refining, and secure a diversified supply of sustainable raw materials from abroad."

"Alongside the Recovery Plan's longer-term vision, urgent measures are required to tackle the severe downturn faced today by Europe's metals industry and its main value chains. We welcome the ecosystems identified as needing priority support, including energy-intensive sectors like ours and six of the key sectors we supply: automotive, construction, digital, aerospace & defence, health, and renewable energy. Let's take an integrated approach to restoring European demand and getting our economy back on its feet".

"We also call for a prioritisation of fair trade and level playing field conditions at a time when our companies are at their most vulnerable and global metals prices at their lowest in a generation. We face the very real risk of Europe's import reliance further increasing as other regions begin their recovery faster. Recovering economies like China will have a strong rationale to oversupply global markets or engage in strategic stockpiling while their demand is low".

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About Eurometaux: Eurometaux is a trade association representing the collective European non-ferrous metals industry, including smelters, refiners, transformers and recyclers of all non-ferrous metals produced industrially in Europe. In total the industry employs 500,000 people across over 900 facilities, with an annual turnover of €120bn. Our [2050 Blueprint](#) outlines the framework conditions required for transitioning towards climate-neutrality