

Press Release

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Towards Zero Plastics to the Oceans

PolyTalk 2018: Together we must save our oceans from litter

*Under the banner of “**Together we must save our oceans from litter**”, this year’s edition of PolyTalk 2018 was held in St-Julian’s, Malta and brought together more than 190 high-level representatives from the world of politics, industry, media, NGOs, science and academia. The two-day event, on 26 and 27 April, was the perfect setting to continue establishing and building new partnerships with stakeholders to improve circularity, waste management and other solutions to prevent marine litter around the world.*

“We all share the same objective: to protect our oceans and the marine environment”, said Daniele Ferrari, President of PlasticsEurope and CEO of Versalis (Eni). “With PolyTalk2018, we want not only to raise awareness, but to share concrete strategies and build new partnerships for preventing marine litter around the world. We want to strengthen our industry efforts and cooperation in key areas, to identify knowledge gaps, and discuss how to improve waste management infrastructures”.

Richard Thompson, Professor of Marine Biology, Plymouth University stressed not only the need for more research in order to understand sources and impact, but the need to design plastic products in a way that they take into consideration the end of their life. “In my view, a key priority is to ensure plastic products are designed with greater consideration of their end of life opportunities – where possible products should be designed to maximize their potential for end of life recyclability”, said Prof Thompson.

During the conference key aspects such as how waste management infrastructures and regulations could contribute in reducing litter were raised. Karmenu Vella, European Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries presented key European policy actions such as the Circular Economy Package and the Plastics Strategy aimed at tackling marine litter. “The European Commission’s new plastics strategy presents a vision for a smart, innovative and sustainable plastics industry. Good use of our resources makes environmental, social and economic sense. Working together, we have an opportunity to develop new and better ways of managing our industrial activities”, he said.

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 1.45 million people are working in more than 62,000 companies (mainly small and medium sized companies in the converting sector) to create a turnover around 350 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.

At global level it was highlighted the role of industry initiatives such as the [World Plastics Council](#) and the [Global Plastic Alliance](#). “Leading plastics producers in Europe and around the world are working together to find solutions to protect the environment. To date, 74 plastic associations in 40 countries have signed the plastics industry’s global declaration, through which 355 projects have been planned, initiated or completed since its launch”, highlighted Jim Seward, Chairman of the World Plastic Council and Vice-President of LyondellBasell.

Solutions at regional level were emphasised by Jose A. Herrera, Minister for the Environment, Sustainable Development and Climate Change. “The protection and conservation of the marine environment is one of the top priorities of Malta’s Environmental Agenda. We all need to work together for a cleaner ocean so that we can truly turn the tide on this issue”.

PolyTalk 2018 aimed at identifying the path towards a clean marine environment with a special focused on the Mediterranean Sea. The event also served as a platform to strengthen industry efforts and actions to tackle marine litter while boosting the role of research and innovations to identify knowledge gaps. Common points such as strategies and actions to change citizens’ behaviours and the importance of implementing proper waste management infrastructures were shared amongst a broad range of stakeholders.

About PolyTalk

PolyTalk is a multi-stakeholder forum organised by the plastics manufacturers to engage with key actors on relevant societal issues in a transparent and constructive dialogue to debate, act and change.

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