

## PRESS RELEASE

### Biodegradable bags on top of the agenda at high level panel debate on the future for plastic bags in Europe

**Brussels, 5 March 2014. With the participation of industry experts, EU policy makers and NGOs, the European Bioplastics high level panel debate on ‘A future for lightweight plastic bags in Europe?’ reaffirmed that the characteristics and dual use of biodegradable plastic bags makes them a key contributor to enhanced resource efficiency and reduced littering in the EU.**

François de Bie, Chairman of European Bioplastics, commented on the Commission’s proposal and the future for plastic bags in Europe: “We agree with the Commission and believe that there should indeed be a reduction in lightweight plastic bags consumption in Europe. However, we also believe that it is important to recognise valid and readily available alternatives to traditional fossil based lightweight plastic bags. Biodegradable plastic bags that comply with standard EN 13432 should be exempted from the measures that Member States are allowed to take to tackle consumption of lightweight plastic bags.”

The idea of an exemption for biodegradable plastic bags was endorsed by co-host MEP Elisabetta Gardini, who has proposed such an exemption in her amendments to the European Parliament report on the proposal, due to be voted in the Environment Committee on 10 March. Also co-host MEP Judith Merkies has acknowledged in one of her amendments that biodegradable bags can lower the environmental burden for Member States.

Also taking part in the panel debate, Marianne Muller, Policy Officer in the Commission’s Waste Management and Recycling unit, explained the Commission proposal in further detail. Joan Marc Simon, Director of Zero Waste Europe called for ambitious measures by EU Member States to ensure that plastic bag consumption is drastically reduced.

The debate confirmed that biodegradable plastic bags are key components in any discussion on the future of plastic bags in Europe. They facilitate the move towards a circular, green economy and their dual use function will help reduce littering and improve waste management in the EU.

*European Bioplastics is the European association representing the interests of the industry along the complete bioplastics’ value chain. Its members produce, refine and distribute bioplastics i.e. plastics that are either biobased, biodegradable, or both. More information is available at [www.european-bioplastics.org](http://www.european-bioplastics.org)*

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