

Press Release

Brussels, 26 May 2021

European plastics manufacturers plan 7.2 billion Euros of investment in chemical recycling

PlasticsEurope announces a significant increase in planned chemical recycling investment: from **2.6 billion Euros in 2025 to 7.2 billion Euros in 2030**. To further accelerate investments in this key technology and the transition towards a circular economy, PlasticsEurope calls for a harmonised and strong policy and regulatory framework.

Chemical recycling allows us to recycle plastic waste which is otherwise incinerated or sent to landfill. It delivers significant quantities of recycled material with virgin plastic properties. It is complementary to mechanical recycling and has a huge potential for creating quality jobs and contributing to a climate neutral and competitive Circular Economy in Europe.

It is estimated that by 2050 nearly 60% of global plastics production could be based on reuse and recycling¹. PlasticsEurope members are already investing billions of Euros and teaming up with innovative value chain partners to ramp up chemical recycling and other leading-edge technology solutions. Our member companies are planning to increase their investment in chemical recycling to produce 1.2Mt in 2025 and 3.4 Mt in 2030 of recycled plastics.

Speaking at the “Closing the loop on chemical recycling in Europe” event in Brussels, Dr **Markus Steilemann**, President of PlasticsEurope and CEO of Covestro, commented: *“Chemical recycling is a game changer and a key building block of the circular economy – not only in Europe. This increased investment confirms the determination of the industry to address the problem of plastic waste and supports the EU Green Deal’s climate and sustainability ambitions. However, this is just a starting point, and sizeable investments are still needed to fully capture the value of this technology.”*

Colin Yates, Packaging Sustainability Director at Mars Pet Nutrition said: *“This is an exciting and welcome development as we reduce, redesign and invest to close the loop on our packaging. The ability of chemical recycling to convert mixed plastic waste, otherwise destined for landfill or incineration, into food grade resins, will be an important step in enabling Mars and other manufacturers to meet our ambition of ensuring our packaging is part of a truly circular economy.”*

Scaling-up this technology, and delivering broader systemic change requires a tool kit that includes many solutions - diversification of feedstock, new infrastructure, business models, new materials, waste prevention and eco-design, amongst others. From an industry perspective, it is also vital that policy-makers create a policy and regulatory framework that provides certainty and incentivises further investment.

Markus Steilemann adds that: *“To capitalise on the potential of chemical recycling we need a harmonised and strong single market framework. We need to harness the power of the EU Single Market and protect its integrity. We should also recognise that we have a shared interest in future-proofing our economy and asset base in Europe with innovative technologies like chemical recycling.”*

¹ [McKinsey - How plastics waste recycling could transform the chemical industry](#)

Editors' note

PlasticsEurope is the pan-European association of plastics manufacturers with offices across 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 openly engage with stakeholders and deliver solutions which are safe, circular and sustainable. We are committed to implementing long-lasting positive change.

Working with public and private partners via alliances at local, national and global level to encourage appropriate recycling, reuse and recovery of plastic waste pollution is key. With a projected contribution of 1,2 Mt of recycled plastics produced through chemical recycling by 2025, PlasticsEurope plays a leading role in delivering on the European Commission's Circular Plastics Alliance target of 10 Mt recycled plastics used in European products by 2025.

*“Based on a unique approach to the circular economy, we believe that embracing and investing in a hierarchy of technologies, ranging from mechanical to chemical recycling, delivers the optimum circular solution for the value chain with less impact on the environment. This approach will enable the plastics industry to achieve its ambitious recycling targets and will contribute to more sustainable living.”, confirms **Lucrece Foufopoulos**, Executive Vice President - Polyolefins and Circular Economy and CTO, Borealis.*

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