

PRESS RELEASE

Bioplastics an important part of the EU roadmap for the strategy on plastics in a circular economy

Berlin, 27 January 2017 – European Bioplastics (EUBP), the association representing the bioplastics industry along the entire value chain in Europe, welcomes the EU Roadmap for a Strategy on Plastics in a Circular Economy published yesterday by the European Commission. “An EU Plastics Strategy is needed to drive continued change in the plastics industry towards an innovative, sustainable, and resource-efficient economy”, says François de Bie, Chairman of European Bioplastics.

“The European Commission’s ambitious circular economy approach becomes apparent in the Roadmap. Alternatives to fossil feedstock such as biomass or CO₂ will be taken into account for the manufacture of plastics. Furthermore, diverse end-of-life options will be assessed. Making use of biodegradation properties of bioplastics will help to divert organic waste from landfill and will help reduce plastic leakage into the environment.”, acknowledges de Bie.

EUBP welcomes the priority the Commission has given to assess how to decarbonise the plastic industry. Replacing a significant proportion of the conventional fossil feedstock by plant-based or waste-based alternatives would reduce GHG emissions. Both market push and pull measures could drive this transition, as would a level-playing-field regarding access to bio-based feedstock in the EU. This approach needs to be underpinned by smart sustainability criteria in order to ensure responsible sourcing and food security.

Biodegradable plastics generate a lot of interest and diverse expectations. As the Plastics Strategy will follow circular thinking as its guiding principle it is important to also look at these materials from a circular vantage point. Currently, biodegradable products are designed and intended for organic recycling in industrial composting facilities, where biodegradation creates secondary products such as organic fertilisers, thus merging efficient resource use, value creation, and economic growth. Organic recycling is putting biodegradability to circular use. Research on biodegradation in alternative environments and evaluating the resulting potential benefits is another path that should continuously be pursued. Unfortunately, the Roadmap refers to biodegradable plastics only under the aspect of ‘plastic leakage into the environment’. This falls short of accounting for the full circular potential these materials offer. European Bioplastics therefore urges the European Commission and all the stakeholders participating in future discussions to consider recycling as both mechanical and organic recycling and to contemplate the corresponding plastic materials in this context.

European Bioplastics looks forward to sharing further information on standards, certifications, and labels available for its industry’s products and the benefits they offer in a circular economy.

For more information:

FS Standards: http://docs.european-bioplastics.org/publications/fs/EUBP_FS_Standards.pdf

Position on End of life: http://docs.european-bioplastics.org/publications/pp/EUBP_PP_End-of-life.pdf

Position Agricultural Resources: http://docs.european-bioplastics.org/publications/pp/EuBP_PP_Feedstock_availability.pdf

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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