

PRESS RELEASE – for immediate release
Federation of Aluminium Consumers in Europe - FACE
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PRESS RELEASE

ALUMINIUM, FACE: “1.8 BILLION EXTRA COSTS. EUROPEAN INDUSTRY AT BREAKING POINT”

“With aluminium prices on the London Metal Exchange (LME) reaching €3,600 and moving towards the €4,000 mark, the cost burden on European industry risks soaring to as much as €1.8 billion per year.” This was stated by Mario Conserva, Secretary General of FACE – Federation of Aluminium Consumers in Europe – highlighting the financial pressure currently generating severe tensions across the global aluminium manufacturing sector.

This situation marks a dramatic deterioration compared to the figures identified in a previous study conducted by FACE together with LUISS University, which showed that the extra cost borne by European industry due to import duties on unwrought aluminium already exceeded €1 billion per year in a more stable market environment, with LME prices ranging between €2,300 and €2,500 per tonne.

According to Conserva, the existence for decades of an import duty on a raw material no longer produced within the EU, such as unwrought aluminium, is in itself a distortion and a major competitive disadvantage for the downstream light metals industry. The persistence of this absurd additional cost is even more incomprehensible and contrary to market logic in the current context of a possible structural deficit in primary metal supplies.

“We should remember that this tariff has effectively become an improper tax on raw materials; it is a hidden subsidy benefiting a limited number of privileged operators within the value chain, but an extra cost for the downstream market involved in processing, manufacturing and end uses, averaging between €80 and €100 per tonne. Over the past twenty years, this burden has made European industry structurally more vulnerable. This enormous economic drag on the entire European aluminium downstream sector – which represents 85% of the total turnover of the EU aluminium value chain – has persisted for decades despite repeated calls for its abolition, and now risks amplifying the impact of global shocks, from the Covid crisis to the war in Ukraine and the latest geopolitical tensions.”





FACE underlines that the European production system now finds itself in a paradoxical situation: “with dependence on imports of primary aluminium exceeding 85%, and with increasing volumes of scrap leaving Europe, maintaining customs duties on a raw material we do not produce ultimately weakens the entire downstream industry precisely at a time when global competition is becoming more aggressive and operating costs are rising.”

“The responsibility of the European Commission, Member State governments and pro-tariff lobbies supporting raw material import costs is clear,” Conserva concludes. “For years they have supported and defended what is effectively a hidden subsidy through import duties on unwrought aluminium, thereby weakening the entire European downstream aluminium industry. Today, with this additional burden approaching €1.8 billion, the risks for industrial sustainability are becoming even more severe. An immediate change of course is needed: eliminating import duties on raw materials is a key step towards defending Europe’s aluminium manufacturing industry.”

FEDERATION OF ALUMINIUM CONSUMERS IN EUROPE (FACE)

FACE was founded in 1999 to specifically defend the interests of the EU independent downstream aluminium transformers, users and consumers. Based in Brussels, FACE advocates for the liberalisation of raw materials, protecting the EU's manufacturing base, supporting a rules-based and fair international system with the WTO at its core, and for the global transformation towards a low-carbon economy with aluminium as the ideal material for attaining sustainability goals.

<https://face-aluminium.com/>

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