

PRESS RELEASE

Greenwashing: misuse of EU composting standard EN 13432

European Bioplastics requests all producers of additives claiming to make conventional plastics biodegradable to fully comply with the standard EN 13432 or to cease misleading references

Berlin, 13 October 2015. Lately, European Bioplastics (EUBP) is noticing an increasing malpractice by producers of fragmentation additives for conventional plastics referring to the European standard for industrial composting, EN 13432, when marketing their products. As is well known, such products do not fulfil the requirements of the EU norm for industrial composting of plastic products. Consequently, European Bioplastics considers this a severe case of greenwashing.

Recent misuse cases comprise the outright false claim that additive-mediated plastics comply with EN 13432 (see image). In other cases, additive producers aim to piggyback on the good reputation of EN 13432 by referring to only parts of the standard, for example stating that 'The plant growth test and the ecotoxicity effects have been studied with positive results above 100% according the EN 13432'.

"If a standard is referenced, all aspects of it need to be fulfilled by the material or product. Should this not be the case, the reference is misleading. We urge all market operators to comply with communication standards according to the ISO 14020 series," states François de Bie, Chairman of the Board of EUBP.

Worried about the negative impacts on the environment of additive-mediated conventional plastics, which merely fragment into small pieces, the European Commission has discussed banning such technology in the past. Currently, the Commission is undertaking an assessment of the impact of oxo-degradable plastics on the environment, as these materials represent the foremost part of additive-mediated plastics. According to a recent amendment of the EU Directive on Packaging and Packaging Waste, the results shall be presented by 2017, at the latest.

Additional information on bioplastics and the norm EN 13432:

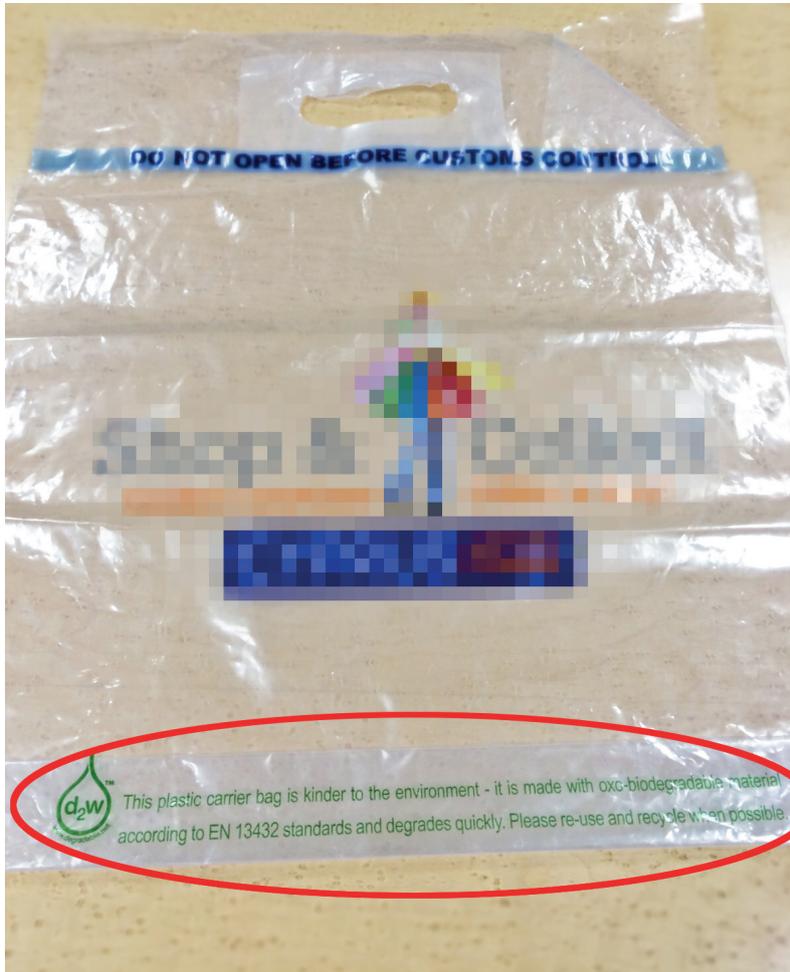
EUBP represents the entire value chain of the bioplastics industry in Europe and defines bioplastics as biobased, biodegradable, or both. In this context, EUBP clearly differentiates between naturally occurring biodegradation and the fragmentation process promoted by additives. EN 13432 requires the material to fully biodegrade in less than 12 weeks and sets clear requirements for the surroundings in which this process takes place (industrial composting plant). Corresponding labels, such as the Seedling, prove that the material is truly biodegradable/compostable and certified according to the standard EN 13432. Simple fragmentation – as is the case of additive-mediated plastics – is not acceptable in the context of EN 13432.

More detailed information about the difference between biodegradable plastics and additive-mediated conventional plastics can be found on the EUBP website: http://en.european-bioplastics.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/publications/EUBP_Background_Additive-mediated_Plastics_2015.pdf

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ISO 14020 series compatible recommendations for communication of bioplastic materials are available in the EUBP Environmental Communications Guide: <http://en.european-bioplastics.org/ecg-4/>



Misleading marketing claim: Shopping bag made from “oxo-degradable material” wrongly claims accordance to EN 13432. (Image taken in August 2015, © European Bioplastics)



compostable

The Seedling logo (European Bioplastics trademark) is a label for compostable packaging certified according to EN 13432.

About European Bioplastics:

European Bioplastics is the European association representing the interests of the industry along the entire bioplastics' value chain. Its members produce, refine, and distribute Bioplastics, i.e. plastics that are either biobased, biodegradable, or both. More information is available on www.european-bioplastics.org.

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