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New Alliance to Boost Recycling Performance of Small Aluminium Packaging

The European Aluminium Foil Association (EAFA), together with partner organisation Flexible Packaging Europe (FPE), is establishing a European alliance with a clear, overarching objective: to significantly enhance the recycling performance of small aluminium packaging – including coffee capsules. The alliance aims to create the conditions needed to ensure that these packaging formats can be collected, sorted and recycled at high quality and scale across Europe.

In light of the upcoming requirements under the Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation (PPWR), a clear need for action has emerged. While aluminium generally achieves high recycling rates, small-aluminium packaging still lags behind – including items such as coffee capsules, chocolate and cheese foils and dairy lids plus small aluminium containers. Modern and large sorting facilities are already capable of effectively separating these formats for aluminium recycling. However, this is far from being the case in all European regions. As a result, a substantial share of these products currently ends up in incineration and is only partially recovered through bottom ash treatment – a process that will not meet the future “recycled-at-scale” requirements under the PPWR. Besides that, with the increasing implementation of deposit-return-schemes in Europe removing beverage containers from the household recycling streams, an opportunity is opened to shift the focus towards other packaging formats in sorting plants.

“We need to join forces in the value chain to make progress particularly with small aluminium packaging in order to achieve the PPWR targets. This alliance provides a shared foundation to improve collection, sorting and recycling in a targeted way,” explains Guido Aufdemkamp, Executive Director of EAFA. “Together, we will identify the respective bottlenecks in waste management which hinder a good recycling performance and conduct relevant studies supporting practical implementation of measures. We also rely on the experience in our network of national aluminium recycling organisations and other existing initiatives to put in practice the necessary actions.”

16 companies from across the entire value chain such as producers of aluminium foil, flexible packaging, coffee capsules and semi-rigid containers, as well as other suppliers, brand owners and fillers have already confirmed their participation in the alliance which will be officially launched on 1 January 2026: Actega, Al Invest, Aluminium Féron, Alupak, Amcor, Bel Group, Constantia Flexibles, Datwyler, Delica, Formika, JDE Peet’s, Laminazione Sottile, Lindt, Nestle Nespresso, Speira and Symetal.

The collaboration of numerous stakeholders along the value chain demonstrates that the industry is willing to tackle these challenges collectively and constructively – in support of a circular economy in which small aluminium packaging formats are reliably and sustainably recycled at high quality and scale.

The European Aluminium Foil Association (EAFA) is the most important industry association in this initiative and represents in particular companies involved in the rolling and rewinding of aluminium foil and the production of semi-rigid aluminium foil containers and household foil in Europe. With more than 40 members, the organisation represents the entire aluminium foil rolling market in Europe. www.alufoil.org

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