Copper ore used in the EU is mainly imported from Chile, Peru, Australia and the USA, though there is also some production in Europe, including Finland, Poland, Spain and Sweden. Responsible mining and successful recycling help make copper sustainable and resource efficient.

Copper mining provides many valuable by-products that can be used in advanced material applications, including cobalt, nickel, platinum, vanadium, titanium, tellurium and rare earth elements, as well as silver, tungsten, gold, lead and zinc.

Copper can be recycled repeatedly without any loss of performance, and recycling requires up to 85% less energy than primary production. Globally, this saves 40 million tonnes of CO₂ annually.

Europe already leads the world when it comes to copper recycling with nearly 50% of its copper demand currently met by recycled material. The industry is working to go even further.

Over 4 million tonnes of copper products are made by EU industry every year.

Copper is the metal of the energy transition, powering renewable energy systems and green technologies.

Around 50% of the EU’s demand for copper is met through recycling.

Renewable energy systems use up to 12 times more copper than conventional power systems. Copper also typically improves energy efficiency. One tonne of copper used in rotating machines — such as an electric motor or a wind turbine — saves 7,500 tonnes of CO₂ emissions over its lifetime.

Copper has a naturally occurring element, present in the earth’s crust and in oceans, lakes and rivers, from trace amounts to rich mine deposits.

The life of copper is infinite and has no end phase. Once mined, it can be recycled over and over with no loss of properties. As such, copper is a sustainable material that is pivotal to building the circular economy.

For more information on the copper industry and its commitment to sustainability, visit www.copperalliance.eu.

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