

## PRESS RELEASE

### EU legislation on plastic bags paves way for compostable shopping bags

**Berlin, 25 November 2014. Yesterday, the European institutions adopted a legislative proposal amending the Packaging and Packaging Waste Directive (PPWD) that addresses the challenge of conventional single use plastic carrier bags consumption, and explicitly sanctions the actions of several member states that have already recognized the benefits of compostable bags.**

European Bioplastics welcomes the strong environmental commitment of Green MEP Margrete Auken, the European Parliament's lead negotiator for the legislation. Commenting on the binding EU rules on reducing plastic bag use, Ms Auken stated "EU member states will have to take action to reduce plastic bag use but they will be able to choose how to do it: either they introduce pricing for plastic bags or equally effective measures, or they deliver on ambitious reduction targets."

The proposal adopted explicitly pushes decision making to the local member state level, where decisions can best be made consistent with local infrastructure, practices, and markets. "This is crucial, because it retroactively legalizes national legislation of Member States like Italy and France. Both states have recognized the benefits that are achievable with biodegradable and compostable shopping bags," said François de Bie, Chairman of European Bioplastics. "These countries are pioneers in putting the decisive ecological advantages of such bags to good use. This means enhancing the separate collection of biowaste and thereby diverting it from landfill." In this context, European Bioplastics also highly appreciates the endorsement of the EN13432 as the standard to certify biodegradation and the initiative to further improve biodegradability and compostability labelling for plastic carrier bags.

Describing 'oxo-biodegradable' plastic bags as "hugely problematic", MEP Auken explained "these plastic bags worsen the litter problem by fragmenting into micro-plastics polluting the environment and hindering composting and recycling". European Bioplastics shares the view of Margrete Auken concerning the missed chance of banning the oxo-degradable plastics. "This would have sent a clear signal that bags should not be placed on the market with misleading claims about biodegradability," de Bie argued. "On the other hand, it will only be a matter of time," he is convinced, referring to the requirement of the Commission to present a report to the European Parliament and Council, examining the impact of the use of oxo-degradable bags on the environment. "The report will clearly show that oxo-degradable plastics are not biodegradable and hence do not qualify as an ecological solution," de Bie concluded.

*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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