



Plastics 2030

PlasticsEurope's Voluntary Commitment
to increasing circularity and resource efficiency

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Executive Summary

The European Commission aims to transform Europe into a more circular and resource efficient economy. PlasticsEurope fully supports this objective.

It is widely recognised that plastics have a crucial role to play in delivering a more sustainable future. Through their unique combination of light-weight, durability and other intrinsic properties, plastics already contribute to emissions reduction and more efficient use of resources across a range of different sectors and everyday applications. As a result of their versatility and capacity for innovation, plastic materials are also frequently best placed to support breakthrough sustainable technologies.

However, challenges relating to littering and end-of-life options for certain types of plastics waste must be addressed if the material is to achieve its fullest potential in a circular and resource efficient economy.

It is in this spirit of commitment to future generations, PlasticsEurope has decided to set a series of ambitious targets and initiatives up to 2030.

The Plastics 2030 Voluntary Commitment focuses on **preventing leakage of plastics** into the environment, **improving resource efficiency and the circularity of plastics packaging** applications.

PlasticsEurope will aim at **achieving the goal of 100% re-use, recycling** and or recovery **of all plastics packaging** in the EU-28, Norway and Switzerland by 2040. The overriding focus of this commitment is to ensure **high rates of re-use and recycling** with the ambition to **reach 60% re-use and recycling** of plastics packaging **by 2030**.

Ensuring the highest possible rates for recycling and re-use will require actions in the following areas:

- Increase efforts along the value chain to include eco-design aspects to deliver sustainable packaging solutions e.g. facilitating re-usability and recyclability
- Collaboration with recyclers and public authorities on the application of improved separate waste collection systems
- Public and private funding
- Investment in research and development of:
 - enhanced waste sorting technology

- more effective physical recycling machinery
- innovative and economical chemical recycling technologies

The targets for recycling and reuse of packaging in general will complement already established recycling programmes for specific plastics types.

Another important pillar of the Plastics 2030 Voluntary Commitment is a further increase in existing **activities aimed at preventing littering** that includes educational projects across Member States, targets to prevent pellet loss, and new research into the origins of the most commonly occurring plastic litter in the environment.

These efforts will be complemented by **additional actions to enhance the resource efficiency of plastics packaging** and **accelerate innovation** aimed at boosting their circularity. This will involve further research into alternative feedstocks, more regular updates of product Life-Cycle Inventories and Environmental Product Declarations, the publication of extended waste data, and new eco-design guidelines for plastics packaging.

PlasticsEurope will work on concrete **action plans and time-based performance indicators** against all of the above objectives by mid-2018. From 2019, an annual progress report will be published.

Yearly evaluation of the progress of the Plastics 2030 Voluntary Commitment will be provided by an independent **committee** made up of representatives of the European Commission, European Parliament, national and local authorities, civil society and academia.

Delivering against these ambitious objectives will also depend on the commitment and support of policy makers at European, national and local level to ensure the implementation of appropriate regulatory frameworks, as well as the mobilisation of public funding.

Introduction

The European Commission aims at transforming Europe into a more circular and resource efficient economy; PlasticsEurope fully supports this objective.

It is widely recognised that plastics have a crucial role to play in delivering a more sustainable future. Through their unique combination of light-weight, durability and other intrinsic properties, plastics already contribute to emissions reduction and more efficient use of resources across a range of different sectors and everyday applications. As a result of their versatility and capacity for innovation, plastic materials are also invariably best placed to support breakthrough sustainable technologies.

However, challenges relating to littering and end-of-life options for certain types of plastics waste - especially packaging waste - must be addressed if the material is to achieve its fullest potential in a circular and resource efficient economy.

It is in this spirit of commitment to sustainable development, PlasticsEurope has decided to set a series of ambitious targets and initiatives up to 2030 that are focussed on the key areas of preventing leakage of plastics into the environment, improving resource efficiency and increasing recycling and re-use rates.

With this Voluntary Commitment, PlasticsEurope is advancing the plastics industry's role to a next level of engagement, recognising that this transformation will only take place through solutions put into reality and the regulatory support of the EU institutions.

Making Circularity and Resource Efficiency a Reality

PlasticsEurope is committed to accelerating ongoing and establish new initiatives to achieve a more circular and resource efficient economy. The regional scope is the EU-28 plus Norway and Switzerland. From 2019, an annual progress report will be published.

1. Preventing Plastics Litter in the Environment

1.1 Actions to Prevent Pellet Loss

Background:

Operation Clean Sweep® (OCS) is a voluntary programme aiming towards zero pellet loss from the production and conversion of plastic pellets and their subsequent distribution and handling. Its objective is to prevent industrial plastic pellet losses from getting into the environment.

To ensure that all potential leakage points of plastic pellets are identified and managed, we focus on prevention and control measures.

Target:

- PlasticsEurope's target is to have 100% of its member companies sign the OCS pledge to which OCS is applicable by the end of 2018.
- Develop by 2018 a transparent, harmonised monitoring scheme for the collection of relevant and comparable information from all signed members to measure progress of the industry. Reports on progress will be published and made available to the EU institutions and key stakeholders on a yearly basis.
- In 2019 PlasticsEurope will explore the feasibility to develop a common assessment tool with its members.
- Based on the successful collaboration with the Antwerp port authority in 2017, we are aiming at engaging with at least one other major European port by the end of 2018. By 2030 we aim at securing that all major industrial plastic pellet handling ports in the EU have taken measures to implement OCS.
- PlasticsEurope will expand the work of the platforms with the supply chain and relevant stakeholders both at global, EU and national levels with a view to accelerate the implementation of OCS in the plastics value chain.

For more information on OCS, please go to: www.opcleansweep.eu

1.2 Actions to Prevent Littering

a) Reduce Littering of Top Plastic Items Found in the Environment

By 2018 PlasticsEurope will intensify its engagement with key stakeholders at both EU and global levels to investigate and analyse the type of plastic items found in the European environment.

We will also explore the potential to launch and financially support studies to fill knowledge gaps with the aim to efficiently tackle and significantly reduce plastic waste littering.

Together with the relevant parts of the value chain, we will develop and implement solutions to prevent these items from being littered.

b) Support to Educational Programmes

Background:

Together with value chain partners, PlasticsEurope supports educational projects for students (starting at six years of age) financially across the EU.

Target:

- PlasticsEurope will continue to work closely together with other stakeholders to develop and support projects aimed at raising awareness, positively enhancing knowledge levels, as well as the attitude and behaviour of citizens.
- For example, more than 30 educational related projects that are running in 28 member states under the flag of Marine Litter Solutions like Grimpola Ecomar Foundation (Spain), Recykling Rejs (Poland), CSI: Litter Challenge (UK), and La plastica in vacanza (Plastics on holiday) (Italy).
- The projects will be regularly reviewed and updated.

2. Improving Resource Efficiency and Accelerating Innovation to Increase Circularity

2.1 Accelerate using Alternative Feedstocks

In addition to increasing recycling in the value chain, PlasticsEurope will continue to expand and explore the use of CO₂ and other renewable feedstocks. For example, by 2019 it will conduct a study on plastics in the circular economy and on increasing the use of alternative feedstocks.

Based on this study, recommendations for actions will be formulated aiming at minimising environmental impacts.

2.2 Facilitate Future Resource Efficiency Gains

To utilise additional and future potential opportunities, the key activities listed below have been identified:

a) Product Life Cycle Inventory

Background:

PlasticsEurope promotes the use of Life Cycle Thinking (LCT) to improve understanding about product benefits and their resource efficiency, in order for the industry to take informed decisions. As a scientific method, Life cycle assessment (LCA) is a technique to analyse the potential environmental impacts associated with a product, process or service.

Target:

- To make informed decisions using the latest data, as of 2018, PlasticsEurope commits to a more regular update (at least every three years) of its Life-Cycle Inventory dataset (LCI) and Environmental Product Declarations (EPD) for the main plastics and recyclates.

b) Extended Waste Data

Background:

PlasticsEurope extensively tracks reliable data and information on post-consumer plastic waste collection and treatment at European and country level. Since 2005, PlasticsEurope has commissioned “Post-consumer Plastic Waste Management” reports with the aim of having an increased understanding of post-consumer plastics waste flows and treatments in Europe and monitor their evolution over time.

Target:

- In 2018, PlasticsEurope will expand the scope of the plastics waste data to be collected to more precisely monitor the circularity of plastics.

c) Eco-Design Guidelines for Plastics Packaging

Background:

PlasticsEurope is actively engaging with stakeholder to increase a common understanding and application of eco-design with plastics. Designing products with plastics aimed at minimizing their environmental impacts over the full life cycle.

Target:

- By 2020 the Plastics Industry will have finalised the on-going development of eco-design guidelines for plastics packaging and design for recycling to maximise re-use and recycling of plastic packaging.

d) Standardisation support/requirement

Background:

Standardisation is an opportunity to engage in dialogue with stakeholders to address issues that concern human safety, the environment and the products; aimed at setting benchmarks and criteria to harmonize best practice, accepted methodology and behaviour in industry and society.

Target:

- From 2018 on, PlasticsEurope will put in place its expertise and resources to properly advance the critical work on standardisation of plastics within the context of the Circular Economy, through a multi-stakeholder dialogue:
 - ISO (TC 61) - subcommittee "Environment", dealing with circular economy, bioplastics, microplastics, recyclates
 - CEN (TC 249) - Steering Committee "Circular economy"
 - National examples, e.g. in Germany at DIN (FNK) – Core group for coordinating national, European and international activities

3. Creating Global Awareness

PlasticsEurope will further increase its engagement to help to deploy appropriate solutions to prevent marine litter and promote circularity around the world, including its active participation in EU Circular Economy missions.

We will strengthen our engagement with other international industry organizations and stakeholders to initiate and manage global action:

- **Global Plastics Alliance (GPA)**

To prevent marine litter over 260 projects have been created by 70 plastics associations in 35 countries over the past years.

By 2018 new targets to continue to expand the efforts will be defined.

- **World Plastics Council (WPC)**

The leading plastic resin manufacturers from around the world have joined since its inception in 2014. The WPC is committed to expand its engagement to support global initiatives, such as Ocean Conservancy and Closed Loop Fund. It will expand its collaboration with UNEP, G7/G20, WBSCD, and others, to jointly promote marine litter solutions globally.

Section II – Sector Specific Commitments - Platforms

1. Increasing Plastics Packaging Recycling and Re-use

PlasticsEurope will aim to **achieve the goal of 100% re-use, recycling** and or recovery of **all plastics packaging** in the EU-28, Norway and Switzerland by 2040. The overriding focus of this commitment is to ensure **high rates of re-use and recycling** with the ambition to **reach 60% re-use and recycling** of plastics packaging **by 2030**.

Therefore, in addition to the *General Commitments* (s. Section I) and its involvement in a significant number of national initiatives, PlasticsEurope has established a number of European platforms to bring forward specific commitments. These commitments will serve as the basis for developing feasible approaches and innovative solutions to stimulate increased recycling across different plastic types and sectors. This will also entail a strengthened multi-stakeholder engagement and collaboration along the value chain.

We will provide a significant share of the required resources (expertise and funding) to achieve the platforms' objectives.

a) Polyolefins Circular Economy Platform (PCEP)

The European Plastics Industry has created this value chain collaboration to drive Europe's Polyolefins-based packaging recycling efforts. The platform is a multi-stakeholder group that seeks to identify the barriers and opportunities to increase Europe's polyolefins recycling and work towards ensuring the supply of high quality recycled polyolefins for the European market.

Innovation is at the heart of this initiative and will require both public and private support to be successful.

The following priority areas of work have been identified:

- Development of **packaging design guidelines and assessment** protocols according to the **principles of the Circular Economy**.
- Innovation to increase the **recyclability of flexible and rigid packaging**.
- **EU wide quality standards for sorted plastics, harmonisation of tests methods** for recycled plastic materials and **certification of plastic recycling operations**.

- Innovation & development of end-use markets to **encourage demand for recycled plastics.**
- Stimulating innovation to **improve mechanical recycling, conversion technologies and reuse.**
- Drive the research and development of new technologies **to convert non-mechanically recyclable plastics into feedstock for the production of new materials.**

By the end of 2018, using the results of an in-depth analysis a roadmap will be developed that will identify bottlenecks to circularity and the best options to remove them to achieve increased recycling and reuse.

b) Styrenics Circular Solutions

The Polystyrene (PS) and Expandable Polystyrene (EPS) producers are actively supporting the development of technologies that enable the recycling of Polystyrene-based products back into their original applications. With a strong focus on innovation, these new technologies will enable the incorporation of post-consumer waste back into production processes, meeting most-demanding standards. By the end of 2018, the most promising technologies and the path forward will be assessed.

The PS/EPS producers will actively collaborate with the complete value chains to further improve the collection and sorting systems for packaging waste. The objective is to considerably expand the accessible market of post-consumer PS and EPS waste.

An independent legal structure with dedicated funding will be set up, and business cases will be developed for the industrial scale-up of the most promising technologies. An example of such business case is the PSLoop cooperative that was established to build a pilot plant which will recycle PS/EPS construction materials.

The EU is invited to monitor and review the progress made.

c) Vinyl Circular Solutions (VCS)

Vinyl Circular Solutions (VCS) is the PVC Packaging Platform of the European Council of Vinyl Manufacturers (ECVM). VCS actively develops and promotes the use of eco-efficient, cost-

effective and safe PVC packaging materials which ensure that packed articles have a considerably increased shelf-life. At the end of their life PVC packaging can be mechanically recycled.

The European Council of Vinyl Manufacturers is a founding member of VinylPlus® (www.vinylplus.eu), the long established Voluntary Commitment to sustainable development by the entire European PVC value chain (resin manufacturers, additives producers and converters), and a benchmark for other industry initiatives. Launched in 2000, VinylPlus® aims at strengthening the sustainability of PVC products and of the entire industry through a holistic approach including increasing safe and quality PVC recycling ([annual progress report](#)). The VinylPlus® commitment includes, amongst others, a target to recycle 800,000 tonnes of PVC per year by 2020.

To continue the journey started in 2000, the European PVC value chain will review in 2018 VinylPlus®' achievements with a view to defining, in consultation with the stakeholders, new ambitious recycling targets alongside a set of other concrete objectives for the next phase of its Voluntary Commitment towards 2030.

Other sectors and plastic types not covered by this commitment, are addressed by the “Voluntary Commitments towards a circular economy” by EuPC and others.

Section III – A Regulatory Framework for Success

1. EU Regulatory Support

In order to achieve our targets towards a more sustainable, resource efficient and globally competitive European Plastics Industry, EU policy support is required:

- **Zero Plastics to Landfill**
The landfilling of recyclable and other recoverable post-consumer waste shall be stopped as soon as possible in the European Union.
- **Internal Market**
Maintain the EU internal market legal base for the EU Packaging & Packaging Waste Directive and all its amending acts.
- **Separate Collection**
Mandatory separate collection of all packaging from residual waste by 2025.
- **Alignment of REACH / Waste / CLP / Product legislation**
Alignment of REACH, CLP and waste and product legislation to remove the obstacles for recycling. It includes the implementation of a risk based approach in order to secure the full potential of plastics recycling of longer life applications into controlled loops (with traceability of SVHC additives) and secure the safety of virgin/recycled plastics for their intended application.
- **Food Contact Regulation**
Adoption of all measures required for the full implementation of the Food Contact Regulation EC/282/2008.

2. EU Funding

Mobilise public funding (such as Horizon 2020) to encourage and stimulate innovation in plastics:

- feedstock recycling
- re-use models
- low carbon footprint feedstocks
- innovation in traceability of materials, collection schemes, sorting and treatment of secondary raw materials.

Section IV – Monitoring and Guiding Progress

As this will establish a multi-year process of continuous improvement and learning, we invite an independent committee - made up of representatives from the European Commission and European Parliament, academia, civil society, and PlasticsEurope - to monitor and guide the progress made. While providing the general oversight of the Plastics 2030 Voluntary Commitment, this advisory committee serves to complement the respective stakeholder committees of the individual Circular Economy and Value Chain Initiatives.

Brussels, 11 January 2018



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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.
www.plasticseurope.org



The Styrenics Circular Solutions is a joint industry initiative to increase the circularity of polystyrene. The initiative engages the value chain in the development and industrialization of new recycling technologies and solutions. It aims to strengthen the sustainability of polystyrene products while improving resource efficiency within the circular economy.
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The European Council of Vinyl Manufacturers represents six leading European producers of PVC resin, which account for around 75% of the EU-28 PVC resin production. These businesses operate around 40 different plants spread over 23 sites, and employ approximately 7,000 people.
www.pvc.org



Polyolefins Circular Economy Platform (PCEP) is a European joint industry value chain initiative. It has been founded in order to advance the circular economy by increasing the reuse and recycling of polyolefin based products and the use of recyclates as raw material. By working together our industry aims to ensure long-term sustainability for polyolefin products.
www.pcep.eu

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