

Statement

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Reaction to European Parliament Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation vote

Plenary vote is a missed opportunity to incentivise investments in circular plastics packaging.

Accelerating the transition of the European plastics system to circularity and net zero requires a policy and regulatory framework that drives the demand for circular feedstocks, boosts investments in recycling technologies and stimulates the development of recyclable products. Plastics Europe believes that today's Plenary vote in the European Parliament contains some welcome aspects such as rewarding highly collected or recycled packaging formats and seeking to ensure that the best performing packaging solutions from an environmental perspective are chosen.

According to Virginia Janssens, Managing Director, Plastics Europe, "*The Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation is one of the most important elements of the plastics transition enabling framework. So, although Plastics Europe welcomes a number of decisions taken by the European Parliament, we believe today's Plenary vote was a missed opportunity to strengthen this critical piece of regulation and create the incentives for the huge investments needed to make plastics packaging circular.*"

Creating the right market pull and regulatory conditions for circularity are essential for incentivising the EU plastics system to significantly increase its drive towards both 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 system.

Virginia Janssens states that, *“It is unfortunate that the decision by the Environment committee to reduce the recycled content targets for contact sensitive packaging has not been reversed in Plenary. This is a missed opportunity to use the Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation to boost the development of the market for recycled plastic packaging in Europe.”*

We are also disappointed that MEPs have failed to sufficiently clarify the role of bio-based plastics and recycled content as separate but complementary solutions that contribute to the plastics industry’s sustainability journey and have failed to mandate that packaging which we will redesign to make fully recyclable is sorted prior to incineration and landfill.

Furthermore, Plastics Europe is disappointed that the European Parliament did not adopt amendments which improve the material neutrality of the proposed legislation. This further threatens the investment climate in Europe for circularity of plastics packaging through arbitrary measures, including bans and reduction targets applying to plastics packaging only, without any impact assessment or demonstration of environmental advantages.

Virginia Janssens states: *“Whilst politically attractive to some stakeholders, arbitrary reduction targets or measures targeting plastics only 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 required to enable 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.