

Press Release

Berlin, 10 October 2019

Rethink – Reuse – Recycle

Inspiring Grand Finals of the EYDC 2019 – Meet the Top 5 Winners

The fourth edition of the European Youth Debating Competition ([EYDC](#)), a platform bringing together youngsters from across Europe, concluded with the European Finals and the Awarding Ceremony yesterday in Berlin. The initiative organised by the European Petrochemical Association (EPCA) and PlasticsEurope gave 23 young pre-selected winners aged between 15 and 19 years old from seven EYDC National Finals the opportunity to debate their ideas on the overarching theme **“Rethink, Reuse, Recycle: how would you shape a sustainable future with plastics and petrochemicals?”**.

Their approach on the role of plastics and petrochemicals in our daily lives and their outreach to future solutions possibly provided by the petrochemical and plastics industry were expressed with great enthusiasm to the jury members comprised of industry leaders, brand owner (adidas) and NGO (Ozeankind®) during the 53rd EPCA Annual Meeting, the largest gathering of the petrochemical industry in Europe. Ten winners were selected from the 23 finalists of the National Finals on their knowledge, their ability to express themselves and to interact with each other. The top five winners were awarded by Pascal Lamy, Chair of the Paris Peace Forum, Former Director General of the WTO and former EU Trade Commissioner, Marc Schuller, EPCA President and Executive Vice-President, Arkema together with Mark Williams, PlasticsEurope Vice President and Vice President SABIC Europe.

The top five winners are: first prize winner - Lorena Ferrarini, 17 years old from Belgium, second prize winner - Lilien Gyabaah, 18 years old from the UK, third prize winner - Valeria Schell, 16 years old from Germany, fourth prize winner - Latoya Michielsen, 17 years old from Belgium and fifth prize winner - Aidan Cairns, 17 years old from France. The other five winners were awarded by Caroline Ciuciu, EPCA CEO and Mark Williams. All of them impressed the jurors and the audience with the strength of their arguments, their passion, as well as with their power of persuasion and confidence standing in front of a crowd while expressing their views.

“The debaters presented the complex challenges of today and tomorrow from a different angle, and we must learn from this”, said Leonor Garcia, Public Affairs Director at PlasticsEurope and Member of the Jury. “I was impressed by the youngsters’ innovative and creative ideas that we must capture and translate into actions, wherever possible.”

Marc Schuller, EPCA President and Executive Vice President of Arkema declared: “I cannot emphasize enough the importance of the pioneering new ideas brought forward by the young people for the future of our planet. I was very stimulated by their ideas and I’m sure this will

bring new ideas to our businesses. They are the ones who will be facing challenges in the years to come and they have all the potential to tackle them.”

Ilsu Ari, student at University of Cambridge, Winner of the EYDC 2017 European Finals said in the opening of EPCA's 53rd Annual Meeting: “EYDC has proven to be much more than just a simple debate. It is a firm stepping stone for personal development. Just like a rocket needs propulsion to reach space, young students and young leaders need a kick to reach their goals and reach the stars. And this is what EYDC is about.”

The first EYDC kicked off in 2016. The 2019 edition has been taking place since March and concluded with the European Finals on Monday, 7th October, in Berlin. More than 400 students have participated in seven National Finals in: Belgium (for a joint “Benelux” Finals), Germany, Italy, Poland, Spain, the United Kingdom and France. This educational programme is an opportunity for the petrochemical and plastics industry to engage with young European citizens. The aim is to discuss issues of common interest and listen to their views and suggestions on how to tackle these challenges and develop constructive solutions. The objective is also to make science and technology more tangible and accessible to the younger generation, irrespective of their gender, origin, age, culture and to empower them with soft skills that will certainly help them in their future social life and career, irrespective of their role or path.

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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.*

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.