

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

## Circular Economy Action Plan essential to securing Europe’s raw materials leadership, says metals industry

- **New Circular Economy Action Plan is essential to help secure Europe’s sustainable supply of the raw materials required in higher volumes by climate-neutrality & digitalisation**
- **Ambitious EU policies should be implemented to improve metals collection and recycling rates from key product value chains including electronics, batteries, vehicles, packaging and construction**
- **Metals industry calls for decisive action to keep valuable resources available for Europe’s state-of-the-art recyclers, avoiding exports to third countries without equivalent environmental standards**

Brussels, 11 March 2020: “Today’s Circular Economy Action Plan is an essential tool for Europe to improve its resource security through making its metals recycling industry a major industrial strength. We know that the Green Deal’s climate-neutrality and digitalisation goals will require higher volumes of raw materials to succeed. It’s now time to unleash the full potential of Europe’s urban mine” Guy Thiran, Director General of Eurometaux, said on the publication day of the European Commission’s Circular Economy Action Plan.

Over half of all base metals produced in Europe already come from recycling, and state-of-the art recyclers are equipped to recover 20+ additional metals from complex products like electronics waste and batteries. Europe has the potential to further increase metals recycling volumes from the Action Plan’s key product value chains including electronics, batteries, vehicles, packaging and construction. Doing so will improve resource security and contribute to climate mitigation, with recycling processes requiring less energy overall than extraction and primary production operations.

Guy Thiran continued: “The metals recycling industry exemplifies how Europe’s industrial strategy and circular economy action plan should work hand in hand. Each year Europe exports millions of tonnes of metals scrap to third countries, without any guarantee it will be properly treated. Today’s Action Plan promises to address red tape and lack of a level playing field so that our recyclers right here in Europe can process that scrap at the highest of standards”

Metals scrap represents over 75% of all global waste trade by value. Europe remains a net exporter, shipping almost 2 million tonnes of cumulative aluminium and copper scrap and 750,000 tonnes of electronics waste each year, mainly to Asia and Africa. Within Europe, shipments across borders face delays of over a month due to burdensome notification requirements and conflicting Member State systems. The metals industry is calling for EU action to improve waste flows to proven high-quality recyclers within Europe, while tackling uncontrolled exports.

“We also confirm the importance of Europe’s wider focuses on sustainable product design, improved collection systems, research & investment to improve sorting and recycling technology, and safe treatment of hazardous chemicals. It’s essential that all measures work together to maximise Europe’s recycling of metals and their by-products, securing our domestic supply of raw materials for the Green Deal”

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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

