

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

New initiatives will keep Europe’s Circular Economy moving forwards

Brussels, 16 January 2018 – The European Commission today released four new initiatives under their Circular Economy Action Plan.

The European non-ferrous metals association (Eurometaux) welcomes new initiatives to monitor Europe’s circularity and clarify the interface between waste and chemicals legislation. We also recognise the need for a targeted approach to managing Europe’s plastics. Moving forwards, it will be important for the European Commission to keep a balanced focus on other strategic materials and their circularity opportunities & barriers.

Guy Thiran, Eurometaux’s Director General, responded to three of the new initiatives:

Plastics Strategy – “Europe’s materials have different Circular Economy barriers, all of which must be overcome in the next decades. With today’s Plastics Strategy, we note the Commission’s recognition that individual materials sometimes require targeted policies. Moving forwards, we request a consideration of how the Plastics Strategy will impact other strategic materials, and whether their circularity might also be boosted through targeted actions.

Overall, the Commission must take care to maintain technology and material neutrality, notably for EU research funding. Europe’s circular economy success requires a delicate balance of horizontal and targeted measures that boost all materials. In our industry, the market for recycled metals is already booming. Most important now is making sure that all Europe’s waste metals are treated properly by high-quality recyclers. Better recycling will allow us to supply Europe’s rising metals demand in low-carbon and high technology applications”.

Monitoring Framework – “Europe’s Circular Economy will require a robust framework for monitoring our collective progress. Today’s proposal is an important starting point. We’re pleased the Commission has already included indicators on raw materials supply and product recycling rates. An evaluation is still needed on whether recent improvements to the recycling rate calculation measure will allow for Member State comparability.

Moving forwards, more detailed indicators will also be required to incentivise recycling of certain raw materials. Recycling rate indicators do not show what happens to the low quantities of strategic or critical metals contained in our electronics or other products. These metals are integral to supplying Europe’s low-carbon transition. We will support the Commission in evolving their framework to better track strategic resources in the future”.

Interface waste, chemicals and products legislation – “Today’s proposal starts an important discussion on what is needed to avoid regulatory burden in Europe’s chemicals & waste legislation to support high-quality recycling. Europe’s metals industry is committed to achieving a “risk-controlled” environment, where hazardous substances are used only when their harmful exposure is controlled.

We have requested that the EU’s policy framework should promote the safe treatment of hazardous substances, where it takes place in our industry and others. Targeted EU action may be needed to address specific risks from hazardous substances in certain waste streams. Our priority should be to identify where those risks take place”.

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.

Contact: Chris Heron, Communications & Public Affairs Manager | heron@eurometaux.be | +32 (0) 493 18 89 63

