

Press Release

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Resource Efficiency at Risk: A Plastic Tax could jeopardize the Circular Economy Goals

PlasticsEurope is concerned about the proposed plastic tax suggested by the European Commission as it could jeopardize one of the main objectives of the Circular Economy: resource efficiency.

“Plastics are one of the most resource efficient materials over their entire life cycle, they protect natural resources, help save energy and limit greenhouse gas emissions. A tax on plastics would undermine these positive contributions and would hinder innovation within the plastics industry”, said Karl-H. Foerster, Executive Director of PlasticsEurope.

“Today in Europe, buildings are responsible for roughly 40% of the EU’s energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. Improving the energy efficiency of new and old buildings is key to tackling climate change and saving resources. Concretely, would consumers be punished with a plastic tax for using plastic window insulation that reduces energy consumption by up to 80%?” expressed Mr Foerster.

PlasticsEurope believes that a plastic tax is discriminatory and it raises concerns on how significant revenues could create positive benefits without severe negative effects. “If a tax is too low, its positive contribution to public revenues would not be sufficiently relevant to justify the additional administrative and financial burden. Conversely, if it is too high, it would have a serious negative impact on the will of companies to invest in the EU, and develop innovative solutions to make plastics more circular and resource efficient”, explained Mr Foerster.

The European Commission presented this measure as a way to modernize the EU budget, reduce waste production and foster recycling. However, PlasticsEurope believes that there are other ways to achieve these goals without jeopardizing the competitiveness of an industry, hindering innovation and/or penalizing resource efficiency; for instance, by promoting and developing new recycling technologies, putting in place proper waste management infrastructures in Europe and promoting responsible consumer behaviour.

Editors' note

PlasticsEurope is one of the leading European trade associations with centres in Brussels, Frankfurt, London, Madrid, Milan and Paris. We are networking with European and national plastics associations and have more than 100 member companies, producing over 90% of all polymers across the EU28 member states plus Norway, Switzerland and Turkey.

The European plastics industry makes a significant contribution to the welfare in Europe by enabling innovation, creating quality of life to citizens and facilitating resource efficiency and climate protection. More than 1.5 million people are working in approximately 60,000 companies (mainly small and medium sized companies in the converting sector) to create a turnover above 340 bn EUR per year. The plastics industry includes polymer producers - represented by PlasticsEurope, converters - represented by EuPC and machine manufacturers - represented by EUROMAP.

For further info see the web links: www.plasticseurope.org, www.plasticsconverters.eu, www.euromap.org.