

Rise in copper prices:

- Worldwide copper use
- Main sectors of the economy which use copper
- The importance of recycling

Worldwide copper use has more than doubled since 1970, reaching 20 million tonnes at the end of 2005. Currently, 70% of demand is met by mining and 30% by recycling. Due to copper being the best electrical conductor after silver, it is essential to electrical and electronics applications, with this sector accounting for two-thirds of the demand. The building construction sector follows, accounting for a quarter of world copper use (pipe work, roofing and facades).

A constantly growing global market led by Europe and China

Worldwide use of copper reached 20 million tonnes in 2005, whereas it was less than 10 million tonnes in 1970. During the last ten years, there has been a 37%¹ increase in world demand for copper, of which 5.4% occurred in 2004 alone.

Europe remains the leading region for copper use, representing 29% of world demand, with a growth of 14% during the period 1995-2005. However, it is becoming increasingly rivalled by China, which has had the world's largest national market since 2002. China's share reached 23% in 2005, against 9% ten years earlier¹. 2005 saw increased demand in Russia and Turkey, as well as in most EU Candidate Countries.

The energy and the building construction sectors use the most copper

The use of copper in Europe is broken down as follows:

- Electricity and energy (including wires and cables in the construction industry): 65%
- Building Construction (including architecture and pipe work): 25%
- Transport: 7%
- Miscellaneous (coins, etc.): 3%.

The high levels of copper use in the electricity and energy sectors are explained by the fact that copper is the best electrical conductor after silver. It is an essential metal in the production and distribution of energy, as well as in improving electrical energy efficiency, whether from traditional or renewable sources.

A boom in recycling

Unlike other raw materials, copper is 100% recyclable, ad infinitum, without any loss of performance. Nowadays, 30% of the world's copper demand is met by recycling waste material containing copper (plumbing items, household appliances, computer and electronic equipment etc.). In Europe, the efficiency of the recycling industry and the ease with which copper can be recycled are such that **41% of demand is met via recycling**.

¹ Source: *International Copper Study Group*, (www.icsg.org)

More facts about copper and its importance to the economy

The origins of copper

Copper is a metal which occurs naturally in the earth's crust and it is essential to life. It is the oldest metal known to mankind and the first copper coins date from 8700 BC.

The world's natural copper reserves are currently estimated to be 2.3 billion tonnes.

Copper in electrical and electronic equipment

On average, the copper content of computers and other electronic equipment, such as mobile phones, accounts for between 5% and 18% of their weight. Copper is also to be found in cables, connectors, transformers, coils and fan motors. In the USA, the ADSL network contains 3 billion kilometres of copper, which is 7,800 times the distance between the Earth and the Moon.

As regards energy, copper is used in particular in high-efficient industrial motors, solar panels and wind turbines (a 1 MW turbine contains 4.4 tonnes of copper).

Copper in building construction

There is an increasing interest in the use of copper in buildings: in France, there has been a six-fold increase in this market in 15 years. Copper is used particularly in roofing and is now used in about 10% of metallic roof coverings. Naturally antibacterial, copper is also the leading material used to refurbish water supply networks; in particular, it is used to replace lead pipes.

About the European Copper Institute:

The European Copper Institute is a joint venture between the world's mining companies (represented by the International Copper Association, Ltd.) and the European copper industry. Its mission is to promote copper's benefits to modern society within Europe through its headquarters in Brussels and a network of eleven copper development associations.

www.eurocopper.org

European Copper Institute

Christian de Barrin
Communications Manager
Tel. +32 2 777 70 82
GSM: +32 476 30 99 60
cdb@eurocopper.org

Press Contacts

Ogilvy Public Relations
Evelyn Gessler
Tel. : +32 2 545 65 47
GSM: +32 475 23 53 92
evelyn.gessler@ogilvy.com