

Press Release

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Plastics Europe raises significant concerns about Environment Committee vote on PPWR

Today the European Parliament Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI) voted on the Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation (PPWR).

Whilst it will result in improvements to the Commission's original proposal in some areas, Plastics Europe is very concerned that the Committee vote has weakened the ambition to create a market for recycled plastic material and does not sufficiently incentivise the use of bio-based plastics. The vote also further threatens the investment climate in Europe for circularity of plastics packaging through arbitrary measures applying to plastics packaging only.

Maintaining the proposed Commission mandatory targets for contact sensitive packaging is essential for incentivising the EU plastics system to significantly increase its investments in mechanical and chemical recycling. These are vital for improving the quantity and quality of recycled plastics, reducing the reliance on fossil-based raw material input, and accelerating the circularity of all parts of the plastics packaging industry.

According to Virginia Janssens, Managing Director, Plastics Europe, *"We are particularly disappointed that the recycled content targets for contact sensitive packaging have been reduced. This is a missed opportunity to encourage the necessary investment and will undermine the development of the market for recycled plastic packaging in Europe."*

Plastics Europe believes that bio-based raw material input has a key role to play in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and reliance on fossil-based feedstock to produce plastic packaging, and supports the development of separate bio-based plastic targets in addition to recycled plastic content targets. Regrettably, today's vote would allow the use of bio-based plastics in packaging only as a way to dilute the targets for recycled content.

Plastics Europe welcomes the Committee's support for the development of Design for Recycling criteria to assess the recyclability of packaging and the involvement of relevant stakeholders in the development of recyclability requirements.

Whilst Plastics Europe sees significant potential for kickstarting reuse models in several packaging applications, the debate around PPWR has largely overlooked the impact of reuse measures on transport packaging and the achievability of reuse targets in this sector.

Virginia Janssens adds: *"Unfortunately, today's vote means that by 2030 flexible plastics films essential for transporting goods within, or between, EU Member States risk being banned entirely if*

the ENVI vote is confirmed in the final legislation. This will result in supply chain disruptions, higher costs for transporters and ultimately consumers, and will negatively impact transportation safety.”

Additionally, the vote maintains a number of arbitrary bans or reduction targets aimed at plastics packaging only, without any impact assessment or demonstration of environmental benefits. Such bans restrict highly recyclable and already widely recycled formats such as plastics packaging for fresh products or grouped packaging, like shrink wraps and collation films, which play an essential role in protecting and transporting consumer goods.

Therefore, fully banning these formats – as foreseen in the provisions relating to restrictions on single use plastic packaging – ignores the PPWR’s environmental objectives and related circularity investments by our industry.

Virginia Janssens states: “Whilst politically attractive to some stakeholders, arbitrary bans are not the answer. They will only encourage the substitution of plastics with other materials without any proven environmental advantages and will not solve the issue of single use packaging. We instead call for an ambitious proposal that creates the positive investment climate enabling the European plastics system to continue its sustainability journey.”

Notes for Editors

Plastics Europe 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.