

Commission launches Circular Plastics Alliance to foster the market of recycled plastics in Europe

Against the backdrop of the Commission's efforts to help accelerate Europe's transition towards a [circular economy](#), the **Circular Plastics Alliance** will aim to improve the economics and quality of plastics recycling in Europe. The Alliance will in particular strengthen the match between supply and demand for recycled plastics which is identified as the main obstacle to a well-functioning EU market of recycled plastics. With this new initiative, the Commission wants to contribute to the objective of achieving at least 10 million tons of recycled plastics into new products on the EU market by 2025 as set in the [European Strategy for Plastics](#).

First Vice-President Frans **Timmermans**, responsible for sustainable development, said: *"Close cooperation within and between all the links in the plastics value chain is essential if we are to achieve a true circular plastics economy and ensure that recycled plastics find their way to new products, instead of into landfills or the incinerators. The Circular Plastics Alliance aims to facilitate this cooperation, building on the commitments the plastics industry has already made and encouraging even more ambitious action. Europe already leads this, and Europe will be the first one to reap the benefits as well. This is the best way to show the world that circular plastic economy is good for the business and good for the environment."*

On occasion of the launch of the Circular Plastics Alliance, Vice-President Jyrki **Katainen**, responsible for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness, said: *"European industry has already clearly committed to more sustainable plastics with the pledges that they have submitted to the Commission. Business understands this is an opportunity to innovate and to become global frontrunners in new technology and materials, in line with circular economy logic. The platform that we are setting up today will encourage cooperation and dialogue between market operators, both on the supply and the demand side, so that we can together build a well-functioning market for recycled plastics."*

The Circular Plastics Alliance will be a high-level, multi-stakeholder platform gathering key industry stakeholders covering the full plastics value chain – from waste collectors to recyclers and primary producers to converters, brand owners and retailers -including in particular packaging, construction and automotive sectors.

The Alliance will pursue three main operational objectives:

– **Fostering short-term, voluntary and coordinated actions and investments** by key industry stakeholders. These actions and investments may cover separate collection of plastic waste; harmonised reporting on collection and recycling

rates and volumes; investments in sorting and recycling facilities; voluntary standards on the 'design for recycling' of plastic products and others. Improving the economics and quality of plastics recycling in Europe would contribute to the achievement of the 10 million tons target by 2025. Public authorities across Europe should also play an active role in that.

– **Reporting on the obstacles** which may hamper stakeholders' efforts to fully deliver on their [pledges](#) and to reach the target set for 2025. Some of those already identified include lack of infrastructure, insufficient access to finance and standardisation gaps.

– **Monitoring progress made** towards more plastics recycling and more uptake of recycled plastics in Europe. The monitoring should help identify the gaps in the supply and demand for different recycled plastics. In parallel, new voluntary commitments will be encouraged.

Next steps

The Commission will invite key industry stakeholders to join the Alliance, in particular from those sectors, which account for most demand for plastics in Europe such as the packaging, construction and automotive industries. Other sectors will be approached as well for their contribution in order to address the full plastics value chain. The first meeting of the Circular Plastics Alliance will be organised as part of the [EU Industry Days](#) on 05 February 2019. A series of operational meetings on the key topics identified by the Alliance at their first meeting will take place between March and May 2019.

Interested parties may contact for further information: GROW-ENV-RPLASTICS-PLEDGE@ec.europa.eu

Background

In December 2015 the Juncker Commission adopted an ambitious new [Circular Economy Package](#) to help European businesses and consumers to make the transition to a stronger and more circular economy where resources are used in a more sustainable way. The Package has broken down silos in the Commission and contributes to broad political priorities by tackling climate change and the environment while boosting job creation, economic growth, investment and social fairness. It has been prepared by a core project team co-chaired by First Vice-President Frans **Timmermans** and Vice-President Jyrki **Katainen** with the close involvement of Commissioners Karmenu **Vella** and Elżbieta **Bieńkowska**. Many other Commissioners were also involved in its preparation and helped identify the most effective tools covering a wide range of policy areas.

In January 2018 the European Commission adopted the first-ever Europe-wide [Plastics Strategy](#) as part of the transition towards a more circular economy. It will protect the environment from plastic pollution whilst fostering growth and innovation, turning a challenge into a positive agenda for the Future of Europe. Under the new plans, all plastic packaging on the EU market will be recyclable by 2030, the consumption of single-use plastics will be reduced and the intentional use of microplastics will be restricted.

As part of this strategy on plastics the Commission launched a voluntary pledges campaign and is currently [assessing the received pledges](#) by the industry. A preliminary analysis indicates that at least 10 million tons of recycled plastics could be supplied by 2025 if the pledges are fully delivered. However, on the demand side, only 5 million tons are expected, demonstrating that more actions will be needed to achieve the objective of a well-functioning EU market of recycled plastics.