

*Voluntary Commitments of the European Plastics
Industry to increasing circularity and resource efficiency*

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Executive Summary

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Plastics – Increasing Circularity and Resource Efficiency

Introduction

Voluntary Commitments of the European Plastics Industry to increasing circularity and resource efficiency

The Plastics2040 Voluntary Commitment focuses on **preventing leakage of plastics** into the environment, **improving resource efficiency and the re-use and recycling rates of different plastic packaging** applications.

The signatory organizations commit to work together to aim at **achieving the goal of 100% re-use, recycling and recovery of all plastic packaging** in the EU-28, Norway and Switzerland by 2040, the overriding focus of this commitment being on **ensuring high rates of re-use and recycling of plastic packaging**.

The European Commission aims at transforming Europe into a more circular and resource efficient economy. The European Plastics Industry fully supports this objective.

It is widely recognized that plastics have a crucial role to play in delivering a more sustainable future. Through their unique combination of light weight and durability, plastics already contribute to emissions reduction and more efficient use of resources across a range of different sectors and everyday applications. As a result of their versatility and capacity for innovation, plastic materials are also invariably best placed to support breakthrough sustainable technologies.

However, challenges relating to littering and end-of-life options for certain types of plastics waste must be addressed if the material is to fulfil its full potential in a circular and resource efficient economy.

It is in this spirit of commitment to sustainable development, that the European plastics supply chain has come together to agree a series of ambitious targets and initiatives up to 2030-2040 focussing on the key areas of preventing leakage of plastics into the environment, improving resource efficiency and increasing recycling rates.

Delivering against these objectives will be reported on a yearly basis.

Section I – General Commitments

1. Preventing Plastics Litter in the Environment

1.1 Actions to Prevent Pellet Loss

Operations Clean Sweep (OCS) is a voluntary programme aiming towards zero pellet loss during the manufacture of plastic pellets, handling, distribution and processing.

The European Plastics Industry will implement OCS at producers' and recyclers' facilities, and continue working with the entire supply chain to fully implement OCS at all levels including transport and logistics.

The European Plastics Industry will set up a transparent, harmonised assessment and monitoring scheme in line with EU standards to report back to the EU institutions and key stakeholders on a yearly basis.

1.2 Actions to Prevent Littering

a) Reduce Littering of Top Plastic Items Found in the Environment

By 2018 the Plastics Industry will intensify its engagement with key stakeholders investigating into plastic items found in the European environment, and subsequently develop and implement solutions to prevent these items from being littered.

b) Support to Educational Programmes

The European Plastics Industry will continue to work closely together with other stakeholders to develop and support projects aiming at raising awareness, positively enhancing knowledge levels, attitude and behaviour of citizens. For example, Waste Free Oceans and the more than 30 educational related projects that are running in 28 member states under the flag of Marine Litter Solutions like Grimpola Ecomar Foundation (Spain), Recykling Rejs (Poland), CSI: Litter Challenge (UK), and La plastica in vacanza (Plastics on holiday) (Italy). These projects are regularly revised.

2. Improving Resource Efficiency and Accelerating Innovation to Increase Circularity

2.1 Accelerate using Alternative Feedstocks

In addition to increasing recycling in the value chain, the Plastics Industry will continue to expand and explore the use of CO₂ and other renewable feedstocks. By 2019 it will conduct a study on plastics in the circular economy and on increasing the use of alternative feedstocks.

Based on this study, recommendations for actions will be formulated aiming at minimizing environmental impacts.

2.2 Facilitate Future Resource Efficiency Gains

To utilize additional and future potentials, key activities have been identified:

a) Product Life Cycle Inventory

The Plastics Industry will regularly update and publish its Life-Cycle Inventory dataset (LCI) and Environmental Product Declarations (EPD) for the main plastics and recyclates on a 3-yearly basis.

b) Extended Waste Data

The Plastics Industry will regularly collect and publish data to support the monitoring of the transition to a more circular and resource efficient economy.

c) Eco-Design Guidelines for Plastics Packaging

By 2020 the Plastics Industry will have finalized the on-going development of eco-design guidelines for Plastic packaging and design for recycling to maximise re-use or recycling of plastic packaging.

d) Standardization support/requirement

The Plastics Industry will actively pursue an integrated and consistent approach to the standardization of environmental aspects such as recycling, circular economy and bio-based materials at international, European and national level, as well as the removal in existing standards of unjustified restrictions preventing the uptake of recyclates.

e) Study of “The role of plastics in the circular economy”

By 2019 the Plastics Industry will publish an independent third party report about “The role of plastics in the circular economy”.

This report will encompass all aspects related to the manufacturing, use and disposal of plastics, such as the impact of plastics materials in daily life, socio-economic aspects as well as environmental challenges.

3. Creating Global Awareness

The Plastics Industry will further increase its engagement to help to deploy appropriate solutions to prevent marine litter and promote circularity around the world. It will strengthen its engagement with other international industry organizations and stakeholders like the Global Plastics Alliance (GPA) and the World Plastics Council (WPC) to demonstrate commitments and initiate global action. It will collaborate and participate in thought-leadership-dialogues with EC, UNEP, G7/G20, WBSCD, and others.

Section II – Sector Specific Commitments

1. Increasing Plastic Recycling

In addition to the significant number of National initiatives, the European Plastics Industry has set up Circular Economy Platforms and Value Chain Initiatives as the basis for developing feasible overall approaches, develop innovative solutions, ensure multi-stakeholder engagement and collaboration, and financing the activities. These programmes stimulate increased recycling across different plastic types and sectors. Independent structures with dedicated funding have/will be set up.

Platform 1

[Input to be included]

Platform 2

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Platform 3

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Platform 4

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2. Uptake of more Recycled Polymers

Industry commits to use more recyclates in final applications provided the quality and material availability are secured and that the brand owners are ready to request more recyclates in their specifications.

A regular report about the current and future use of plastics recyclates by industry will be published on a yearly basis to demonstrate the growing intake of recycled material in the plastics industry.

New Eurostat NACE nomenclatures regarding plastics waste and recyclates will be suggested, in order to monitor the waste export and recyclate use volumes. This will be possible after the adoption of the EU wide standards on recyclates and sorting of plastics waste.

Section III - A Regulatory Framework for Success

1. EU Regulatory Support

In order to achieve our targets towards a more sustainable, resource efficient and globally competitive European Plastics Industry, EU policy support is required:

- **Zero Plastics to Landfill**

The landfilling of recyclable and other recoverable post-consumer waste shall be stopped as soon as possible in the European Union.

- **Internal Market**

Maintain the EU internal market legal base for the EU Packaging & Packaging Waste Directive and all its amending acts.

- **Separate Collection**

Mandatory separate collection of all packaging from residual waste by 2025.

- **Alignment of REACH/Waste/ CLP/ Product legislation**

Alignment of REACH, CLP and waste and product legislation to remove the obstacles for recycling. It includes the implementation of a risk based approach in order to secure the full potential of plastics recycling of longer life applications into controlled loops (with traceability of SVHC additives) and secure the safety of virgin/recycled plastics for their intended application.

• **Food Contact Regulation**

Adoption of all measures required for the full implementation of the Food Contact Regulation EC/282/2008.

2. EU Funding

Mobilise public funding (such as Horizon 2020) to encourage and stimulate innovation in plastics:

- feedstock recycling
- re-use models
- low carbon footprint feedstocks
- innovation in traceability of materials, collection schemes, sorting and treatment of secondary raw materials.

As this will establish a multi-year process of continuous improvement and learning, we invite to monitor and guide it with the help of an XXX committee, comprising of members from the European Commission and Parliament, academia, civil society, and the Plastics Industry.

Brussels XX December 2017

Signatories

Name XX
Association XX

Name XX
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The European plastics industry is an integral part of the manufacturing in the European Union with over 62,000 companies providing more than 1.4 million jobs and annually contributing 26 billion euros to public finances.

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