

PRESS RELEASE

REVIEWED EUROPEAN BIOECONOMY STRATEGY STRENGTHENS DEFOSSILISATION OF PLASTICS SECTOR

Berlin, 17 October 2018. The European Commission recently delivered its review of the 2012 European Bioeconomy Strategy. The strategy is a step forward towards ensuring that fossil resources are replaced by sustainable natural alternatives for the production of bio-based products such as bio-based plastics and energy. 'Only by driving the transition in relevant markets, it will be possible to reach Europe's climate change mitigation goals', says Hasso von Pogrell, Managing Director at European Bioplastics (EUBP). 'Implementation of the key actions of the updated Bioeconomy Strategy is paramount to making this happen'.

The strategy focuses on the importance of a stable regulatory framework as well as on research and innovation to accelerate the growth of the bioeconomy, which is already worth around 2,1 trillion euros in annual turnover in Europe. Specifically, the bioplastics industry not only helps reduce greenhouse gas emissions, but also contributes to employment growth in Europe and to the development of rural areas. 'The bioplastics industry is a main driver of the bioeconomy,' says Mr von Pogrell. 'According to a study of EuropaBio, it accounts for about 23,000 jobs in Europe. With suitable investment and regulatory frameworks, this number could increase by 2030 with up to 300,000 high skilled jobs'.

European Bioplastics welcomes the Commission's support for using bio-based feedstock for the production of plastics. Furthermore, the strategy underlines that bio-based plastics should be mechanically or organically recyclable and by this links the concepts of bioeconomy and circular economy.

The new document aims at fostering research into plastics which are biodegradable in the marine environment and refers to the currently debated draft directive on marine pollution and single-use plastics. 'While marine biodegradability can be an interesting property, it is important to clearly define for which materials and applications and under which conditions it is meaningful. In the context of single-use plastic items, European Bioplastics considers soundly established land-based waste management as the key to fight marine pollution', states von Pogrell.

As the European Bioeconomy Alliance (EUBA) has already pointed out, the Bioeconomy Strategy should deliver the following five policy priorities in order to ensure Europe's leadership in the sector: making the circular bioeconomy an integral part of EU-level frameworks and policies; increasing funding and improving coherence of financing mechanisms for the circular bioeconomy; securing the Bio-Based Industries Joint Undertaking (BBI JU) 2.0; creating incentives for bio-based products in strategic sectors; and promoting bio-based products' visibility to stimulate market demand.

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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