

Press Release

Brussels, 07 May 2019

National EYDC Finals in Frankfurt

Youngsters from across Germany debate on Rethink, Reuse, Recycle

On 4th May 2019, more than 50 students from all over Germany engaged in a fascinating debate on the topic of **“Rethink, Reuse, Recycle: how would you shape a sustainable future with plastics and petrochemicals?”** at the House of Literature in Frankfurt. This year is the 4th edition of the European Youth Debating Competition (EYDC, www.eydc.eu) organised by the European Petrochemical Association (EPCA) and PlasticsEurope.

A seven-member jury composed of representatives of the industry (Dow Deutschland, Vynova Group), press (Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Kunststoff Information), civil society, EPCA and PlasticsEurope had the difficult task to select three winners and three runners-up of the German National Finals. These are: Lilli Armbrust, Johann Davies, Carla Marie Süling, Valeria Schell, Sven Richter, Mathis Striedelmeyer. To win, students needed to display public speaking skills with well-informed and persuasive arguments. They were also judged on their ability to interact with other students during the debate.

Next, the three winners will travel to Berlin and will take part in this year's European Finals on Monday, 7th October during the 53rd EPCA Annual Meeting, the largest gathering of the petrochemical industry in Europe. On this occasion, the winners from the 7 National Finals will compete against each other. Until then, there will be 5 further national competitions in Belgium for a joint “Benelux Finals”, France, Italy, Poland and the UK. The EYDC started this year in Spain, with a National Finals that took place at the end of March in Tarragona. The competition is open to students between 16 and 19 years old from across Europe, irrespective of their origin, gender, age and culture.

Stefan Sommer, Steering Board member of PlasticsEurope, Vice-Chairman of PlasticsEurope Deutschland, President Vynova Group, member of the jury and pro-speaker at the EYDC German debate, praised the competition as an excellent opportunity for the youngsters to brush-up their debating skills, and for the industry to learn about the priorities of young people around sustainability and industry issues. He stated in the run-up to the Frankfurt event: „Debating quality means explaining positions well. This can be extremely challenging, especially for complex questions and problems. It is great that students actively practice this. I am sure that the experiences gained at the EYDC will be highly valuable to them for their future, but also for our industry.“

Nathalie Debuyst, Communication and Education Manager at the European Petrochemical Association, stated: “We are delighted that for the 4th time EPCA together with PlasticsEurope have launched the EYDC, which gives a unique opportunity to youngsters to express themselves and argue in a convincing way and for our industry to connect with the new generation, listen and learn about their views.”

With the EYDC, EPCA and PlasticsEurope aim at making science and technology more tangible, accessible, and directly connected to the everyday reality of the debaters. Beyond the importance of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) education, the youngsters will also gain soft skills that will help them interact in a fast-changing and sometimes divisive environment. Education and innovative solutions are key to advancing a true circular economy, and building a sustainable future for the next generations.

Further information about the EYDC is available at www.eydc.eu, www.epca.eu, www.plasticseurope.org and Twitter: #youthdebate2019.

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The European Petrochemical Association (EPCA)

*Based in Brussels, EPCA is the **primary European Business Network** for the global petrochemical business community consisting of chemical producers, their suppliers, customers and service providers. It operates for and through more than 700-member companies from 54 different countries. EPCA **hosts events** in Europe offering members all over the world the opportunity to meet industry leaders and selected external stakeholders and stay abreast of international market developments as well as technological and societal trends. EPCA also **assists** members on **specific topics** that underpin the sustainable development of the global petrochemical industry. EPCA promotes STEM education, with a clear focus on gender and diversity inclusion. EPCA also highlight the multidisciplinary approach and the variety of challenging career paths that the petrochemical industry offers.*

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