

Video meeting between Commissioner and metals industry company leaders

WebEx – 16th July 2020 – 10:00-10:45

I. List of participants:

- Commission representatives:
 - o Commissioner Virginijus Sinkevičius
 - o Rozalina Petrova (CAB)
 - o [REDACTED]
 - o [REDACTED]
- Industry representatives:
 - o [REDACTED] (Eurometaux/Boliden)
 - o [REDACTED] (Eurometaux)
 - o [REDACTED] (Eurometaux)
 - o [REDACTED] (Eurometaux)
 - o [REDACTED] (Constellium)
 - o [REDACTED] (Constellium)
 - o [REDACTED] (Metallo/Aurubis)
 - o [REDACTED] (Umicore)

II. Discussion:

[REDACTED] made an introductory statement, presenting the work of *Eurometaux* and its member companies. In their view, limiting the European overdependence on materials from other world regions is a key issue. *Eurometaux* is willing to discuss with the Commission how the environmental and climate agenda can link with economic recovery and strategic autonomy. He introduced the participating companies, which were to give their recommendations on how to improve recycling and ensure coherence with other policies, in particular in the framework of the Chemicals Strategy.

Eurometaux members currently recycle more than 20 different strategic metals. Thanks to their effort, more than 25% of recycled metals in the world are recovered in Europe. The current and future policy actions will require more and more recycling of these materials. To that end, *Eurometaux* would recommend the Commission to focus on ensuring that metal waste is recycled instead of landfilled or exported; achieving coherence between the circular economy principles and other policies; and developing a strategic agenda to ensure metal recovery.

Eurometaux considers crucial that risks are managed through the life cycle of materials and products. The Chemicals Strategy should establish a value chain platform where industry and regulators can work together to ensure that risk is minimised while maintaining investments.

[REDACTED] continued the presentation for *Eurometaux*. He mentioned that recycling and collection need right incentives in place to succeed and that there are currently conflicting areas. They support the different policy objectives but find them somehow contradictory. A few examples include:

- E-waste, where there is no solution on how to manage e-sludge from an environmental point of view;
- CO₂: sometimes recycling could have higher CO₂ emission than virgin materials;
- Lead: they ask for security around this material, it is very important for production processes, while they consider there is a wish to remove it from production processes.

[REDACTED] then introduced some practical examples of problems they are facing in their day to day business:

- Copper mine project: one of the lowest CO2 projects in Europe, for which it is very difficult to get permits because of direct effects in Natura 2000 sites.
- Production site in Norway: the water framework directive has made it very difficult to get a permit, being only possible to get it after construction of the site. They have to invest before knowing if they can use it (50 million)

██████ presented the views of Constellium, in particular showing the high circularity of aluminium: Recycling reduces CO2 emissions and import dependence, while increasing revenue.

He believes possible to reach 50% of demand with recycled metal by 2050. For that the objective must be that all end-of-life aluminium is collected and efficiently recycled. He had two policy recommendations:

- Packaging: they want to achieve 100% recycling of cans in 2030. For that, they ask for more investments in collection and sorting systems, because right technologies are available. In particular, they suggest return/deposit system for cans and phasing out landfilling.
- Automotive: to make sure that end of life vehicles are recycled, cars need to be designed for recycling. Shredding should be reduced, removing useful parts before it happens. Exports of waste should be reduced, aluminium scraps are exported out of EU, we want to ban it except if they have the same standards than in Europe

██████, from Umicore, proposed a redefinition of waste regulations, because many of them emerged from a linear economy thinking and policies are in conflict. They have issues regarding hazardous classification of their waste feedstock, and they recommend fast-track procedures for intra-EU waste shipments to avoid consuming paperwork.

He also invited the Commission to find courage to promote sustainable metals in our environmental policies. Lead, cobalt and nickel are seen as very dangerous metals, but they are needed for recycling, batteries... In his view, it is necessary to manage risks rather than avoiding these substances.

██████ continued the exposition from Oribis point of view. He advocated for policy coherence to ensure recycling, industrial symbiosis (given the environmental advantage in comparison with virgin materials) and legal predictability. Other topics included:

- Toxic-free environment: lead is a toxic material but also indispensable for recycling gold and silver, and necessary for a circular economy. Prohibition in recycling streams goes against objectives of circular economy. Loss of lead would eliminate essential processes from metal industry and it could risk the EU position as recycling leader.
- Life cycle approach should be used to determine benefit of recycling. Use of sludge can help reduce cement carbon intensity. Environmental requirements hamper industrial symbiosis for decarbonisation and recycling.
- Policy coherence requires a risk approach and not hazard approach

Cssr. Sinkevičius thanked the industry leaders for their views and made a statement outlining the Commission priorities, as well as taking into account the industry priorities. He highlighted the need for increased material recovery and high quality recycling through better dismantling and use of digital tools (for example, product passports). He acknowledged that the metal industry is well advance in reusing and recycling materials and that links need to be found with the recovery package the Commission has prepared.

Regarding digital passports, the Commissioner restated the need for clear information to improve dismantling and recycling. He mentioned the new sustainable products legislative proposal as an important milestone, as well as waste collection systems harmonised at EU level, the review of legislation on batteries, hazardous substances, end-of-life vehicles, waste shipments...

On the Chemicals Strategy, he mentioned that it is part of the zero pollution ambition for a toxic-free environment and that it complements other key initiatives under the European Green Deal and, as such, it needs to be aligned with other Commission priorities (circular economy, climate, digital). He mentioned that the strategy will cover five overarching principles and that the chemical industry is extremely innovative, but the Commission will aim to increase more its support to innovation. He referred to other key areas, such as increased knowledge on chemicals, tracking of hazardous substances in articles and non-toxic material cycles.

With regard to non-toxic material cycles, he stated that achieving a circular economy that really closes the loop requires a progressive transition towards non-toxic cycles and that the Chemicals Strategy will include actions to that end.

██████████ was given the floor, restating the need for coherence and the industry commitment to help in any way that they can, being available for consultation and discussion. He finished by referring to metals as needed for the transition to a climate neutral economy and key for electrification.

The Commissioner restated that coherence is a priority, as it is a waste of money if there is no coherence in our legislation. Long-term objectives are clear, by 2050 we are going to decarbonise our economy. It is not going to be easy, huge challenges are ahead. Coherence and reciprocity outside the EU are also needed. This transition can also increase our jobs in Europe, clean jobs. The crisis will allow huge amounts of public money to be invested in this transition.

██████████ thanked the Commissioner for his time and offered the industry support and openness for further debates.

The meeting concluded at 10:55.