



EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
 DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR INTERNAL MARKET, INDUSTRY, ENTREPRENEURSHIP  
 AND SMES  
 Ecosystems IV: Mobility & energy intensive industries  
 I3. Green and Circular Economy

## BTO Report Meeting DG GROW and PlasticsEurope.

**Date of meeting:** 21 September 2021

### Participants:

**DG GROW:** Kerstin JORNA, [REDACTED]

**PlasticsEurope:** [REDACTED]

**Agreed follow-up:** PlasticsEurope will revert to DG GROW on 3 key topics: 1) barriers encountered in the Single Market for plastic products; 2) figures on plastics contribution to the green transition, including chemical recycling; and 3) future role of the Circular Plastics Alliance, in this context.

### Details of the discussion

**PlasticsEurope** stressed the **potential of chemical recycling to ensure indefinite recycling of carbon content from plastics**. Chemical recycling includes many technologies, with different Technology Readiness Levels. The green transition can bring growth and EU industrial leadership for plastics, the question is how. PlasticsEurope has commissioned a study by Systemiq on this transition pathway. Chemical recycling can be part of the pathway, but there are at least 3 conditions to ensure economic viability: 1) considerable investments; 2) cheap and abundant green energy; and 3) technology-neutral framework.

**Chemical recycling is complementary to mechanical recycling.** The latter has lower environmental impacts but technical limitations in terms of plastic waste that can be processed and properties of recycled materials. Chemical recycling is compatible with existing facilities (crackers, refineries) and can deliver materials that behave as their virgin equivalent.

**Chemical recycling will not develop in Europe without a favourable framework.** There are many on-going projects, at demonstration/piloting stage. Some require co-

processing of feedstock (mix of plastic waste and crude oil) and can contribute to reduce CO2 emissions in the short term (if permitted).

**DG GROW** stressed the fundamental importance of 2030 and 2050 as target dates for the green transition. The question is how plastics can contribute. Only **credible figures** will matter in the political debate. DG GROW is identifying **standardisation priorities for the green and digital transition**, and inputs from the plastics value chain are welcome on this.

**PlasticsEurope** highlighted **concerns on the proliferation of environmental measures by Member States** (FR, ES, SE) which damage the Single Market for plastic products, in particular packaging. Some measures are not notified. **DG GROW** stressed its commitment to take action, as the Single Market is an essential driver of economic growth. This includes TRIS notifications, but also new approaches based on peer pressure between national authorities, such as the Single Market Enforcement Task Force. A review of existing barriers on plastic products can be envisaged, if duly justified.

**PlasticsEurope** mentioned the **benefit of the work done within the Circular Plastics Alliance** (CPA) to build consensus on targets for recycled content (30% in packaging). There are however diverging views on implementation, including monitoring, that have rendered cooperation more difficult in the value chain lately. **DG GROW** invited PlasticsEurope to reflect on the future role of the CPA, within the broader context of the green transition.