

# France Metals Report Q2 2014

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## Abstracts

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France's metals sector is set for very modest growth and, in some cases, decline, as major producers hold back on investment. Steel will continue to dominate the country's metals industry, but we do not expect any significant new investment. ArcelorMittal and Rio Tinto, the two largest producers in the country, are facing an increasingly hostile and competitive operating environment, with steel still cheap on a relative basis and aluminium being exported from China. We therefore do not expect France to return to pre-2008 rates of production over the foreseeable future.

The relatively strong performance the French steel industry enjoyed in H113 had dissipated in the second half of the year as it struggled with an increasingly sluggish domestic manufacturing sector and an equally listless European scenario. Uncertainty surrounds the future of ArcelorMittal's Florange steel mill, which has turned into an increasingly fraught political dispute. By 2013 a deal by the government to save the plant from closure with a five-year investment programme appeared to have failed due to technical difficulties, but it seemed unlikely the government would carry through with its threat to nationalise the facility.

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