Plastics
the material for the 21st century

Since the first plastic was invented a century or more ago, plastics have revolutionised the way we live. Whether we're communicating, travelling, playing, caring for each other's health or protecting the environment, there's no sphere of human activity that hasn't been significantly advanced by the use of this remarkable material. And today, scientists and technologists are continuously working at the forefront of knowledge, in fields as diverse as space exploration, nanotechnology and medicine, to find new ways plastics can benefit people. Their research means that many solutions, for most of us as yet unimaginable, will soon enter our everyday lives - all thanks to amazing plastics. No wonder plastics are set to be the material for the 21st century.

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EUROPEAN PLASTICS CONVERTERS

PlasticsEurope
Association of Plastics Manufacturers

Protection

Plastics
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Plastics are amazing

Plastics play a vital part in our lives: at home, at work, in schools and hospitals. We play with them, we travel with them, we wear them.
And sometimes, if parts of our body don't work, doctors can even replace them with new ones - made of plastic. Plastics keep us safe, they make life more comfortable and fun, and they're surprisingly good for the environment.
They come in many different forms: harder than steel, softer than silk, any colour or shape...
It's why designers and inventors love them. Plastics are amazing. We often take them for granted, but life wouldn't be the same without them.

Plastics make life safer

Lightweight and flexible but also strong and shatterproof, plastic materials are increasingly being used in safety applications - at work (in protective clothing, such as helmets, clothes, gloves, goggles and shoes), in the streets (in traffic safety measures, such as speed bumps and corner protectors), and at home (in, for instance, baby-safe electrical sockets and anti-slip rugs and carpets in bathrooms and on stairs).
Plastics help make transportation safer, too. On the road, we're protected by helmets, seat belts, airbags and reflective clothing - all made of plastic.
In the air, plastics protect us in the form of oxygen masks and parachutes, while at sea, lifeboats and life jackets made of plastics will save our lives if necessary.
Plastics also save the lives of soldiers and police officers, thanks to bullet-proof vests, helmets and anti-riot gear. And fire fighters rely on flame resistant plastics, in their clothing and their equipment.

Plastics for emergencies

How can we help populations hit by calamities or disasters with cost-effective first-aid infrastructures that are easy to transport, install and maintain - even in very adverse conditions? The answer is through the use of plastics: temporary structures made of plastics are light, weather-resistant and easy to install and to manage.
Field hospitals, tents, boats, water-resistant clothing, and systems for transporting water and energy - all made of plastic - provide effective relief to large numbers of people in distress. Dikes in rivers can temporarily be protected against water. Today, without plastics, many relief agencies, governments and NGOs would be much less effective in responding to emergencies.

Plastics protect nature

Plastics provide a large number of tools and solutions to protect the environment and conserve natural resources. Plastic protection and insulation materials are widely used in land recovery, reforestation, water conservation and agricultural applications. Meanwhile, scientists are evaluating other innovative and experimental solutions, such as the use of plastic pipes to help coral development and protective tarpaulins to preserve glaciers.