

Statement

Brussels, 20 May 2021

Greenpeace “Trashed” Report

PlasticsEurope condemns the illegal trade of plastic waste

PlasticsEurope condemns the illegal dumping of plastic waste. It is distressing that this environmental and societal issue continues to heavily impact countries lacking the waste enforcement capacities and suitable infrastructure to prevent the trade of illegal waste and its thoughtless discard into the environment. We call for stricter enforcement of the controls on its shipment and work collaboratively with enforcement authorities at a country level to tackle this issue.

The [Interpol report on illegal plastic waste exports](#) issued in August 2020 flagged a significant increase in plastic waste crime. We welcomed the Report’s conclusions and have expressed since then the urgency to increase enforcement of existing global and national legislation on waste trade which PlasticsEurope fully backs.

Virginia Janssens, PlasticsEurope Managing Director, stated: “More radical measures are needed to stop this issue. This is why we also urged the international community to step up the development of efficient monitoring systems to tackle the lack of waste traceability and to improve collection of reliable data.”

We reiterate our determination to collaborate with the waste industry sector in the elaboration, development and implementation of a global certification platform for recycling which we believe will help reduce the illegal waste trade issue. Encouragingly, according to [Plastics – the Facts 2020](#), plastic waste exports outside the EU have decreased by 39% from 2016 to 2018. However, we continue to advocate for the further reduction of exports outside the EU and to recycle such materials at a domestic level in order to further stimulate Europe’s transformation into a circular economy.

As an industry, we are transitioning to a circular economy and working with all players (governments, whole value chain, local communities, NGOs) is key to truly deliver one circular vision. We are playing our part in tackling the plastic pollution and stepping up efforts in this direction requires many solutions to also mitigate the impact of fraudulent plastic waste exports.

“We need the right mechanisms in place that include innovative technologies, such as chemical recycling, and new waste minimisation business models. To facilitate domestic recycling, appropriate legislation is needed to rapidly remove remaining barriers to intra-EU movement of waste for recycling.”, added Virginia Janssens, PlasticsEurope Managing Director.

As plastics manufacturers, we are investing billions of Euros in capacity for chemical recycling, to complement mechanical recycling. A recent survey conducted amongst our members shows the strong determination of the industry to continue investing in chemical recycling, with planned investments in Europe of more than 7 billion Euros by 2030. The aim is to deliver significant quantities of recycled plastics with virgin plastic properties.

Another example of successful partnership along the value chain is the [European Commission’s Circular Plastics Alliance](#). As a proud member, we are playing a leading role in this alliance to help reaching the target of 10 million tonnes recycled plastics being used in European products by 2025.

Editors’ note

PlasticsEurope is the pan-European association of plastics manufacturers with offices in every major capital of Europe. For over 100 years, science and innovation has been the DNA that cuts across our industry. With close to 100 members producing over 90% of all polymers across Europe, we are the catalyst for the industry with a responsibility to communicate transparently with other stakeholders and deliver solutions which are safe, circular and sustainable. We are committed to implementing long-lasting positive change.

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