Aluminium beverage can recycling in Europe hits record 76.1% in 2018

34 billion cans recycled, or 457,000 tons of aluminium

Brussels, 16 December 2020 - The overall recycling rate for aluminium beverage cans in the European Union, Switzerland, Norway and Iceland rose by more than 2% from 2017 (74.5%), to reach an all-time record of 76.1% in 2018. The total amount of aluminium recycled increased by 37,000 tonnes to an impressive 457,000 tonnes, representing a total GHG emissions saving of 3.7 million tonnes of CO_2 eq.[1]. This is equivalent to the amount of GHG emissions of a mid-size European town of 400,000 inhabitants like Palma de Mallorca, Szczecin or Bologna[2].

Can manufacturers (members of Metal Packaging Europe) and their aluminium suppliers (members of European Aluminium) are very pleased with the new result and believe that can recycling rates can be further improved, providing that separate packaging collection systems ('yellow' or 'blue' bags and bins) in Europe are further optimised and are complemented by modern and balanced deposit return schemes for beverage cans and other relevant beverage containers. These schemes can be very helpful in moving beverage can recycling levels towards 90% or more.

Leonie Knox-Peebles, CEO of Metal Packaging Europe, stated: "With an impressive recycling rate of 76.1%, the aluminium beverage can is well positioned to contribute to the EU's vision of becoming a truly circular economy. Consistent year-on-year increases on already high rates, combined with a well-functioning market for recycled material, demonstrate that the aluminium beverage can is a sustainable packaging solution with a key role to play in a resource-efficient society."

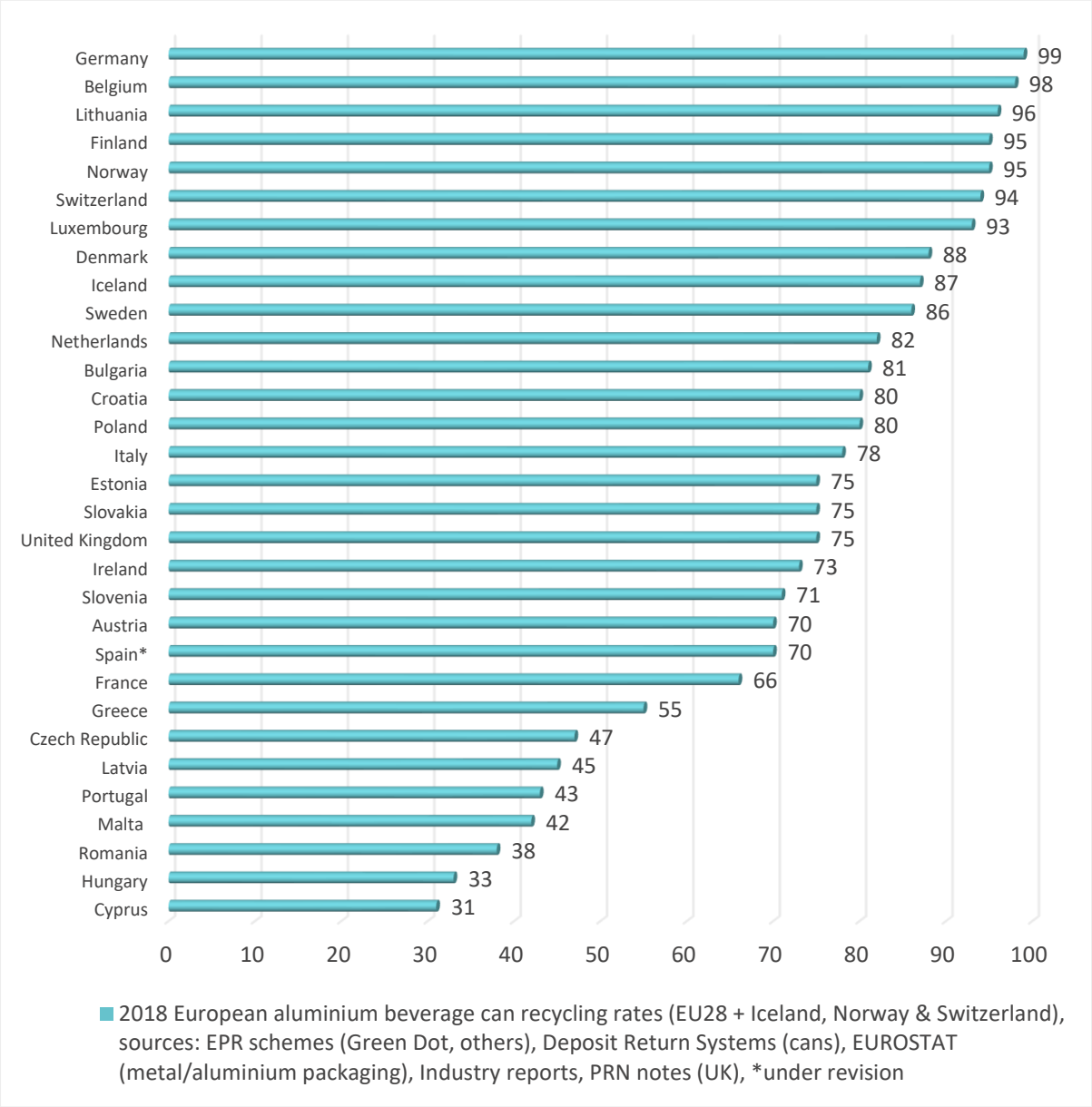
Maarten Labberton, Director Packaging Group at European Aluminium, added: "We hope that our recycling success and permanent material properties are recognized in the upcoming review of the EU Packaging and Packaging Waste Directive and that a distinction is made between materials which can be recycled endlessly and materials which down-cycle after only a few reuse or recycling trips."

The annex provides a detailed overview of aluminium beverage can recycling rates by country in 2018. Recycling rates have been calculated on the basis of the present EU reporting rules.

---

[1] Based on a substitution of primary aluminium by recycled aluminium with carbon footprint values calculated according to the Environmental profile report 2018 of European Aluminium, i.e. 8,6 tonnes CO_2 eq/tonne of primary aluminium and 0,5 tonne CO_2 eq/tonne of recycled aluminium providing a GHG saving of 8,1 tonnes/tonne recycled aluminium

[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)



For further information:

European Aluminium:

- **Website**: https://european-aluminium.eu/
- Maarten Labberton, Director Packaging Group - labberton@european-aluminium.eu
- **Phone:** +32 494 5858

Metal Packaging Europe:

- **Website**: https://www.metalpackagingeurope.org/
- **Phone:** +32.2.897.04.90
- **Email:** info@metalpackagingeurope.org