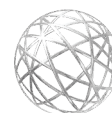




**MARCH 8 #InspireInclusion**

**HAPPY INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY**



INTERNATIONAL  
**ALUMINIUM**

Aluminium, shaping a better tomorrow

# 'Be bold, stay curious and never underestimate your worth'

Kelly Roegies, European Aluminium



**Kelly Roegies, Senior Manager, Communications, at European Aluminium, discusses her journey, the industry's challenges in attracting young talent, and driving inclusivity and innovation.**

## How did you come to work for the aluminium industry?

I stumbled into the aluminium industry a bit by chance and a bit by choice. After working as a communications consultant, and feeling like I knew a little about a lot, I wanted to dive deeper into one area. I was on the lookout for industry association jobs in Brussels when I found this role in the summer of 2017. I didn't know much about aluminium at first, but the more I learned, the more I got hooked. It's everywhere, from cars to cans, and it plays a role in a large number of EU policies too.

## What about the aluminium industry most excites you?

Working in an advocacy organisation, it's important to stand behind the industry I represent. And with aluminium, that's easy to do because it's such a key player in Europe's push for a more sustainable future. I feel a sense of pride knowing that my work helps promote an industry that's useful and vital for meeting our sustainability goals.

## We know that the aluminium industry is considered a male-dominated sector. What do you think is the most pressing issue facing women today in the sector?

As in many tech and engineering fields, one of the biggest challenges for women is not just getting in the door, but also gaining the same respect and opportunities as men. Interestingly, during my hiring interview, I was asked how comfortable I would feel working in a male-dominated industry. This question itself sheds light on the sector's recognition of its gender imbalance and the potential challenges that come with it. At European Aluminium, we're fortunate to have an even split between men and women, which is encouraging but not reflective of the industry at large.

We're also battling an image problem: the industry isn't widely seen as innovative or "sexy", making it harder to attract the young and talented, regardless of gender. We have a significant task ahead in not only changing these perceptions but also in actively promoting the industry as a vibrant and dynamic place where women can thrive and lead.

## How has the landscape changed since you first started?

There's now more talk and action around diversity and inclusion. I've noticed a tangible increase in the presence of women at industry events and meetings, which was less common when I first began.

However, there's still a considerable journey ahead. Changing a sector's culture takes time, and we need to keep pushing for progress, making sure everyone, no matter their background, feels like they belong here.

## Who is your role model?

My answer would be all the remarkable women in our membership and our team. It's their collective wisdom and achievements that truly inspire me and remind me of the progress we're making towards a more inclusive and diverse industry.

## What is your advice for young women aspiring to work in the sector?

Go for it. Be bold, stay curious, and don't let the fact that it's still a male-dominated industry scare you off. Look for mentors, build your network, and never underestimate your worth. You have a unique perspective and skills that the

industry needs. Believe in yourself and your ability to make a difference. The aluminium sector, like any other, thrives on fresh ideas and passion, and that's exactly what you can bring to the table.

## Can you highlight some of your career successes?

A recent highlight in my career was the opportunity to work closely with two remarkable colleagues, Benedetta and Chiara, on a project very dear to us. We came together to create a proposal for a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) all about aluminium, aiming to spark interest and drive innovation among the next generation in our industry.

We gathered financial and in-kind support from a wide network of regional aluminium associations and global stakeholders. So, I am pretty proud of that. Stay tuned for the launch of the MOOC at the end of this year!

**Changing a sector's culture takes time, and we need to keep pushing for progress.**