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Bright end to 2016 lifts aluminium foil deliveries to new record level

A strong performance from European aluminium foil rollers in the last half of the year has lifted deliveries above pre-economic crisis levels for the first time in a decade. Domestic deliveries showed a marked improvement (+1.5%) compared with a year earlier, and exports performed better than expected, according to figures released by the European Aluminium Foil Association (EAFA).

While Q3 saw flat demand, generally the October- December period returned to solid growth, enabling overall production to reach 874,480 tonnes, an increase of 1.5% on the previous twelve months. This is an all-time high, as the last time it approached this level was ten years earlier when production hit 865,870t in 2006.

Thinner gauges, used mainly for flexible packaging and household foils, ended the full year 0.5% higher, thanks to a very strong result (+4.0%) in European markets for Q4. Thicker gauges, used typically for semi-rigid containers and technical applications, have been performing better for most of the year and ended 3.4% ahead, returning to a 1.4% increase in the final three months, after a dip the previous quarter.

Exports, were less impacted by overseas competition, recording an increase of 1.3% compared to 2015. Although the final quarter saw a decline, it was not enough to push deliveries into negative territory following strong growth in Q1 and Q3. In particular, thicker gauges were up by more than 20%.

EAFA's Executive Director, Guido Aufdemkamp, said he was pleased with the figures but warned that it was too early to say the upward trend was established. "To have exceeded the previous all-time high is very encouraging. But we have seen volatile swings in demand patterns quarter on quarter for both thinner and thicker gauges through the last years. While the overall performance is very robust we will remain alert to continuing changes in market circumstances."

Aluminium foil characteristics are strength, formability and barrier properties which have made it an essential part of many flexible packaging and container applications. Other uses of aluminium foil include automotive and heat exchange components, insulation material and many industrial applications

** EAFA region covers EU 28, Armenia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia, Montenegro, Norway, Russia, Serbia, Switzerland and Turkey*

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The European Aluminium Foil Association is the international body representing companies engaged in the rolling and rewinding of alufoil and in the manufacture of aluminium closures, alufoil semi-rigid containers and of all kind of flexible packaging. Its more than 100 members include companies in Western, Central and Eastern Europe.

