

Press Release

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K 2019: PlasticsEurope unveils updated plastics data and Voluntary Commitment progress

- In 2018, global plastics production almost reached 360 million tonnes; in Europe, there was a slight decrease in the plastics production from 64.4 million tonnes in 2017 to 61.8 million tonnes in 2018.
- Since 2006, the volume of plastics waste sent to recycling in Europe has doubled.
- The European plastics industry is highly committed to accelerate its transformation towards a more circular and resource efficient plastics economy.

The industry's progress and new developments to increase sustainability and circularity of plastics were unveiled today at the PlasticsEurope press conference at K 2019, the world's number 1 trade fair for plastics and rubber.

Dr Rüdiger Baunemann, Regional Director – Central Region PlasticsEurope and Director General PlasticsEurope Deutschland e.V. opened the convening with an analysis of the European plastics production, demand and waste data. "[Plastics – the Facts 2019](#)" was launched on this occasion.

While global production of plastics continued to grow in 2018, in Europe, plastics production decreased and 2019 forecasts show that the downward trend will continue in line with the EU expected economic developments. "The plastics manufacturers are suffering from the weak economic development not only in Europe, but also worldwide", Baunemann concluded. "Economic development has lost considerable momentum, important customer industries are showing weak to clearly negative growth rates."

Regarding plastic post-consumer waste figures, the trend is more positive: in 2018 collection increased from 27.1 million tonnes in 2016 to 29.1 million tonnes in 2018 and quantities sent to recycling increased almost 12% reaching over 9.4 million tonnes. The European converter demand in 2018 continues to remain stable compared to 2017.

Javier Constante, President of PlasticsEurope and Commercial Vice President, Packaging and Specialty Plastics Business EMEA of DOW Europe took stock of the key developments since it launched its [Plastics 2030 - Voluntary Commitment](#). It shows the industry is moving beyond its targets to implement the European Plastics Strategy. We contributed to setting up value chain oriented platforms for specific plastics to advance recycling rates and improve resource efficiency. Each of these structures are now well established.

Moreover, we have made it compulsory for all our member companies to have signed up to the Operation Clean Sweep (OCS) programme by end of 2019, thereby becoming the first trade association in the world to incorporate OCS as a core value. This is the key industry's activity to protect the environment and enable a circular economy for plastics.

"I see a lot of determination from the industry to accelerate concrete solutions to fight marine litter, change business models and go beyond the recycling targets.", said Javier Constante, President of PlasticsEurope.

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 62,000 companies (mainly small and medium sized companies in the converting sector) to create a turnover above 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.