

## Recycling: Belgium Leads the Way

### 31 May, Visit to the Metallo-Chimique Recycling Plant

European Copper Institute organised a journalist visit on 31 May to the Metallo-Chimique Recycling Plant in Beerse outside Antwerp where 1,000 tonnes of WEEE (waste electrical and electronic equipment) is melted down every month to become 99,99% pure copper cathodes. Participants were given the opportunity to follow the Metallo-Chimique's industrial activity, from sorting and gathering waste to refining and finally production of pure copper, tin, lead, zinc, nickel and silver.

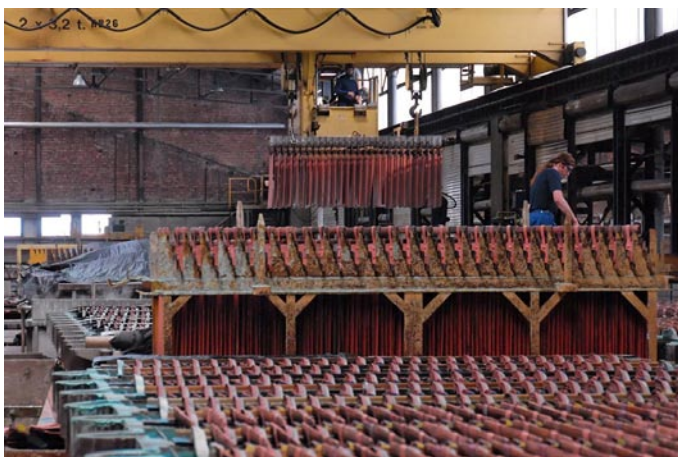
Copper can be found everywhere in our daily lives, in electronic equipment, engineering and transport. The waste (computers, screens, mobile phones, cables and waste from industrial production) comes to Beerse from all over the world and the final pure products are exported to countries within and beyond the European continent. The site in Beerse, dating back to 1919, is one of a handful recycling plants in Europe dealing with copper.



European Copper Institute - Metallo Chimique Plant

Current world demand for refined copper exceeded 17 million tonnes in 2006 and a rise of 4,7% is expected during the year of 2007, which in turn causes an increase in raw material cost. Asia is the world's biggest copper user (7,2 million tonnes), leading Europe (5,2 million tonnes) and North America (2,7 million tonnes). The rising demand and use of copper makes recycled copper a major resource. 34% of worldwide copper use comes from recycled copper, 41% in Europe.

In Europe, 50 million tonnes of WEEE are dumped every year, an amount that increases by 3-5% per year. In Belgium, 7,7 kg per capita of WEEE was collected in 2006, well exceeding the European Union's target on 4 kg per capita. Copper is 100% recyclable and further recycling of this metal would bring both cost savings and environmental benefits.



European Copper Institute - Metallo Chimique Plant

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## Host



European Copper Institute

## Links

<http://www.eurocopper.org>

<http://www.copperbenelux.org>

<http://www.metallo.com>