

Aluminium industry calls for stronger enforcement of trade defence instruments

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“With China’s aggressive industrial policy on the one hand and the USA’s “America First” protectionist trade policy on the other, to use a Greek image, the European aluminium industry today resembles the Argonauts’ vessel trying to go through the Clashing Rocks, the Simplegades. Europe can no longer afford to act naively. We must promote open trade based on environmentally friendly practices, but we must also protect Europe’s jobs and industry from unfair trade practices worldwide”, said Member of the European Parliament Anna-Michelle Asimakopoulou, Vice-Chair of the INTA Committee and host of a roundtable organised with European Aluminium to raise awareness among Members of the European Parliament on the difficulties faced by the sector in Europe.

In 15 years, China has become the leading aluminium producer and built an excess capacity that is five-time bigger than the total European production. An uneven playing field is a threat, and Europe must safeguard its manufacturing assets by introducing stronger trade defence tools and showing leadership in the World Trade Organisation reform. Defining clear and strong rules and ensuring transparency and enforcement should be the priorities.

European Aluminium Director General Gerd Götz said: *“Excess Chinese capacity is depressing aluminium prices and putting pressure on European producers. We are calling for swift, focused and decisive action on market-distorting behaviour and excess capacity in both the upstream and downstream sector. How can we otherwise defend European manufacturing and jobs? The current EU trade measures are not enough. On the other hand, we have a huge opportunity ahead of us. We are living in a unique era where sustainability and care for the environment are becoming the top priority.”*

Aluminium is a key material to develop renewable energy technologies, energy efficiency in buildings and more sustainable transport and is fully committed to contributing to the fight against climate change. Today, aluminium produced in Europe has a carbon footprint that is three times lower than in China. The ongoing review of relevant state aid guidelines as well as the expected industrial policy, the European Green Deal and the climate law are perfect opportunities to preserve strategic value chains such as aluminium.

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. Through environmental and technical expertise, economic and statistical analysis, scientific research, education and sharing of best practices, public affairs and communication activities, European Aluminium promotes the use of aluminium as a material with permanent properties that is part of the solution to achieving sustainable goals, while maintaining and improving the image of the industry, of the material and of its applications among their stakeholders. Our 80+ members include primary aluminium producers; downstream manufacturers of extruded, rolled and cast aluminium; producers of recycled aluminium and national aluminium associations are 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 further information, please contact: communications@european-aluminium.eu, +32 2 775 63 63