

5 Key Policy Drivers

1. Immediate policy levers to unlock investments and accelerate the industry's circularity and net-zero emissions journey

- **Initiate a Clean Transition Dialogue with the plastics industry**
 - Urgently initiate a Clean Transition Dialogue with the plastics industry which looks at the enablers, investments and roadblocks to reaching a circular, net zero and sustainable plastics system in Europe, recognising the plastics industry's strategic role in achieving Europe's green transition goals.
- **Acknowledge essential role of plastics in delivering on the EU Green Deal**
 - Acknowledge plastics, and European plastics production, as an essential material across almost all industrial ecosystems in the EU through uptake of the priority policy recommendations contained in this roadmap. Recognise that access to low-carbon and circular plastics materials will become key in ensuring the net-zero transitions and resource independency of all EU industries
- **Support development of all recycling technologies**
 - Support the development of a portfolio of multiple recycling technologies to ensure maximum availability of circular feedstocks, encouraging a harmonised approach and unlocking investment across Europe, enabling industry's circular and net zero roadmap and increasing Europe's economy resilience and creating green jobs growth in the region.
- **Clarity on mass balance by 2024**
 - Urgently legally recognise mass balance credit-based approach with third-party certification as a key enabler of plastics circularity to accelerate the uptake alternative feedstocks from plastic waste, bio-feedstocks and captured carbon. For plastic waste-based feedstocks, recognise fuel use exempt allocation model to make circular transition and associated investments possible.
- **Simplify and accelerate permit procedures for projects** to build installations with low-carbon and circular industrial technologies
- **Prioritize environmental impact over material-specific policies & ensure a material agnostic, science- and data-based approach to policies framing the transition**
 - Focus on preventing excessive use of materials for each application rather than the choice of material. It is crucial to base decisions on scientific life cycle assessment principle to avoid unjustified material substitutions and unintended environmental impacts.

2. Incentivise low carbon and circular business models and create demand through legislation

- **Urgently define mandatory minimum circular plastic content targets**
 - Develop minimum circular plastic content targets for all key plastics applications in the European market (including imports) to create a market pull for circular plastics.
- **Make use of sustainably sourced biomass for production of plastics financially attractive**
 - Policymakers are asked to set up incentive schemes that enhance the use of biomass for materials including minimum bio-based plastics content targets for key plastics applications to create a market pull for bio-based plastics.
 - Develop a policy framework with clear definitions, requirements and reporting for biomass streams that can be used as feedstock for materials.
- **Impose legal requirements to develop recyclable plastics products for all sectors**
 - Promote and enforce design for recycling standards
 - Put forward clear definitions and practical methodologies (e.g. at CEN or ISO level), and impose binding requirements to design products for the EU market (including imports) in such a way that they can be easily recycled and valorised as high-quality feedstock for the industry.
- **Endorse trustworthy certification systems and standards for the sustainable sourcing of circular and biomass feedstocks**
 - Create a legally binding framework with clear sustainability criteria and incentives for labels, and externally audited third-party certification systems to create a thriving European market for sustainably sourced biomass and circular feedstock streams.
 - Define harmonised standards for LCA calculation for bio-based and circular plastics to incentivise scale up.
- **Leverage public procurement for circular plastics and decarbonisation technologies**
 - Leverage public procurement to make circularity a priority for products demanded by the market.
- **Support research and development for CCU**
 - Promote research and investment to scale up CCU for the production of plastics.
 - **Formalise the CO₂ emission savings from CCU in regulation** by creating a transparent legal framework harmonised across the EU market to calculate and validate the CO₂ savings from CCU.
 - Recognise Carbon Capture and Utilisation (CCU) as a strategic net zero technology in the EU Net Zero Industry Act and other relevant EU policy initiatives

3. Work to urgently restore the competitiveness of European industry

The roadmap demonstrates an urgent need to create a level playing field and regain European competitiveness, including by:

- **Funding a European circular plastics economy/transition**
 - Provide accessible funding opportunities that make circular plastics production in Europe competitive and speed up the circular transition
 - Ensure easy-to-access public support schemes (sufficient funding from a single source or cumulation of sufficient funding from multiple sources. Consider the development of a comprehensive EU equivalent to the US Inflation Reduction Act - implement measures (including providing state aid, subsidies and tax credits for investments in recycling, sustainably sourced biomass to material technologies, renewable energy, green hydrogen, and biofuels), and setting-up one-stop shops, to attract new net-zero investments in high-risk and innovative net-zero technologies.
 - Closely monitor the competitive deficit of the European industry compared to other regional blocks

- **Designing regulation to reinvigorate the European plastics industry**
 - Competitiveness check of the impact of proposed EU regulations on the global competitiveness of EU industry – to include an assessment of final adopted legislation, and identify and address excessive compliance costs
 - Include the plastics industry in the impact assessment of the CBAM - evaluate the upstream, downstream and export impact of implementing, or not, a CBAM on polymers (leveraging data which industry will contribute to), and involving Plastics Europe and the full plastics value chain in the discussion.

- **Ensure competitive energy prices and make reliable supplies of low carbon energy and hydrogen accessible and affordable**
 - Promote massive investments in low-carbon electricity production and distribution networks, implementing incentive schemes, and simplifying the deployment of renewable electricity projects, including by streamlining permit processes.
 - Increase renewable energy capacity, drastically upscale renewable energy strategies such as the EU solar strategy, bringing online over 320 GW of solar photovoltaic by 2025 and almost 600 GW by 2030. Similar efforts will also be needed for other renewable energy technologies.
 - Enable the free flow of electricity, hydrogen and CO₂ between EU countries and invest in relevant transportation infrastructure.
 - Facilitate competition between sources of energy to decrease energy prices and increase energy security.
 - Plan and incentivise as a priority stream the required capacity for a green economy with low-carbon hydrogen feedstock for the production of circular plastics.

- Create a single European market for industrial hydrogen and incorporate hydrogen in National Energy and Climate Plans.

4. Develop a waste management system fit for a net-zero circular economy

Transitioning to a net-zero circular economy requires a waste management system which facilitates and favours the reuse of plastics and recycling of plastics waste, aiming towards a future without incineration of recyclable plastic waste by incentivising better and harmonised sorting, collection, and recycling processes for all plastics waste. Key elements include:

- **Phase out landfilling and incineration of recyclable plastic waste**
 - Minimum landfill and incineration taxes that steadily increase on all waste streams containing plastics to be effective in deviating recyclable waste from landfilling or incineration to recycling and implement inclusion of waste incineration in the EU ETS. Make carbon capture obligatory for remaining waste incinerators via Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) or Carbon Capture and Utilisation (CCU) after 2040, such that the GHG emissions are minimized for the specific waste streams where incineration is the only viable option.
 - Implement mandatory measures to incentivise mixed waste sorting as a complementary solution to separate collection of plastics waste. Mixed waste sorting should always complement and not replace the adoption of separate collection schemes (with data showing plastics recycling rates are 13 times higher when collected separately)
- **Financing and investments**
 - Ensure needed financing and leverage and expand mandatory Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) schemes to all key plastics sectors and other policy instruments in order to increase and warrant the long-term financing of plastic waste collection, sorting and recycling infrastructure with the aim to increase the quantity and quality of plastic waste collected for recycling.
- **Make shipping of sorted waste and recycled feedstock easier between EU Member States and align EU Waste Shipment legislation with the Basel Convention.**
 - Policymakers are requested to ensure fully harmonised implementation of the Waste Shipment Regulation (WSR) at Member State level – with digital tools, streamlined administrative procedures and predictable outcomes within a reasonable timeframe. This would foster intra-EU trade and increase the value of recyclable plastic waste as a secondary raw material destined for recycling, which should be covered by product legislation.
- **Harmonise definitions and improve statistics for plastic and organic waste management**

- Make statistics on plastic waste management within and between EU countries more robust and comparable. This will improve understanding of the market and bottlenecks blocking more circularity, and will serve as a basis for smart regulation.
- Create a new centralized information system to track supply of circular plastics to monitor compliance of mandatory circular plastics content targets across key plastics sectors.
- **Enhance the quality and quantity of collected biowaste suitable as feedstock for plastics production**
 - Implement mandatory separate collection of organic household waste for organics recycling in the EU Member States.

5. Promote greater and increased collaboration among all actors

The roadmap highlights the urgent need for more intense and more combined efforts of all parts of the European plastics system and of policymakers and regulators. Key asks in achieving this goal of collaboration include

- **Continue to develop collaboration and transition platforms**
 - Continuing to develop **collaboration and transition platforms** working with governments, all actors along the plastics supply chain and civil society through a reinvigorated Circular Plastics Alliance or alternative collaboration platform supported by the EU Member States and highest levels of the European Commission
- **Leverage the EU Single Market**
 - Ensure a harmonised and consistent regulatory framework across the **EU Single Market** and fully enforce EU Single Market principles by avoiding fragmented regulatory measures applying to plastics
- **Increase citizens' awareness**
 - Communicate widely about the need for more circularity and progress made, and further incorporate circularity in all educational curricula.
- **Role of the Global Instrument to End Plastic Pollution**
 - Global Instrument to End Plastic Pollution – ensure a global agreement which facilitates rather than hinders the European plastics industry's transition to a climate neutral and circular economy, and ensure that the agreement does not further lower the competitiveness of EU industry.