

PRESS RELEASE

SINGLE-USE PLASTICS DIRECTIVE FAILS TO ACKNOWLEDGE POTENTIAL OF BIODEGRADABLE PLASTICS

Berlin, 20 December 2018 - The European institutions have reached an agreement on a directive to curb the use of a number of single-use plastic products in the EU, which aims to prevent and reduce marine litter of these products. European Bioplastics (EUBP) fully supports the transition from a linear to a ‘no-leakage’ circular and bio-based economy in Europe. “This directive is a valuable initiative to raise awareness for consumption patterns and tackle marine pollution”, says François de Bie, Chairman of EUBP. “However, it is necessary to combine ambition and proportionality within the directive – so that unnecessary single-use plastics are avoided, while provisions for the circular economy and the EU’s internal market are safeguarded. Biodegradable certified compostable plastics fulfil Europe’s requirements for health and safety and can be recycled organically together with food waste”.

The priority should be the use of multi-use options where feasible. However, EUBP considers a general restriction of single-use cutlery and plates an excessive move that will create negative consequences in contexts where EU legislation for hygiene and food contact need to be fulfilled, but where no multi-use options can be deployed. “When implementing the Directive, Member States should envisage the possibility to create limited, efficient exemptions for innovative compostable plastic products that facilitate organic recycling”, says de Bie. As boosting organic recycling is a major pillar of the European circular economy, such considerations would support the European Commission’s commitment towards a sustainable circular bioeconomy while safeguarding the investments and the jobs created by the European bioplastics industry.

On a different note, EUBP fully supports the European institutions’ decision to restrict the use of oxo-degradable plastics. Significant evidence suggests oxo-degradable plastics merely fragment into small pieces, contributing to microplastics pollution. In order to ensure the use of biodegradable plastics in the context of a strong European circular economy, it is important to clearly define the difference between oxo-degradable and biodegradable plastics. The directive at hand, therefore, needs to provide unambiguous definitions.

EUBP looks forward to discussing the use of bio-based feedstock for the production of plastics as well as the benefits biodegradable plastics can offer in a circular economy context with the European institutions and Member States in 2019.

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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