

Press Release

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EYDC Benelux National Finals

Debate on “Rethink, Reuse, Recycle” gathers youngsters from across Benelux

75 students from across Benelux debated on the topic of “**Rethink, Reuse, Recycle: how would you shape a sustainable future with plastics and petrochemicals?**” in Brussels on 17th May. The Benelux National Finals is the third contest of the European Youth Debating Competition (EYDC, www.eydc.eu) organised by the European Petrochemical Association (EPCA) and PlasticsEurope. Students between 16 and 19 years old from across Europe, of different origin, gender, age and culture are encouraged to participate in this educational initiative.

Representatives of the industry (Chevron Phillips Chemicals, Dow Belgium, Solvay, Total, ADPO), academia (University of Gent) and EPCA took part in the jury who awarded the best performing students. After deliberation, the six winners are: Lorena Ferrarini (1st place), 17 years, from the European School of Brussels IV, Latoya Michielsen (2nd place), 17 years from Atheneum Schilde in Antwerp, Djemaro Dalloesingh (3rd place), 15 years from Caland Lyceum in Amsterdam, Helena Berendijk (4th place), Inigo Grau (5th place), Ethan Abramczyk (6th place). The winners excelled in the ability to express themselves in public, while using well-informed and persuasive arguments. Youngsters were also judged on their ability to interact with other students during the debate.

Benny Mermans, Europe Africa Region General Manager, Chevron Phillips Chemical, Member of the PlasticsEurope Steering Board and member of the jury said:

“The EYDC is an excellent platform that provides students from across Europe the opportunity to engage with our industry. We need to hear the voice of the future generation as they provide an incredibly valuable perspective on those issues we face as an industry. By incorporating their thoughts in our processes we can together address the societal challenges we are facing and build a sustainable future for generations to come.”

Nick Bastiaansen, Senior Trader Aromatics & Styrene, Total Petrochemicals & Refining stated: “Nice to see how these young students made the effort to dig into a subject as complex as plastics and petrochemicals. Many of them took the debate aspect very seriously and both PRO and CON speakers came up with interesting arguments this afternoon.”

As part of the next steps of the competition, the top three winners of the EYDC Benelux National Finals won a ticket to Berlin and the opportunity to participate in the European Finals on 7th October, during the 53rd EPCA Annual Meeting, the largest gathering of the petrochemical industry in Europe. On this occasion, the winners from the 7 National Finals of the EYDC will engage in the European Finals.

The upcoming national competitions will take place in Poland (21st May), Italy (30th May), UK (17th June) and in France (27th September). With the EYDC, EPCA and PlasticsEurope aim at making science and technology more tangible and accessible for the youngsters, and directly connected to their everyday reality. Beyond the importance of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) education, the participants will also gain soft skills that will help them interact in a fast-changing and sometimes divisive environment. Education and innovative

solutions are key to advance towards circular economy, and build a sustainable future for the next generations.

Further information about the EYDC is available at www.eydc.eu, www.epca.eu, www.plasticseurope.org and Twitter: #youthdebate2019.

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The European Petrochemical Association (EPCA)

*Based in Brussels, EPCA is the **primary European Business Network** for the global petrochemical business community consisting of chemical producers, their suppliers, customers and service providers. It operates for and through more than 700-member companies from 54 different countries. EPCA **hosts events** in Europe offering members all over the world the opportunity to meet industry leaders and selected external stakeholders and stay abreast of international market developments as well as technological and societal trends. EPCA also **assists** members on **specific topics** that underpin the sustainable development of the global petrochemical industry. EPCA promotes STEM education, with a clear focus on gender and diversity inclusion. EPCA also highlight the multidisciplinary approach and the variety of challenging career paths that the petrochemical industry offers.*

***PlasticsEurope** is one of the leading European trade associations with centres in Brussels, Frankfurt, London, Madrid, Milan and Paris. The association is networking with European and national plastics associations and has more than 100 member companies, producing over 90% of all polymers across the EU28 member states plus Norway, Switzerland and Turkey.*