

# Roadmap New Circular Economy Action Plan ETRMA contribution

Brussels, 20 January 2020

## Introduction

European tyre manufacturers have continuously optimised their products and manufacturing processes to be able to bring high-performance tyres to the market, minimizing weight, rolling resistance and noise whilst improving safety and driving comfort. The European tyre industry continues to internalize many of the principles, which are crucial to a circular economy by acting and investing in the different tyre lifecycle stages, from design to recycling. The tyre industry recognizes that circular economy policies are a viable approach to solve fundamental issues like raw-materials scarcity and the inefficient use of resources.

## Circular Economy is high on our industry's agenda

The European tyre manufacturers believe in a future inclusive economy based on an efficient use of resources, ensuring full recovery of waste-stream at highest possible value with minimal material functionality loss, and no uncontrolled emission, driven by an innovative and sustainable market economy.

## It all starts with product design

A long-standing design-for-reuse strategy has been implemented by the tyre industry. Aircraft tyres, truck & bus tyres, off-road/earth moving tyres and agricultural tyres are mostly designed to last more than one tread-life. Tyre casings are designed to last for several tread-lives, permitting remanufacturing of worn tyres to be fitted with a new tread, thereby extending their lifetime and significantly reducing the material and product functionality loss. Retreaded tyres lead to 70% material savings thanks to material recovery and a longer lifespan.

When it comes to recycling the first and by far the most important EU policy action was the 1999 ban on tyre landfill. This action, as well as the implementation of an Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) in many European countries, sparked an immediate creation of an available quality source of input material into the already existing, but timid, tyre recycling market. Today, the European Tyre recycling is recognized and is very successfully collecting virtually all ELTs for recycling with a 62% material recovery rate and the residual 38% as energy recovery.

After 20 years, the tyre recycling market has significantly matured maintaining a strong call for a favourable regulatory environment and a dedicated support from policy makers to ensure the right measures are taken and funding granted to force technology forward. Notably, support and focus on scientific breakthroughs to reach higher valuation and less material functionality loss in the recycling of vulcanized rubber is crucial to close the loop. Today, the reuse of tyre derived secondary raw materials in the manufacturing of new tires is limited by physics, but remains a vision and a target for the industry.

Dedicated industry work on end-of-life tyre management and support to recycling processes, ELT-derived materials have been characterized and standardized. ETRMA and its members are engaged in these processes at multiple levels and strive together with the recyclers to foster a sustainable development of recycling processes delivering high value secondary raw-materials, with the lowest possible material functionality loss, in an industrial symbiosis perspective.

## Policy Actions Matters for the Tyre Circular Economy

The European tyre industry recognizes that although most circular economy actions have to be taken by the industry and consumers, regulators and policy makers have a significant role to play.

The European Institutions and Member States could play an important role in supporting measures driving consumers towards existing tyre products favouring the circular economy objectives. For instance, several steps have been taken by the industry to facilitate repair and remanufacturing, increasing tyre lifetime and reducing environmental impact. Premium truck tyres, for example, are designed to be retreaded up to three times leading to 70% material savings<sup>1</sup> thanks to material recovery and a longer lifespan.

ETRMA, amongst other, calls for:

- A favourable regulatory environment and dedicated support from policy makers to ensure the right measures are taken and funding is granted to support and drive technology forward,
- Support and focus on scientific breakthroughs to reach higher valuation and less material functionality loss in the recycling of vulcanized rubber is crucial to close the loop,
- Supporting measures by the European Institutions and Member States to drive consumers towards retreaded truck tyres, which favours the objectives, set in a circular economy.

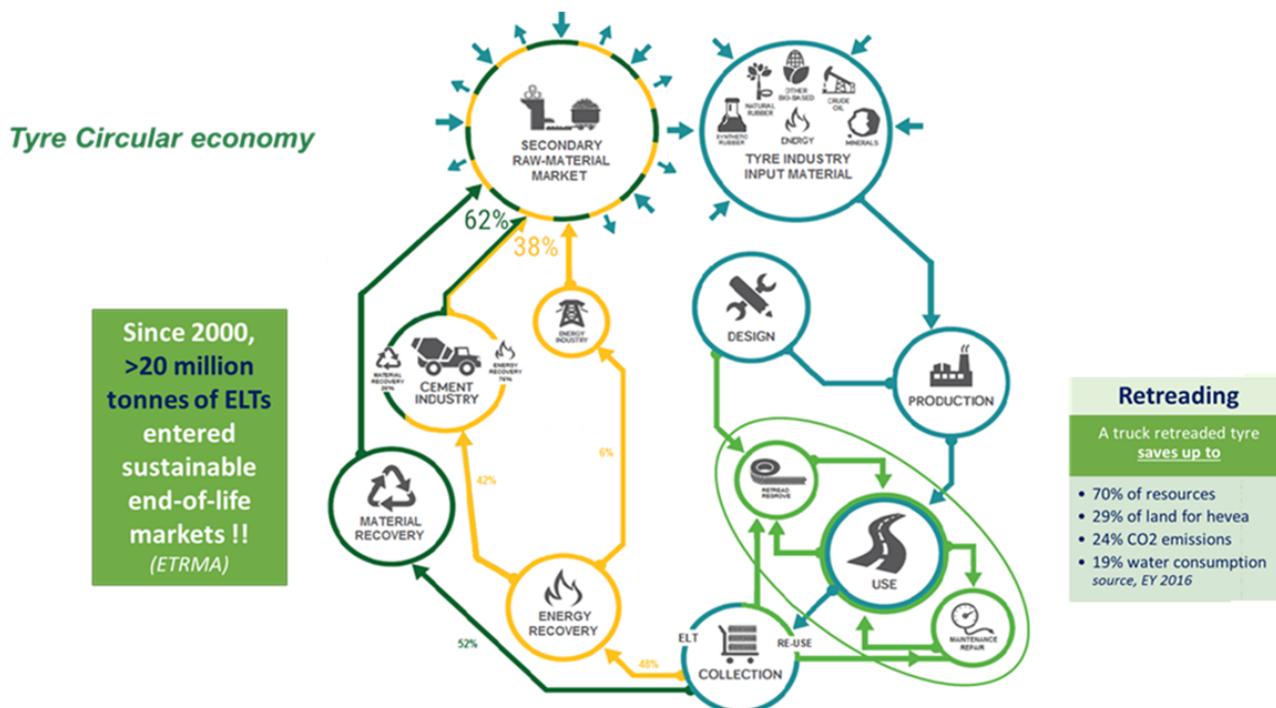
## Where we are going

ETRMA and its members believe Europe has the capacity to take a leading role in recycling technologies and this in the broader interest of the environment as well as the absolute need to ensure highest possible raw-material circularity reducing primary raw-material dependency also for the tyre industry.

The tyre supply chain still has many objectives to reach in the sphere of circular economy. To this end ETRMA endorses the European Commission's initiative to continue the intense work on circular economy and calls upon the institutions to work closely with our industry to identify the most efficient use of regulation to boost the European tyre and rubber circular economy.

## ETRMA

The European Tyre & Rubber Manufacturers Association (ETRMA)<sup>2</sup> and its members count around 4.300 companies in the EU employing directly 360.000 people. ETRMA tyre corporate companies represent 59 % of global sales and 7 out of 10 are among top 10 world leaders. ETRMA has a strong presence in the EU and candidate countries with 93 tyre-producing plants and 17 R&D centres. [www.etrma.org](http://www.etrma.org)



<sup>1</sup> [E&Y Report](#), The Socio-economic impact of truck tyre retreading in Europe, October 2016

<sup>2</sup> *European Tyre and Rubber Manufacturers' Association members* ([www.etrma.org](http://www.etrma.org)).