

Press Release

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EYDC UK National Finals

At its 4th edition, an educational initiative gathers more than 70 students from across the UK

“Rethink, Reuse, Recycle: how would you shape a sustainable future with plastics and petrochemicals?” It is under this overarching theme that more than 70 students from 13 schools from across the UK gathered on 17th June at King’s College in London. Youngsters between 16 and 19 years old debated their ideas for improving sustainability at the UK National Finals - the sixth contest of the European Youth Debating Competition (EYDC, www.eydc.eu).

Representatives of the industry (Dow, Shell Chemicals Europe), media (ICIS News), trade associations (PlasticsEurope, British Plastics Federation) and the European Petrochemical Association (EPCA) took part in the jury. The best performing students were awarded based on their ability to express themselves in public and interact with each other, while using well-informed and persuasive arguments. After deliberation, the six winners are: Sam Thomas (1st place), 17 years, from Ibstock Place School, Alex Hook (2nd place), 16 years from Ibstock Place School, Lilien Gyabaah (3rd place), 16 years from Brampton Manor Academy, Yasmine Amirouch (4th place), Charlotte Copeman (5th place), Jason-Thomas Antwi-Dicson (6th place).

Oonagh McArdle, EMEA Sustainability Leader, Dow, and member of the jury stated: “These youngsters bring new ideas on how to boost sustainability. They are digital natives who see opportunities where others don’t. I am impressed with their fresh thinking and I believe it has the potential to boost positive change in our society.”

Kim Christiansen, North Region Director, PlasticsEurope, and member of the jury, said: “As PlasticsEurope, we are proud to give a voice to hundreds of students across Europe. They are tomorrow’s generation and their views and ideas are incredibly important to secure a sustainable future. It is only by working together and listening to all relevant stakeholders that we can find solutions to the societal challenges that we are facing.”

As part of the next steps of the competition, the top three winners of the EYDC UK National Finals won a ticket to Berlin and the opportunity to participate in the European Finals on 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 of the EYDC will gather to engage in the European Finals.

The upcoming and last national competition of this 4th EYDC edition will take place in France in Paris on 27th September. With this educational initiative, EPCA and PlasticsEurope aim at making science and technology more tangible and accessible for the youngsters, and directly connected to their everyday reality. Students between 16 and 19 years old from across Europe, of different origin, gender, age and culture are encouraged to participate. Beyond the importance of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) education, the participants 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 advance towards circular economy, and build 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 on 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.*