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# EVERY CAN COUNTS PRESS KIT



# WHAT IS EVERY CAN COUNTS?

#KEEPTHECYCLEGOING

31

**billion drink  
cans were  
recycled in 2017  
in Europe**

Every Can Counts is a unique partnership between drink can manufacturers and European aluminium can sheet producers that works to inspire, encourage, and empower people to recycle their drink cans wherever they are, with a focus on out-of-home consumption.

Did you know that 75% of all the aluminium ever produced is still in use today? That is only possible thanks to the infinite recyclability of aluminium and high recycling rates!

We are passionate about recycling drink cans and our mission is to convince people to do the right thing with their empty cans by recycling them. In Europe, **75% of all cans are recycled**, which is a nice figure, but **our goal is to reach 100%** by communicating the benefits of recycling drink cans. We directly engage with and are often financially supported by green dot organisations, waste management companies, event and festival organisers, drink brands, companies, schools, and universities across Europe.

And we need you to help raise awareness among event organisers, drink brands, city councils, and others to make on-the-go recycling much easier.



## #KEEPTHECYCLEGOING

Some 31 billion drink cans were recycled in Europe (EU28 + EFTA) in 2017, which avoided the equivalent of the annual greenhouse gas emissions of a city the size of Malmö or Thessaloniki.

“Aluminium is a permanent material that can be recycled an infinite number of times without losing its properties. Although the final 2018 recycling rates for aluminium cans have not been released yet, we believe they will be higher across Europe as we work with municipalities and other stakeholders to grow the metal recycling bin network,” Every Can Counts Europe Director David Van Heuverswyn said.

**The Every Can Counts initiative** was born in the UK in 2009 and **now has branches in 19 countries across Europe**. Today, we are the leading programme to promote drink can recycling across Europe! We have signed up hundreds of organisations to the programme, including major international events like the Tour de France, MotoGP, and the Exit festival while educating millions of attendees at hundreds of events. But we’re always hungry for more.

# WHAT ARE OUR GOALS?

## GETTING TO 100%

Drink cans are already **the world’s most recycled drink container**, and recycling rates are much higher than for other types of drink containers.

**Although the aluminium can recycling rate stood at 74.5% in Europe in 2017**, there is no reason we can’t reach 100%.

In general, the collection of cans through kerbside collection is efficient – you put the can in the bin for recyclables and it is taken away for further sorting and recycling.

But when it comes to cans consumed on-the-go – at music festivals, sporting events, or in public places – things are not so great. It’s here where **we can make a real difference**.

That’s why **we are asking everyone to help us** offer better ways to recycle on-the-go and **to have fun while doing so**.

**Let’s make Every Can Count!**

# 75

**percent of all cans were recycled in Europe in 2017**

**METAL RECYCLES FOREVER**  
**WHY RECYCLE**  
**CANS?**

## #KEEPTHECYCLEGOING

**Once collected, it is possible to recycle a used aluminium drink can into a new can again and again. It is therefore the ideal packaging for closed loop recycling that saves energy and reduces greenhouse gas emissions while contributing to building a real circular economy.**

- Producing new aluminium drink cans from recycled ones consumes 95% less energy and greenhouse gases than producing them from virgin aluminium.
- Can recycling therefore saves the annual equivalent of approximately 3 million tonnes of GHG emissions, or the annual emissions of a mid-sized European town like Belfast.<sup>1</sup>
- Once emptied and placed into a recycling bin, it takes only 60 days for a single aluminium can to be re-melted, produced, filled, and placed back on a store shelf. This loop can be repeated infinitely.
- The more drink cans are recycled, the smaller their carbon footprint.
- Recycling does not take away any of the can's intrinsic properties, making aluminium the ideal packaging for a true circular economy.

<sup>1</sup> 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)





**Although many European countries have high drink can recycling rates, more can be done to improve collection systems and recycling facilities.**

- In 2017, the recycling rate for used aluminium drink cans in Europe stood at 74.5%, an important milestone on the route to the industry's voluntary recycling target of 90% or more by 2030.
- Almost 31 billion cans were recycled in the EU and EFTA countries in 2017, representing a total of more than 420,000 tonnes of aluminium. In addition, we believe a significant but unfortunately unregistered number of used cans is collected by the informal recycling sector.
- The energy saved by recycling one aluminium can is enough to power a smartphone for a day. <sup>2</sup>
- "The fact the overall European recycling rate continues to climb is certainly positive, but we want to achieve 100% of all cans being recycled, and we work with festival and event organisers, drink brands, green dot organisations, and producers to make that goal a reality," noted Every Can Counts Europe Chairman Ramon Arratia.

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<sup>2</sup> Every Can Counts (2020).

# HOW ARE CANS RECYCLED?

**COLLECTION** The first step is to collect the cans. If they're not collected, then they can't be recycled.

**SORTING** Cans go to a sorting centre where they are separated from other materials using magnetic currents.

**BALING UP** Separated cans are baled up into large, heavily compressed cubes and sent to a recycling facility.

**SHREDDING** Bales of cans are shredded into smaller pieces. Any ferrous particles left are removed with the help of a magnet and the aluminium is then further isolated by electric currents.

**REMELTING** The shreds are heated so the decoration can be removed. The energy released by this process is recovered, minimizing energy inputs.

**INGOT CASTING** At the recycling plant, cans are melted and shaped into huge aluminium blocks

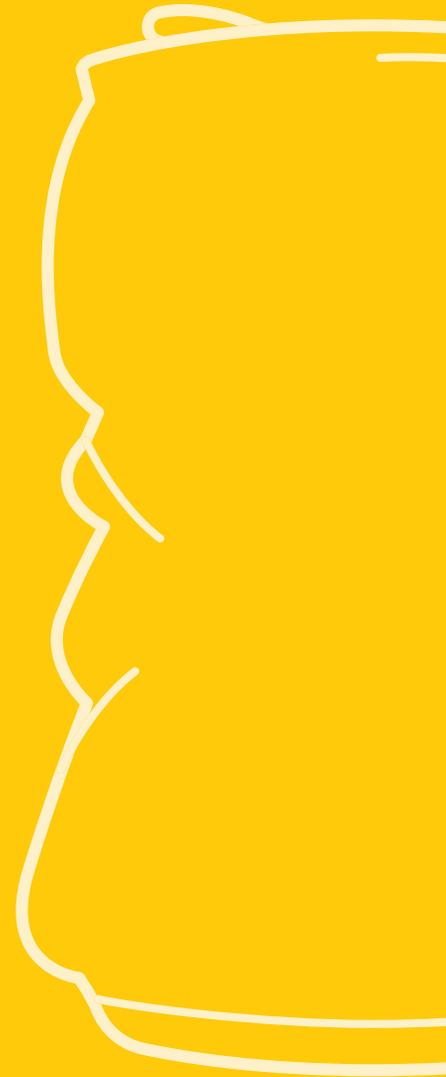
**ROLLING** The blocks are rolled into thin sheets and coils from which they're made into new cans.

**MANUFACTURING** Drink cans are manufactured by shaping aluminium into a cylindrical shape.

**DRINK CANS** The cans are printed at tremendous speed and with extreme accuracy. They are now ready to be filled and return to stores.

## AND EVERYTHING STARTS AGAIN!

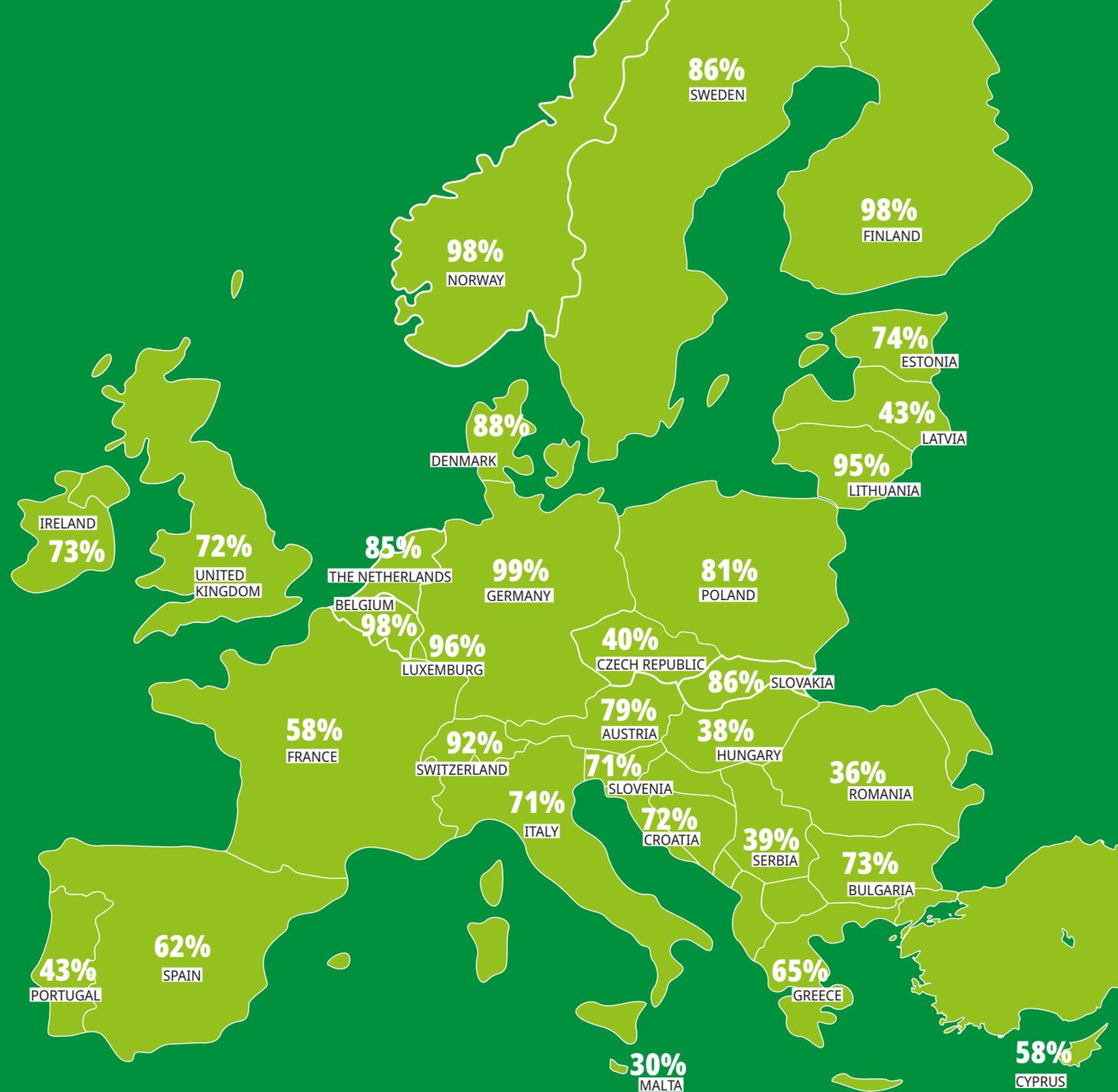
The whole process is incredibly quick – old drink cans become part of a new bike, car, coffee pot, or even a new can within 60 days of being collected. It is possible to recycle every aluminium drink can over and over again, forever.



#KEEPTHECYCLEGOING

# DRINK CAN RECYCLING RATES IN EUROPE

The average drink can recycling rate in European Union member states, Norway, Iceland, and Switzerland jumped by 2.3 percentage points year on year to 74.5% in 2017. According to data from European Aluminium and Metal Packaging Europe, that figure represents a colossal 31 billion cans.



# THE HISTORY OF THE ALUMINIUM DRINK CAN

The modern aluminium drink can traces its origins to 1959 when Coors introduced the first all-aluminium, seamless, two-piece drink container. Recycling was instituted at the same time, and Coors paid 1 cent for each can returned.

Aluminium cans made inroads into the soft drink market in 1964 when Royal Crown Cola released both its RC Cola and Diet Rite drinks in two-piece, 12-ounce aluminium containers. In the first year on the market, 1 million cases of soda were packaged using aluminium cans. In addition to being lighter than their steel predecessors, aluminium cans provide a superior surface on which to print text and graphics, which increased the opportunity to promote shelf presence and brand awareness.



**Today, the aluminium drink can is one of the world's most popular drink containers. Europeans use up to 50 billion cans every year and besides soft drinks and beer, the aluminium can has also become a preferred packaging for energy drinks, craft beer, water, wine, and flavoured water.**

Aluminium is currently the second most-used metal in the world. Its biggest advantage is that it can be recycled over and over without losing any of its physical properties. Moreover, making a new product from recycled aluminium conserves 95% energy and GHG emissions compared to an item made from virgin aluminium.

Thanks to Every Can Counts, awareness about the massive benefits of recycling aluminium is gradually increasing across Europe.

**METAL**  
  
**recycles  
forever** <sup>TM</sup>

# WHAT ARE THE MATERIAL ADVANTAGES OF ALUMINIUM?

**The aluminium drink can is one of the world's most popular drink containers because it addresses both environmental concerns and consumer demands:**

- Drink cans maintain the taste of the contents while offering a very long shelf life
- Drinks can be quickly cooled and remain cold for longer
- Cans made from aluminium easily handle carbonated drinks
- Aluminium cans are a perfect fit for a real circular economy, reducing carbon emissions through their endless recyclability.
- Aluminium drink cans are incredibly light, stackable, and virtually unbreakable, providing storage and shipping efficiencies and limiting overall transportation carbon emissions
- No matter their colour, size or shape, all drink cans are infinitely recyclable.

# CONTACT



**DAVID VAN HEUVERSWYN**  
**DIRECTOR, EVERY CAN COUNTS EUROPE**

David Van Heuverswyn joined European Aluminium in March 2008, initially working on public affairs, communications, and packaging-related issues. In 2015, he became coordinator of the Packaging Group. In 2020, he was promoted to Packaging Group manager at European Aluminium and appointed as director of Every Can Counts (ECC) Europe. With this additional responsibility, David coordinates local ECC initiatives and ensures continuous alignment and improvements across all programmes to maximise the agreed goals of this joint initiative between can makers and members of European Aluminium's Packaging Group.



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