

PRESS RELEASE

EU WASTE LEGISLATION RECOGNISES BENEFITS OF BIOPLASTICS

Revised legislative package on waste acknowledges that bioplastics play a key role in achieving EU recycling goals

Berlin, 28 February 2018 – The provisional agreements reached by the European Council and Parliament on the EU waste legislative package published by the Commission in 2015, recognise the benefits of bioplastics. The new legislation acknowledges that bio-based feedstock for plastic packaging as well as compostable plastics for separate bio-waste collection contribute to more efficient waste management and help to reduce the impacts of plastic packaging on the environment. The legislative package includes the revision of the Waste Framework Directive and the Packaging and Packaging Waste Directive.

“Bioplastics are recognised for their circular nature. Both directives emphasise the potential of bio-based mechanically recyclable and bio-based compostable plastic packaging to foster a European circular economy”, says François de Bie, Chairman of European Bioplastics (EUBP), the association for the bioplastics industry in Europe, and adds: “Substituting fossil-based feedstock with renewable resources is a key transition that is supported by this new legislation.”

The revised Waste Framework Directive allows biodegradable and compostable packaging to be collected together with the bio-waste and recycled in industrial composting and anaerobic digestion, which has already successfully been implemented in several Member States. By 2023, separate collection of bio-waste is set to be mandatory throughout Europe. Biodegradable plastics verifiably help to collect more bio-waste and ultimately contribute to reaching the new recycling targets. Relevant European standards, such as the harmonized standard EN 13432 for industrially compostable plastic packaging can serve as basis for future standards for composting outlined in the agreed revision.

The Packaging and Packaging Waste Directive acknowledges that bio-based plastics help to minimise the environmental impacts of plastic packaging and to reduce Europe’s dependence on imported raw materials. Bio-based and recycled materials are equally viable solutions to make packaging more sustainable. While Member States are encouraged to promote the use of bio-based recyclable packaging and bio-based compostable packaging, the European legislators miss the chance to introduce concrete legislative measures stimulating their use and improving market conditions for such products.

Furthermore, the agreed text makes a clear distinction between biodegradable compostable plastics and so-called oxo-degradable plastics, which shall not be considered biodegradable. This position has also been integrated in the recently published EU Strategy on Plastics, which aims to restrict the use of oxo-degradable plastics.

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EUBP congratulates the representatives of the Trilogue on this important step to integrate mechanical recycling and organic recycling into a vision for a future European circular economy, as well as recognising the importance of separate collection, in order to make waste management more efficient. We are also looking forward to continue working closely together with the EU institutions to elaborate on the bioeconomy's role to boost the circular economy, to identify synergies and to ensure that the initial acknowledgements of alternative bio-based feedstocks in the waste legislative package will be further developed throughout the future initiatives such as the outlined actions of the EU Plastics Strategy.

About European Bioplastics:

European Bioplastics (EUBP) is the European association representing the interests of the bioplastics industry along the entire value chain. Its members produce, refine and distribute bioplastics i.e. plastics that are bio-based, biodegradable, or both. More information is available at www.european-bioplastics.org.

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