

PRESS RELEASE - for immediate release

Federation of Aluminium Consumers in Europe - FACE

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PRESS RELEASE

FACE: “ALUMINIUM SCRAP IS A STRATEGIC RAW MATERIAL. RESTRICTING EXPORTS IS WELCOME, BUT THE EU MUST ALSO CREATE THE CONDITIONS TO USE IT WITHIN ITS OWN INDUSTRY”

Brussels, 8 September 2026 – FACE welcomes the European Commission’s intention to strengthen measures to retain aluminium scrap in EU, but expresses strong reservations about the change of approach announced by Brussels.

The Commission has withdrawn its previous proposal for a trade instrument to limit scrap exports and is now considering a delegated act under the EU waste shipment framework, with the aim of banning exports to non-OECD countries, while potentially providing exemptions for certain EU candidate countries.

FACE supports the need for restrictions on scrap exports, provided that they are effective and WTO-compliant. But export restrictions alone are not sufficient.

“FACE has long called for a strong measure to retain aluminium scrap in the EU, including through a high export tariff or an equivalent instrument, provided that it is consistent with WTO rules. We therefore do not challenge the Commission’s objective of limiting exports. What we challenge is the decision to abandon a trade instrument that had already been identified as urgent and, instead, pursue a solution under waste management rules without a parallel industrial strategy to ensure that this raw material is effectively used within the EU”, said Mario Conserva, Secretary General of FACE – Federation of Aluminium Consumers in Europe.

For FACE, the core objective of EU policy must be twofold: **retain scrap within the Union and significantly increase the capacity of industry to use it.**

Aluminium scrap should not be treated simply as a resource to be managed, but as a **strategic raw material**, representing a reserve of metal and embodied energy that is essential to the manufacturing vitality, competitiveness and decarbonisation of the EU aluminium value chain.

Any measure restricting exports should therefore be accompanied by action to:

- simplify environmental and other regulations that hinder the use of scrap;
- increase EU capacity for collection, sorting, processing, refining and recycling;
- support investment in the technologies required to use greater quantities of scrap;
- create competitive conditions for EU companies processing recycled material;
- support financially SMEs in the recycling business, notably on energy costs;
- promote the use of secondary aluminium in EU manufacturing;
- fully recognise aluminium scrap as a **strategic raw material** within EU industrial policy.

*“The objective should not simply be to retain material, but to **retain and create industrial value** in the EU. If recycled aluminium is a strategic raw material, the Union must ensure that it is effectively processed and used by EU companies”, Conserva added.*

Why export to countries outside the EU?

FACE also believes that the proposed approach raises important questions regarding the possible continuation of exports to OECD countries and, potentially, to certain EU candidate countries.

If the priority today is to secure raw materials for EU manufacturing, why should aluminium scrap be directed to countries that are not or not yet part of the Union?

There is a risk that the material could leave the EU, be processed outside the Community market and subsequently be redirected to other markets. In this way, the EU risks losing not only the raw material, but also **the embodied energy, industrial capacity and added value associated with its processing**.

“At a time when EU manufacturing is facing a crisis of competitiveness, rising costs and massive losses of industrial jobs, the priority of EU industrial policy must be to support companies within the Union. We do not understand why a strategic raw material should be made available to countries that are not EU members, rather than first strengthening the EU’s own industrial capacity”, Conserva stressed.

FACE is also concerned about the slow and hesitant way in which the Commission and Member States are proceeding: a measure to retain greater quantities of scrap in the EU had already been identified as urgent last year. After several delays, the previous proposal has now been withdrawn in favour of a completely different instrument. **After two years of growing pressure on scrap availability and of constant EU industrial erosion, the EU cannot afford further delays or partial solutions.**

“The EU must decide whether it wants to protect a strategic raw material for its industry and to stimulate its use within the Union. For FACE, the answer is clear: aluminium scrap must become a central component of EU industrial strategy”, Conserva concluded.

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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