



PLASTICS RECYCLERS EUROPE'S MANIFESTO

Driving Plastic Circularity,
Competitiveness & Transparency

DRIVING PLASTIC CIRCULARITY, COMPETITIVENESS & TRANSPARENCY

Accelerating the transition from a linear to a circular economy in the EU has never been a more pressing issue. The EU has acknowledged the pivotal role of decoupling economic growth from natural resources use and embodied the shift to a circular economy model as a core strategy in achieving its climate neutrality goal by 2050.

The plastics recycling industry plays a leading role in supporting this transition, by keeping valuable resources in the loop, reducing the dependency on virgin raw materials and thereby decreasing the EU's carbon footprint.

The Green Deal and the new Circular Economy Action Plan set a clear path for the adoption of key legislation targeting the entire product lifecycle, from design to end-of-life management, including recycling and use of recycled content. Despite these developments, systemic barriers and bottlenecks remain. The lack of collection, improper design for recycling, coupled with the energy crisis and global competition on recycled polymers prevent the EU plastics recycling industry from operating at its full potential.



“Plastics recycling has proved itself as one of the vital components of a circular, carbon-neutral economy in Europe. To unlock its full potential, our industry relies on a strong value chain collaboration, coherent legislative framework, and its rigorous implementation.”

Ton Emans, PRE President

The 2024-2029 EU term will be decisive in delivering a robust legislative framework which recognises the plastics recycling industry as a strategic pillar in the transition towards a circular and decarbonised EU.

Introducing further legislation to scale up plastics recycling capacities, and the development of a strong market for secondary raw materials, is paramount for the achievement of EU's ambitious circular and climate targets. Addressing key challenges on the lack of enforcement of existing waste legislation, providing legal certainty to industry players and ensuring transparency in the rules to verify progress are critical prerequisites.

Plastics Recyclers Europe calls upon the EU institutions to maintain the ambition to achieve a genuine circularity for plastics without compromising on the competitiveness and resilience of the EU plastics recycling market. The necessary incentives, targeting the entire value chain, must be set to drive investments towards EU recycling capacities and technological developments.

Safeguarding the EU plastics recycling industry is integral to the success of the EU's green and digital transitions.

OUR PRIORITIES FOR A CIRCULAR ECONOMY FOR PLASTICS



1

ACCELERATING THE
TRANSITION TOWARDS
CIRCULAR PLASTICS



2

COMBATTING
GREENWASHING
WITH TRANSPARENCY



3

COMPETING
IN A GLOBAL
ECONOMY



4

STRENGTHENING
INVESTMENTS &
SUSTAINABLE FINANCE



5

FOSTERING SCIENCE-BASED
SOLUTIONS FOR FUTURE
POLICIES



1 ACCELERATING THE TRANSITION TOWARDS CIRCULAR PLASTICS

As the EU strives to be a frontrunner in sustainability policies, a robust legislative framework is imperative to bolster the plastic recycling industry as a cornerstone in achieving a truly circular economy. To this end, strengthening the recycling and recycled content targets, promoting design for recycling and tackling remaining challenges in waste management must be put high on the political agenda. Equally important are collective industry efforts across, and beyond, the plastics value chain to implement sustainable best practices. Therefore, future EU policies shall:

- ✓ Address substantial increase of collection rates coupled with a scale-up in the efforts to improve both separate collection and sorting infrastructure across the EU.
- ✓ Aim at an overall decrease in the generation of waste in the EU, regardless of the material, to ensure a sustained reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.
- ✓ Focus on introducing design for recycling requirements for plastic products beyond packaging.
- ✓ Further support the uptake of plastics recyclates in products, via minimum recycled content targets, beyond packaging – in vehicles, building and construction, electric & electronic equipment and textiles.
- ✓ Prioritise enforcement of existing targets & requirements to ensure that the set objectives are reached.
- ✓ Manifest circular economy principles and observe the waste hierarchy with an objective to ban landfills of plastics waste from all sectors.
- ✓ Encourage the digitalisation of the waste sector as a key tool to improve the efficiency of the sorting and recycling processes.



2 PRIORITISING TRANSPARENCY IN COMBATting GREENWASHING

Following a productive policy cycle with many targets set for the years to come, now is the time to mobilise efforts towards effective implementation and harmonisation across the EU. The benefits of the circular economy transition can only be harnessed by establishing a reliable verification and certification system that ensures traceability of waste-derived materials along the value chain, thereby, driving substantial changes in the market and bringing credibility to product's claims.

Transparency in the way EU targets are achieved is paramount to warrant the credibility of the plastics recycling industry. To this end, the legislation shall:

- ✓ Strengthen targets on recycling & recycled content with verification rules for products placed on the Union market to be fully effective.
- ✓ Implement third-party certification schemes in the EU to ensure transparency and traceability of waste along the value chain. This is fundamental to the reliability and accuracy of products' claims towards consumers.
- ✓ Guarantee that methodologies and calculation methods related to plastics waste targets are technology neutral and that only waste-derived materials are accounted towards the achievement of such targets. Reliable & harmonised methodologies are key to avoid greenwashing.



COMPETING IN A GLOBAL ECONOMY

Due to the increasing global demand for recycled feedstocks, it is imperative that the EU maintains its strategic position by safeguarding the leadership and competitiveness of the EU plastics recycling industry. This is crucial to ensure a continued and sustainable supply of high-quality recycled plastics. Policies shall therefore focus on:

- ✓ Safeguarding ambitious EU circular economy and climate targets by ensuring that the same legislative requirements to which the EU industry is subject to, apply for imported products into the EU Single Market.
- ✓ Securing the use of recycled plastics originating from the EU, as a key contribution to a balanced transition to plastics circularity.
- ✓ Introducing additional sustainability requirements for imported plastics products, such as carbon footprint.
- ✓ Addressing high energy costs and market price fluctuations, which negatively impact the competitiveness of EU recyclers.



STRENGTHENING INVESTMENTS & SUSTAINABLE FINANCE

The necessity to scale up recycling infrastructure in the EU, coupled with the uncertainties of the market, call for measures and instruments providing financial support to the industry. To ensure financial stability for recyclers, the legislation shall prioritise:

- ✓ Continuous backing of investments in recycling infrastructure to increase the EU recycling infrastructure and its capacity, improve separate collection and quality sorting of plastic waste. These investments are essential for the EU plastics recycling industry to meet the legislative targets.
- ✓ Ensuring the effective implementation of the EU Sustainable Finance legislative framework, which already recognises as a green activity the manufacture of plastic products and packaging with recycled materials, while seeking to cover additional circular economy activities which would further support recycling.
- ✓ Broadening Extended Producers Responsibility (EPR) schemes to cover a wider set of waste streams and sectors.
- ✓ Leveraging the potential of public procurement policies to further encourage the adoption of circular business models.



FOSTERING SCIENCE-BASED SOLUTIONS FOR FUTURE POLICIES

Realising the transition to a circular economy demands the adoption of forward-looking policies which must consider science-based assessments and robust data. Future EU policies shall, therefore:

- ✓ Establish instruments that are science-based and promote measures that drive tangible and measurable changes in the market towards the transition to a circular economy for plastics.
- ✓ Introduce reliable & objective assessments, based on robust data, to inform the decision-making process and future EU policies.



PLASTICS RECYCLERS EUROPE

Avenue de Broqueville 12

1150 Brussels - Belgium

+32 2 786 39 08

info@plasticsrecyclers.eu

www.plasticsrecyclers.eu

