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## **Empac challenge: Win €10,000 for designing future metal packaging**

**Brussels, 6 May 2010** -- European Metal Packaging (Empac) is heralding *The Next 200 Years* of metal packaging by calling top engineering and metallurgy students throughout Europe to compete in creating sustainable innovations for the metal can. The metal packaging association Empac will offer prize money of €10,000 to the winning student or team.

This year, 2010, marks the 200th anniversary of the invention and patenting of the metal can since the birth of the metal packaging industry. For 200 years metal packaging has preserved and protected the nutritious value of fresh food while helping to prevent food wastage. The can continues to evolve and, during the next two centuries, the challenge will be to create additional innovations that will further reduce the CO<sub>2</sub> footprint of metal packaging while benefiting consumers and manufacturers.

"*The Next 200 Years* competition is a great way to celebrate innovations achieved with the can but, more importantly, to look at what features we can build into canned packaging in the future," says Gordon Shade, CEO Empac. "We would like to focus on cost effectiveness and efficiency throughout the supply chain. Students may for example invent a special closing mechanism or a fresh style for the can. It could even be a new use for the can with food, paint or aerosols. The emphasis will be on celebrating our two centuries of existence and improving on what we have achieved. We're particularly interested in any innovations geared towards improving our industry's sustainability profile."

The success story of the metal can began in 1810 when a Parisian named Nicolas Appert developed an airtight glass container, which Emperor Napoleon I and his troops tested and approved while at sea. That same year, Englishman Peter Durand invented the metal can, which received the royal seal of approval with a patent from King George III on 25 August of the same year. The first canning factory was built near London in 1812, allowing British troops the following year to enjoy safe, nutritious food straight from the tin. The can has come a long way since then, becoming 33 percent lighter on average in the past 20 years.

"Cans are made from abundant natural resources and previously used iron and aluminium, so they are totally sustainable," Shade continues. "In fact, three quarters of all aluminium ever mined is still in use. Metal is one of the easiest and cheapest

materials to recover, is 100 percent recyclable and has the best recovery rates among all the packaging material industries."

In 2008, 70 percent of steel cans and, in 2007, 62 percent of aluminium drink cans in the European Union were recycled while metal packaging accounts for just 1.5 percent of household waste. More than 90 percent of metal packaging in Germany, Netherlands and Belgium is recycled while more than 80 percent is in Switzerland and Austria.

The deadline for entries will be midnight on 5 November 2010, while judging will take place over the following two weeks.

To receive the official application, please email [empac@citysavvy.com](mailto:empac@citysavvy.com), or download it directly via the Facebook Fan Page.

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## Notes to editors

### About Empac

Empac brings together producers of rigid metal packaging and their national associations to defend the interests and promote the benefits of metal packaging in Europe. From food cans to aerosols, beer kegs to paint tins, the industry takes into account about 200 plants and more than 50,000 people who produce approximately 70 billion units a year, representing up to a fifth of Europe's packaging industry by turnover.