

Closing Remarks by Commissioner Oettinger: an own resource contribution on plastics – the case for action [if needed, to be finalised during the intervention of participants]

- Thank you very much for this useful and quite lively debate. I have taken note of your concerns and of your opinions. Let me quickly summarise what has been said.
- There is a **general consensus that fiscal measures can play a role** in reducing plastic pollution. But obviously, any new taxation initiative must be considered carefully.
- We all agree that we shall endeavour to find a solution which would help **accelerate the implementation of the plastic strategy**.
- A **reasonable contribution** to the EU budget would also be desirable, but it is not the first objective of this initiative.

1. Stimulate the investment, innovation and marketing decisions in industry

- On the first agenda item, I noted your concerns that a tax would entail a **risk of shifting the production outside the EU**. Moreover, it could hit small and medium enterprises.
- Furthermore, a production tax **can hardly be targeted** to the most dangerous products on an environmental perspective.
- I agree that we need to take this into account.

2. Fostering more sustainable consumption patterns and consumer behaviour

- On the second item, I need to conclude that taxes on consumers are considered to be **less harmful for growth** as compared with production taxes.
- Furthermore, retail taxes could in principle be **better targeted** to the plastic items causing the most environmental damages.

- On the other hand, I have taken note of your concerns regarding the feasibility of plastic consumption taxes, in particular in terms of **administrative costs** for national tax authorities and for businesses.
- Furthermore, we agree that we do not want to increase the tax burden of EU citizens.
- We therefore need to further reflect on the practical implementation of such a tax before moving forward.

3. *What could be the role of the revenue side of the EU budget ?*

- As demonstrated by my Colleague Pierre Moscovici, tax harmonisation can bring benefits to the EU citizen. This is the reason why the Commission proposed to re-launch the Common Consolidated Corporate Tax Base and also proposed [yesterday] a tax on digital services.
- However, it is not always the case. For plastics, I have noted your **doubts on a “one size fit all” approach**.
- We therefore need to carefully **balance the advantages and disadvantages of a harmonised plastic tax across the EU** and amend our proposal accordingly.
- As mentioned earlier, I will make a proposal on 2 May and make sure that this reflects our concerns.