

Metals Day 2026, 29 September 2026

Speech by Lisa ALLEN, Director of Regulatory Affairs, International Lead Association

I'm delighted to bring you good news about a European industrial success story. Here in the EU, we *already* have a strategically important supply of a metal that can be recycled infinitely — one that's essential for the energy transition, for regional security, and even for producing other metals. And it's one that is already recycled again and again here in the EU.

You probably haven't heard much about it. Historically, this metal has been the poor relation in discussions about strategically important materials. It's only recently — amid upheaval in global trade, war in Europe, and climate change — that policymakers have started asking hard questions about how we secure the materials we need, now and in the future.

That metal is lead. And I want to spend a few minutes explaining why it matters — to industry, and to society.

Consider what Europe relies on this metal for: aircraft systems and space vehicles, medical imaging, nuclear safety, the cables connecting wind farms to the grid, and defence applications.

And, of course, its primary application: batteries. And not just for your car and as a critical support battery in your EV. Advanced lead batteries support grid stability, provide essential backup power, and deliver Uninterruptible Power Supply solutions — in substations, hospitals, and the data centres driving Europe's digitisation. Europe is a centre of excellence for advanced lead battery manufacturing. And we are home to the *Consortium for Battery Innovation*, our research hub pioneering next-generation batteries and applications.

These are just a few examples of the role this important metal plays in Europe— you'll find more on our website, Lead Matters, <https://leadmatters.org>

You may be interested to know that the United States has already designated lead a critical raw material, because it faces a domestic supply shortage. It's essential that we protect and nurture the supply in Europe. Without a secure supply, we would be forced to import more — relying on third parties for a metal essential to our energy security, our defence capabilities, and our industrial base. To me, that is a risky strategy.

That's why we believe lead should be recognised as a Strategic Raw Material. It is strategically important to industry, society and the economy, so why doesn't it have the recognition as a Strategic Raw Material in Europe?

Europe has a thriving lead manufacturing, battery production, and recycling industry. It needs to be supported, protected, and nurtured.

Lead is Made in Europe, it's used in Europe, and it's Recycled in Europe – let's keep it that way.

Thank you.

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