

PRESS RELEASE

EU Parliament report on revised waste legislation emphasises the role of bioplastics in the transition to a circular economy

Berlin, 8 June 2016 – European Bioplastics (EUBP), the association representing the bioplastics industry in Europe, welcomes the draft reports on the revised EU waste legislation by MEP Simona Bonafè, Rapporteur of the European Parliament’s Committee on the Environment, which was published last week. The reports lay out the legal measures needed for a paradigm shift from a linear to a circular economy where waste is considered a valuable resource, and the transformation to a low-carbon bioeconomy, which uses resources more efficiently.

“We welcome the strong and ambitious positions of Rapporteur Bonafè on encouraging better market conditions for renewable raw materials and promoting the use of bio-based materials in packaging,” says François de Bie, Chairman of European Bioplastics, “because it sends the right signals to our industry and investors in the bioeconomy”. The report on the Packaging and Packaging Waste Directive further asks the Commission to assess the feasibility of gradually replacing food packaging with bio-based and/or biodegradable and compostable packaging solutions. “We hope that this will encourage Member States to recognise the benefits of, and create a level-playing field for, bio-based and/or biodegradable products,” says de Bie.

Furthermore, the report on the amendments to the Waste Framework Directive places particular emphasis on the definitions of bio-waste and recycling. It supports the inclusion of organic recycling (in the form of composting and anaerobic digestion of organic waste) in the definition of ‘recycling’ and suggests a future-oriented definition of bio-waste by taking into account ‘other materials with similar biodegradability and compostability properties’. “These amendments are essential to achieve higher recycling targets by making use of the enormous but yet untapped potential of organic waste and compostable products in Europe. The largest fraction of municipal waste (up to 50%) in Europe is bio-waste, only 25%¹ of which are currently collected and recycled,” says de Bie. The report calls for a mandatory collection of bio-waste by 2020 supported by measures to increase the organic recycling of bio-waste to 65% by 2025. The proposed amendments also foresee limiting the amount of residual municipal waste landfilled to 25% by 2025 and to 5% by 2030.

“We welcome the connection that the report makes between the bioeconomy and the responsible use of non-fossil feedstock in packaging, and the strong focus on resource efficiency along the entire industrial production cycle, from bio-based materials and products, to collecting and recycling bio-waste. The measures and actions proposed by MEP Bonafè will help the bioplastics industry and the entire European bioeconomy to unfold its full environmental, social, and economic potential to provide new business opportunities and to create quality and long-term employment in Europe while protecting the environment and foster the efficient and sustainable use of our resources,” says Hasso von Pogrell, Managing Director of European Bioplastics. “On the basis of these reports, we will continue to discuss with the European Parliament and all other relevant stakeholders on how to ensure Europe can decouple the economy from fossil resources and move towards a circular economy,” von Pogrell concludes.

For more information, please see our position paper on the EU Circular Economy Package: http://docs.european-bioplastics.org/2016/publications/pp/EUBP_PP_Circular_Economy_Package.pdf

¹ Source: European Compost Network (ECN) e.V., 2016

European Bioplastics is the association representing the interests of the bioplastics industry along the entire value chain in Europe. 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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