

Joint Press Statement

The European metals sector embarks on Transition Pathway to enable the EU Green Deal and Digital Agenda

Brussels, 11 September 2023 – The European metals industry, including both ferrous and non-ferrous metals, has initiated the process to establish its own EU Transition Pathway¹ in collaboration with the European Commission. The metals sector plays a pivotal role in facilitating the EU’s green and digital transitions by enabling several strategic value chains at the core of the clean tech economy. The objective of this comprehensive plan is to ensure the sustainability and resilience of the metals sector, aligning it with the overarching objectives of the EU twin transition.

As other regions worldwide are equally transitioning towards a more digital and greener economy, the demand for metals is rapidly increasing, often designating them as critical resources for clean energy and electronic technologies. Steel and a wide range of non-ferrous metals – such as aluminium, copper, nickel, zinc, and lithium – are indispensable components of this transition: they are essential for electric vehicles, wind, solar and hydrogen technologies, to name a few. Europe must ensure the security and sustainability of its metals supply to deliver on its 2030 clean energy goals.

This underscores the importance of establishing a healthy and resilient metals sector as a key factor for the EU’s strategic autonomy. The metals sector is also a key pillar of the EU economy, providing over 800,000 direct jobs and over 5 million indirect jobs.

The Transition Pathway for Metals will lay out the main challenges to be faced in the European metals sector’s transition towards 2050, the investments required to overcome them, and the necessary policy framework and conditions to encourage these investments. The process will accelerate over the next semester, with the objective of completing the work by the end of March 2024.

Guy Thiran, Eurometaux Director General, says: “The faster Europe decarbonises, the higher its metals requirements. We’re excited to be working with the European Commission on a Transition Pathway for Metals that will bring all stakeholders around the table to tackle the security and sustainability challenge ahead. Our industry has the ambition to supply more of the metals that Europe needs for its batteries, renewable energy technologies, and grids – at the same time as decarbonising, recycling more, and continually lowering our environmental footprint. Achieving this ambition requires a more comprehensive EU industrial policy, uniting all policy areas to help our companies compete globally. We want the Transition Pathway for Metals to be a step forward for Europe and its work ahead to deliver an effective policy package for growing tomorrow’s clean energy supply chains”.

Axel Eggert, EUROFER Director General, says: “The Transition Pathway for Metals is a timely opportunity to collectively craft a long-term vision for our industry with a fresh approach that transcends policy silos and encompasses various areas, from decarbonisation to energy and circularity policies. An effective co-creation process, founded on dialogue with all relevant stakeholders, will be crucial to produce a pathway that can be put into practice. Steel is 100% recyclable and a core material in all low-carbon technologies, ranging from wind turbines to sustainable buildings. We are already implementing several steel decarbonisation projects across the EU. However, the right conditions need to be in place to support the transition whilst facing fierce, and often unfair, global competition that jeopardizes both the sector’s viability and the success of the EU twin transition”.

¹ ‘Transition Pathways’ are a European Commission-led ‘co-development’ process for strategic industrial sectors and their stakeholders to develop an action-orientated roadmap towards 2050. This roadmap should outline the technologies and regulatory components that will be required for enabling the sector’s twin transition, circularity, and resilience. Transition Pathways have previously been established for Europe’s chemicals and tourism sectors.

Notes for editors

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About Eurometaux

Eurometaux is a trade association representing the collective European non-ferrous metals industry, including miners, smelters, refiners, fabricators and recyclers. The industry employs 500,000 people across over 900 facilities, with an annual turnover of €120bn.

About the European Steel Association (EUROFER)

EUROFER AISBL is located in Brussels and was founded in 1976. It represents the entirety of steel production in the European Union. EUROFER members are steel companies and national steel federations throughout the EU. The major steel companies and national steel federations in the United Kingdom and Turkey are associate members.

The European Steel Association is recorded in the EU transparency register: 93038071152-83.