

PRESS RELEASE

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STEEL FOR PACKAGING ACHIEVES A NEW RECORD IN EUROPE WITH A 72% RECYCLING RATE IN 2009

APEAL (the Association of European Producers of Steel for Packaging) releases the latest figures that demonstrate how recycling rates of steel packaging for Europe in 2009 increased by 2% to reach more than 72%.

This increase places steel once again far ahead of other packaging materials such as plastic, beverage cartons and glass, which demonstrate rates of 30%, 34% and 67% respectively.

Europe: a recycling champions league

Belgium is the European champion of recycling for the 9th consecutive year, with an outstanding 98% recycling rate (figure 1). Germany and the Netherlands follow closely behind, with figures of over 87%. These countries benefit in particular from efficient national systems of kerbside collection. The past year has also seen noticeable increases in recycling rates among other European countries. Among these, Poland has achieved an increase of 20% in the recycling rate of steel packaging, a substantial part of which can be attributed to the introduction of ferromagnetic sorting methods in several waste sorting facilities in 2009.

Steel, a natural recycling champion

The intrinsic nature of steel makes it a natural recycling champion. Steel is magnetic and can be easily and economically separated from other household waste. Steel is indestructible and loses none of its strength or qualities no matter how many times it is recycled. Steel is efficient and recycled steel can be easily integrated into the manufacturing process, reducing energy use and emissions. Indeed today, 56% of steel products consist of recycled materials.

Steel recyclability, good news for the environment

Indeed, each item of recycled steel packaging saves almost twice its weight in CO₂. So the more steel is recycled, the more CO₂ emissions are reduced. Around 2.5 million tonnes of steel beverage and food packaging is recycled in Europe, which corresponds to a 49% reduction of CO₂ emissions into the atmosphere.

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Figure 1: Recycling rates for 27 European countries + Norway and Switzerland

