

Aluminium beverage can recycling remains at a high 76% in 2019

Increased consumption in 2019 led to record number of 36.5 billion cans being recycled, or 488,000 tons of aluminium, saving 4 million tonnes CO₂

Brussels, 16 December 2021 – A new report by Metal Packaging Europe and European Aluminium shows that the overall recycling rate for aluminium beverage cans in the European Union¹, Switzerland, Norway and Iceland remained stable in 2019 at 76% (75.8%). With a growing can consumption, the total amount of aluminium recycled from cans reached a record level of 488,000 tonnes and represents a total Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions saving of 4 million tonnes of CO₂ (equivalent to the amount of GHG emissions produced by a European town of 440,000 inhabitants like Bratislava, Tallinn or Murcia².)

Can manufacturers (members of Metal Packaging Europe) and their aluminium suppliers (members of European Aluminium) welcomed the new result but say that with some extra effort, the recycling rates could go even higher. In March 2021, the two industry associations launched their joint *Roadmap towards 100% can recycling by the year 2030*. This ambitious target can only be reached if existing packaging collection systems in Europe are further improved or replaced by well-designed deposit return systems for beverage cans and other relevant beverage containers.



“With an increasing demand for fully circular packaging systems, the aluminium beverage can, which is made from an endlessly recyclable material, is the ideal alternative to less sustainable packaging options,” said Léonie Knox-Peebles, CEO of Metal Packaging Europe. *“We now need to work together to make sure that even more used cans are correctly disposed of and recycled so that we reach our ambitious 2030 goal. We are confident that the credentials highlighted in our Metal Recycles Forever logo will incite consumers to do just that.”*

“We would like to see more countries moving towards modern and well-designed deposit return systems, allowing for an optimal use of the high scrap value and quality of the collected aluminium cans,” Maarten Labberton, Director Packaging Group at European Aluminium, stressed. *“Although used cans are also recycled into a wide range of other valuable end-use products like bikes or electric vehicles, the most efficient solution is to use them again for the production of new cans. No other type of beverage packaging can reach such high recycling rates whilst using so little primary material, resulting in product circularity as well as carbon emissions reductions.”*

¹ Including the United Kingdom for the reporting year 2019

² If a yearly GHG emission of 9,2 tonnes is assumed per EU citizen as used in the Product Environmental Footprint methodology, see Normalisation method and data for Environmental Footprints – Deliverable 2 of the AA Environmental Footprint and Material Efficiency Support for Product Policy (No. 70307/2012/ENV.C.1/635340)

Notes to the editor:

About Metal Packaging Europe:

Metal Packaging Europe gives Europe's rigid metal packaging industry a unified voice, by bringing together manufacturers, suppliers, and national associations. We proactively position and support the positive attributes and image of metal packaging through joint marketing, environmental and technical initiatives. We represent the industry's views and voice opinions so that stakeholders understand how metal packaging contributes to the Circular Economy. For further information: MPE Secretariat, T: +32.2.897.04.93, info@metalpackagingeurope.org

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. Our 95+ members include primary aluminium producers; downstream manufacturers of extruded, rolled and cast aluminium; producers of recycled aluminium and national aluminium associations, 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. For media requests: Kelly Roegies, Manager Communications, roegies@european-aluminium.eu, M: +32 471 80 20 98

Annex:

The annex provides a detailed overview of aluminium beverage can recycling rates by country in 2019. Recycling rates have been calculated on the basis of the present EU reporting rules.

