

# EU Critical Raw Materials Act is step in the right direction to boost European sovereignty in raw materials supply

**Brussels, 14 September 2022 – European Aluminium, the industry association representing the aluminium value chain in Europe, welcomes European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen’s announcement of a new Critical Raw Materials Act during the annual State of the Union Address. Considering the increasing importance of accelerating Europe’s green transition, the Association calls on policy makers to urgently assist in securing a sustainable supply of European aluminium. The metal is a critical component in green technologies, such as wind turbines and solar panels, defence applications, and essential consumer products.**

*“The Critical Raw Materials Act is a step in the right direction to support sustainable growth and strategic autonomy in raw materials. We appreciate that the Commission is taking a full value chain approach and will identify strategic projects along the supply chain, from extraction to refining, from processing to recycling. However, European raw materials that aren’t deemed ‘scarce’ or ‘rare’ shouldn’t be left behind. Policy makers should introduce measures for all raw materials industries to help increase their supply security, obtain greater investments and scale up recycling capacity to recover valuable secondary raw materials. We’re all experiencing the devastating consequences of our overdependence on Russian gas; let’s not make that disastrous mistake again with raw materials,”* comments Paul Voss, Director General of European Aluminium.

European Aluminium stresses the importance of boosting Europe’s strategic autonomy in raw materials, given their importance in delivering the EU Green Deal and essential applications for European citizens.

Because it can improve a product’s energy efficiency and recyclability, aluminium has become the material of choice for clean technologies. Wind, solar and hydrogen power, batteries, electric vehicles, electricity transmission, and energy-efficient building systems are among the applications that rely on aluminium. A recent study shows that European aluminium demand for clean technologies alone will increase from 14 million tonnes in 2020 to 21 million tonnes in 2050, with electric vehicles, solar power, and electricity networks as the main growth drivers.<sup>1</sup> The metal is also widely used in food and pharmaceutical packaging as well as military and defence applications, including communication systems, aerospace, and satellites.

Increasing and preserving the capacity of Europe’s low-carbon primary aluminium production and world-class recycling sector is the only way to meet growing demand and overcome import dependencies. Furthermore, to reduce the industry’s energy demand and help it reach full circularity, policy measures should incentivise the uptake of scrap in Europe, which is a valuable secondary raw material.

*“Aluminium truly is the base metal for the green transition and plays a unique role in Europe’s transformation to a more sustainable, digital economy. That’s why Europe must absolutely avoid dependence on aluminium imports from third countries and focus on fostering a secure and sustainable supply of European aluminium. We appreciate that the*

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<sup>1</sup> [Metals for clean energy](#), Eurometaux & KU Leuven, April 2022.

*European Commission is stepping up its actions to strengthen the resilience of raw material value chains, but we also need immediate emergency measures to help our energy-intensive value chain survive the winter,” concludes Voss.*

## **Note to the editor:**

The European aluminium value chain is one of Europe’s most complete and thriving raw materials sectors, with over 600 plants across 30 European countries. Serving six of the EU’s fourteen industrial ecosystems, the European aluminium industry plays a key enabling role in realising the European Green Deal. The industry is also an important socio-economic actor. It contributes around 40 billion annual turnover to the European economy and provides over 1 million direct and indirect jobs.

When it comes to sustainability, European producers apply the highest environmental, social and governance (ESG) standards across the entire aluminium value chain, from sourcing raw materials to managing end-of-life products. Moreover, the carbon footprint of Europe’s primary production process is much lower than the global average, with only 6.8 kg CO<sub>2</sub> emissions compared to the Chinese average of 20 kg and the global average of 16.1 kg CO<sub>2</sub> per kg of aluminium produced. The industry has already reduced the carbon intensity of primary aluminium production by 50% since 1990. Our semi-fabrication and recycling processes have equally reduced their carbon intensity, making European producers ‘best-in-class’. The European aluminium industry aims to decarbonise further and faster, and is committed to reaching carbon neutrality by 2050.

Boosting domestic aluminium recycling is key to achieving net-zero and limiting Europe’s dependence on fossil fuel imports. Aluminium can be recycled repeatedly without its original properties, and recycling only takes 5% of energy compared to producing primary aluminum production, representing a clear environmental benefit.

## **About European Aluminium:**

European Aluminium, founded in 1981 and based in Brussels, is the voice of the aluminium industry in Europe. We actively engage with decision makers and the wider stakeholder community to promote the outstanding properties of aluminium, secure growth and optimise the contribution our metal can make to meeting Europe’s sustainability challenges. Through environmental and technical expertise, economic and statistical analysis, scientific research, education and sharing of best practices, public affairs and communication activities, European Aluminium promotes the use of aluminium as a material with permanent properties that is part of the solution to achieving sustainable goals, while maintaining and improving the image of the industry, of the material and of its applications among their stakeholders. Our 100+ members include primary aluminium producers; downstream manufacturers of extruded, rolled and cast aluminium; producers of recycled aluminium and national aluminium associations are representing more than 600 plants in 30 European countries. Aluminium products are used in a wide range of markets, including automotive, transport, high-tech engineering, building, construction and packaging.

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