

European Copper Institute launches “ Euro-Copper Coin Tour” in partnership with the Belgian Royal Mint.

Brussels, October 18, 2001- Today, the European Copper Industry launched the first round of its “Euro-Copper Coin Tour” in Belgium. **The tour, aimed at promoting copper’s role in the new euro coinage, will continue to France, Spain, Italy and Germany and will highlight copper’s benefits in modern society.**

The first tour started at Umicore Copper, in Olen. Copper’s recycling and rolling processes were demonstrated **in the presence of Didier Reynders, Belgium Minister of Finance, and current head of the Euro Group of EU finance ministers.** With more than 80% of all copper ever mined still in circulation globally, copper is one metal that can help Europe achieve its various goals around sustainable development.

The tour continued with a visit to Lamitref Industries, in Liège, where nearly 2 billion coins will be produced for Belgium by the end of the year. Copper’s technical attributes were highlighted in this precision, quality oriented process. For example, copper’s superior electrical conductivity will facilitate the recognition of the various coins in vending machines across Europe, thus minimising the risk of fraud.

The tour ended with an opportunity to see the eight euro coins at the Royal Mint of Belgium, in Brussels, which opened its doors officially to the press. A closer look at the euro coins themselves show a European side and a national side. Luc Luycx, a graphic designer of the Belgian Royal Mint, designed the common European side that shows a map of the European Union in different forms with a dynamic background composed of arrows and stars. The national side designs vary from country to country. Romain Coenen, Mintmaster, has supported from the origin the idea of the “eurominikit”, containing twenty nine coins for Belgium (at least one of each denomination), which will be available from December 15. Copper’s performance attributes will help preserve the visual appearance and longevity of the coins in everyday use.

This press tour is part of a broader awareness campaign (under the slogan: "Euro. Born of Copper"), which emphasises the various properties of copper that led to its use in the new currency. Each set of images will highlight a different aspect of copper as it relates to its use in the euro coins. **The euro will become the official currency in twelve countries in Europe beginning January 1, 2002 -- 52 million coins will be issued for the start up.**

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For more information, visit the website: www.eurocopper.org or call:
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Editors Notes:

What is the ECI?

The European Copper Institute (ECI) is a joint venture between the world's mining companies, represented by the ICA (International Copper Association) and Europe's leading copper fabricators, represented by the IWCC (International Wrought Copper Council).

ECI is committed to promoting the benefits of copper across Europe. ECI aims to increase public awareness of copper's valuable contributions to modern technologies, its important role as an essential element for human health and to show that copper's recyclability supports the goals of a sustainable society.