

PRESS RELEASE

RAW MATERIALS: CONSERVA (FACE), EU NEEDS ALUMINIUM, HINDERING IMPORT IS INSANE

“EU REQUIREMENT 13.5 MILLION TONNES OF ALUMINIUM BUT PRODUCES ONLY 950,000 OF THEM”

21 March 2024. “Today, Europe requires approximately 8 million tons of primary aluminium annually, out of a total raw metal usage, including recycled metal, of just over 13.5 million tons. Assessing the supply within this crucial downstream industrial chain requires thorough evaluation and attention from decision-makers. Over recent years, the EU has witnessed a significant decline, with a 65% loss in domestic primary production, now totalling only about 950,000 tons per year,” stated Mario Conserva, Secretary General of FACE (Federation of Aluminium Consumers Europe).

“While it's true that rates of virtuous recovery and recycling from scrap are increasing significantly,” adds Conserva, “it's important to recognize that miracles are not of this earth. Analytical data consistently indicate that even with maximal rates of scrap recovery, aluminium derived from recycling would only meet approximately 60% of the global demand for this light metal, which is projected to increase by 40-50% by 2050.”

“Considering the EU's needs in the context of ‘old Europe’, we must also account for the increase in primary production in the EFTA countries (Norway and Iceland) by 1 million tonnes per year in 2023 compared to 2000. Their annual supply of metal to the EU has reached approximately 2.2 million tonnes, accounting for around 33% of the total imports of primary aluminium into the EU. However, even if the growth of primary production in the EFTA countries were 25% higher than current levels by 2050, and all primary metal produced by these countries were exclusively sold to the EU, the EU would still face a deficit requiring alternative imports.”

“In essence, considering the EU's current domestic primary production and the 2.2 million tonnes of potential imports from EFTA, additional imports of primary aluminium from countries outside the EU/EFTA would still need to reach around 5 million tonnes to meet the expected demand of approximately 9 million tonnes per year by 2050. Which is half of the global use of raw aluminium, at 18 million tonnes per year, including recycling. To develop a truly circular and environmentally sustainable economy, Europe will ultimately need increasing amounts of primary metal, much better if it is low carbon”.

“Hindering the importation of green aluminium into the EU,” concludes Conserva, “would be a self-defeating choice for the competitiveness of the downstream supply chain. Such a move could undermine both the industrial development of aluminium in Europe and the path towards a green transition.”

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