



**TOWARDS  
100%  
REAL  
RECYCLING**

by

**2030**

An ambitious  
Recycling Roadmap  
for the Aluminium  
Beverage Can



EUROPEAN ALUMINIUM



Metal  
Packaging  
Europe

## INTRODUCTION

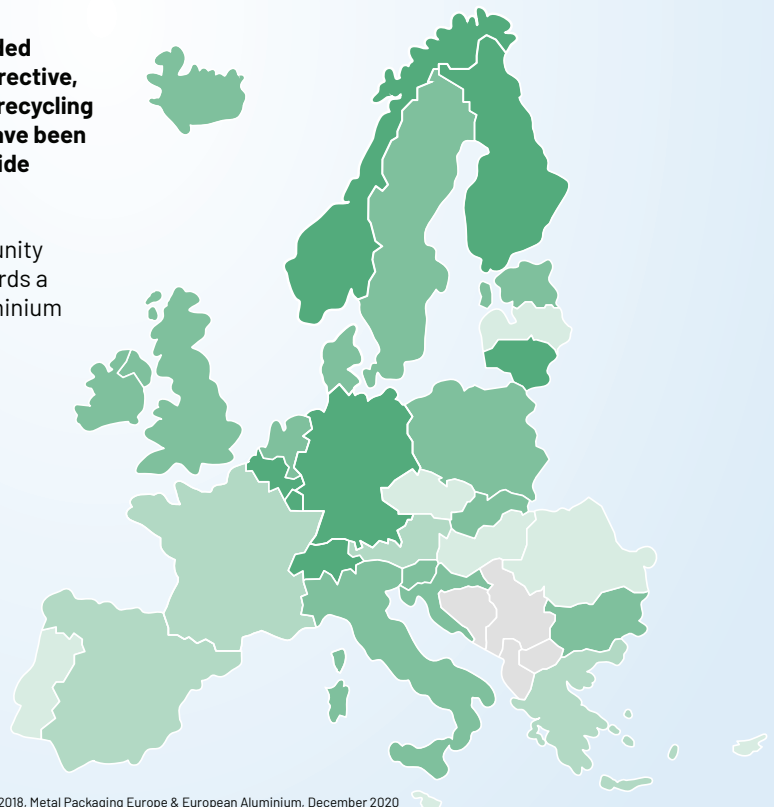
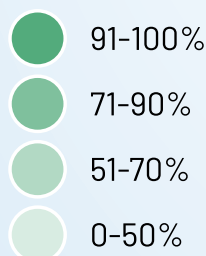
**The beverage can makers of Metal Packaging Europe and the aluminium can sheet suppliers and used beverage can recyclers, all members of European Aluminium, have teamed up to define the future role of the aluminium beverage can within the European circular economy. They have agreed on a detailed Roadmap to move towards a 100% can recycling target for Europe by 2030.**

Aiming at accelerating the transformational changes required by the European Green Deal, the new EU Circular Economy Action Plan for a cleaner and more competitive Europe, published in March 2020, recognises the packaging sector as one of the key product value chains which the European Commission will address through policy and legislative measures. In this context, the aluminium beverage can is a key part of a resource-efficient and circular economy. It is a metal packaging product made from a permanent and high-value material with outstanding inherent properties, notably being lightweight, durable, impermeable, versatile and endlessly recyclable based on an attractive and sleek design.

## IN EUROPE, THE RECYCLING RATE FOR ALUMINIUM BEVERAGE CANS REACHED **76.1%** IN 2018<sup>1</sup>

However, under the recently amended Packaging and Packaging Waste Directive, more ambitious EU 2025 and 2030 recycling targets for aluminium packaging have been adopted together with a new EU-wide method of calculation.

In this context, we seize the opportunity to set out our ambitious vision towards a 100% real recycling rate for the aluminium beverage can in Europe by 2030.



<sup>1</sup> Aluminium beverage can recycling in Europe hits record 76.1% in 2018, Metal Packaging Europe & European Aluminium, December 2020

**WITH THIS ROADMAP, WE SEEK TO PAVE THE WAY AND IDENTIFY THE KEY ENABLERS WHICH WILL HELP US ACHIEVE THIS RECYCLING TARGET FOR THE ALUMINIUM BEVERAGE CAN THROUGH:**

1.

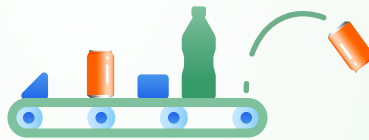
## IMPROVING KERBSIDE AND ON-THE-GO WASTE COLLECTION SYSTEMS FOR ALUMINIUM BEVERAGE CANS



Overall, to achieve higher capture rates from households, aluminium cans need to be fed into properly set up and well-maintained separate collection arrangements under well-managed, effective and cost-efficient Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) schemes and Deposit Return Systems (DRS). It is essential to run regular and targeted recycling campaigns aiming at long-term behaviour changes and encouraging consumers to place aluminium beverage cans in the appropriate bins, thus participating in their proper sorting. This should increase the tonnage directly collected from households and on-the-go usage. To this end, the focus should also be on how the best existing digital technology could introduce a new generation of modern DRS as well as what a modern waste management system under EPR could look like.

2.

## INCREASING EFFICIENCY IN SORTING INFRASTRUCTURE AND ADDRESSING INFORMAL RECYCLING EFFECTIVELY



Setting up efficient sorting systems and infrastructures backed up by the most advanced sorting technologies is a prerequisite for moving towards 100% recycling by 2030. An additional key parameter for the effective sorting of aluminium beverage cans and aluminium packaging in general is the need to install at least two high performing eddy current separators at sorting plants. To address informal recycling, the entire value chain should engage with local authorities to encourage them to set up efficient separate collection systems for aluminium beverage cans. Local authorities should also ensure that these are well-managed and monitored on a daily basis to prevent any arbitrary collection of aluminium beverage packaging by informal groups and individuals. Alternatively, partnerships could be set up with more organised groups and individuals to convince them to participate in an official can collection initiative run by the industry.

3.

## RECOVERING ALUMINIUM FROM BOTTOM ASH TREATMENT



A number of aluminium cans end up in mixed residual waste which is subsequently treated in waste-to-energy plants. The remaining aluminium is recovered from the incinerator bottom ash. Until we can prevent recyclables ending-up in waste-to-energy plants, we should consider the recovery of aluminium from incinerator bottom ash as a medium-term option. At the same time, it is important that the quantities of ingoing packaging waste and of the outgoing recovered material going through incinerator bottom ash treatment are officially registered in all EU Member States.

4.

## INFORMING AND ENGAGING CONSUMERS EFFECTIVELY




An important aspect of effective separate collection of aluminium cans, both at home and on-the-go, is educating and engaging consumers through effective communication. To achieve a successful collection system of aluminium cans, Packaging Recovery Organisations (PROs) must raise, in cooperation with local authorities, public awareness on waste management. Information about the local sorting system should be communicated to householders and end-users through good practice measures such as: the provision of marketing materials, the organisation of awareness-raising campaigns and training programmes through online platforms and public engagement. At the same time, the use of clear and unequivocal messaging on the recyclability of packaging products is an equally important parameter for the aluminium can's effective collection, sorting and recycling.



# POWERFUL SYNERGIES FOR PUTTING SUSTAINABLE PACKAGING AT THE HEART OF THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY

Achieving the full recycling of the aluminium beverage can requires the right synergies. Therefore, our Roadmap is an open call for working in partnership with all key stakeholders across the packaging value chain bringing together:



A woman is shown in profile, drinking from an aluminum beverage can. The scene is set against a vibrant sunset or sunrise, with the sun low on the horizon, creating a warm, golden glow. The woman's hair is tied back, and she is wearing a dark top. The overall mood is one of refreshment and sustainability.

We invite all the relevant stakeholders across the packaging value chain to endorse this Roadmap to ensure the level of stakeholder coordination necessary to work all together in a cooperative spirit and develop targeted joint actions that will actively contribute to the achievement of our goal.

**BEING FULLY COMMITTED TO  
CREATING THE RIGHT SYNERGIES,  
PROCESSES AND SYSTEMS  
TO ACHIEVE OUR VISION FOR  
SUSTAINABLE PACKAGING, WE  
LOOK FORWARD TO ACHIEVING THE  
ALUMINIUM BEVERAGE CAN'S FULL  
POTENTIAL AS AN ENABLER OF A  
TRUE CIRCULAR ECONOMY!**



## 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 and represent 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.

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Metal  
Packaging  
Europe

## ABOUT METAL PACKAGING EUROPE:

Founded in 1990, Beverage Can Makers Europe (BCME) merged with European Metal Packaging (Empac) to form a new entity in 2017, Metal Packaging Europe (MPE). The new structure, which combines the best of both former associations, creating a more efficient and powerful organisation, is based in Brussels and 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. It is our goal to make metal the preferred choice for consumer and industrial packaging. We represent the industry's views and voice opinions so that stakeholders understand how metal packaging contributes to the Circular Economy. Our membership consists of over 760 companies, employing over 180,000 people, and 90% of member companies are small and medium-sized enterprises.

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**#EveryCanRecycledBy2030**

Read the full online Roadmap:  
<https://canroadmap2030.eu>