

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

Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability: Work ahead to turn ambition into coherent action

- **Metals industry supports EU goal for ensuring chemicals are produced & used in a way that maximises their contribution to society while avoiding harm, but questions new strategy's coherence in key areas**

Brussels, 14 October 2020: "Today's Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability has a clear ambition that Europe must fully address all potential of harmful chemicals exposure. But we're concerned about the lack of coherence between several proposed measures and Europe's wider climate change and circular economy goals. One-size won't fit all, and we shouldn't ignore the complexity of what's ahead of us" said Guy Thiran, Eurometaux Director General, on the day of publication for the EU's Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability.

"All parties agree that Europe's use of chemicals should not harm human health or the environment. But we need to get the balance right, through addressing the most problematic issues while keeping essential materials in safe and sustainable use. Over 80% of the metals Europe requires for its green and digital transitions have a classifiable hazard of some type. But most of them are used safely in products and can be recycled endlessly. Think of the metals locked in batteries for our mobility and energy systems, the alloyed steel in a wind turbine, or a laptop circuit board".

"Europe's Circular Economy priority is rightly to invest into safe recycling capacity for these strategic metals so they can replace imported primary material with major climate benefits. We're confused to see such a blanket focus on minimisation in today's strategy and will seek further clarification from the Commission. Now must be the time for policies that support sustainable manufacturing to enable Europe's green economic recovery, not ones impeding it".

The Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability sets out an objective for a toxic-free environment, where chemicals are produced and used in a way that maximises their contribution to society while avoiding harm to the planet. The European Commission has introduced new measures aiming to address impacts from the most harmful chemicals, as well as putting attention on a new "Substances of Concern" category with more widespread coverage.

Metals are inorganic chemicals used across a range of European industrial ecosystems, including mobility, construction, electronics, digital, health, and renewable energy. Their demand is projected to increase significantly in line with society's transition away from fossil fuels towards climate-neutrality, with recycling a key route to improving Europe's resilience. The industry maintains that Europe's priority should be to develop robust measures for controlling any harmful exposure from metals across their lifecycle, building on the significant industry investments made into making REACH a success as the most comprehensive chemicals legislation in the world.

"We commit to joining the new high-level roundtable the European Commission has announced for realising the chemicals strategy's objectives. We want to contribute through fact-based evidence and constructive proposals, building on our long-held commitment to safe and sustainable metals loops. It will be crucial to bring Europe's strategic value chains together for defining a viable way forward to safely manage those essential substances where society doesn't have an available alternative. Getting the balance wrong will be detrimental to Europe's goal of improving its resilience compared with the risk of less controlled imports supplying our Green Deal"

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About Eurometaux: Eurometaux is a trade association representing the collective European non-ferrous metals industry, including smelters, refiners, fabricators 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.