

For immediate release

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PRESS RELEASE

EU delays approval of recycling processes in food contact applications: An obstacle to the Circular Economy

More than 9 years have passed since the publication of the Regulation (EC) No. 282/2008 setting up the rules on the use of recycled plastic materials in food applications. To this date, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) has adopted more than 140 positive scientific opinions on the safety of processes to recycle plastics for use in food contact materials. Following these opinions, the European Commission is in a position to officially authorize the evaluated processes. However, it has not taken any initiative in that direction so far.

The absence of EU legal framework prolongs the lack of harmonisation amongst Member States and generates legal uncertainty and unnecessary burden for the industry using recycled materials.

Casper van den Dungen, PRE Vice-President & Chairman of the PET Working Group, said: *More than €500 million have been invested by companies in plants which can transform recycled plastic materials into materials suitable for packaging and food contact applications. In 2014, more than 50% of the recycled PET in Europe was used in food contact applications. But EU businesses are still in a legislative no-man's land due to years of delay. He added: This uncertainty leads to decline in investments and more importantly to a possible mistrust in the legislation ruling food contact materials.*

Other organizations from across the value chain joined the call:

Food contact development is subject to clear regulations, said Christian Crépet, Executive Director of Petcore Europe. He added: Although PET is one of the most widely recycled polymer, the absence of regulation results in a lack of market visibility for sales of recycled PET. This situation affects the whole value chain from virgin production up to waste management. Investment is down and the "bottle-to-bottle" activity should be facilitated.

Alexandre Dangis, Managing Director, EuPC added: *In order to realise a real circular economy in the European Union we ask the EU Commission to unlock this bureaucratic situation very urgently. Industry needs to remain competitive at global level and very important investments have been made by hundreds of companies in Europe to comply with this EU regulation.*

Patricia Fosselard, EFBW Secretary General, emphasized that: *Natural mineral and spring water producers are important users of recycled plastic (PET). Having a harmonized European framework on recycling processes will pave the way for greater use of recycled plastic and foster circular economy while bringing legal certainty to recyclers and users alike.*

The PET value chain urges the Commission to authorize recycling processes positively evaluated by EFSA. This authorization would ensure harmonization of the market and remove any legal uncertainty in trading recycled materials in food contact applications. It will also enable to drive circular economy for plastics by opening new markets for plastics recyclates.



About:

Plastics Recyclers Europe (PRE) is the professional representative body of plastics recyclers in Europe. PRE promotes plastics mechanical recycling and conditions that enable profitable and sustainable business, while offering a service platform to its members. Our members constitute 80% of the European recycling capacity, processing more than 3 million tonnes of collected plastics per year. *More information:* Emilia Tarlowska emilia.tarlowska@eupr.org | www.plasticsrecyclers.eu

EuPC is the EU-level Trade Association, based in Brussels, representing European Plastics Converters. Plastics converters (sometimes called "Processors") are the heart of the plastics industry. They manufacture plastics semi-finished and finished products for an extremely wide range of industrial and consumer markets - the automotive electrical and electronic, packaging, construction and healthcare industries, to name but a few. *More information:* Felix Miessen felix.miessen@eupc.org | www.plasticsconverters.eu

Petcore Europe is the association representing the complete PET value chain in Europe. Its mission is to ensure that the entire PET industry is well aligned to enhance its value and sustainable growth, to represent the PET industry before the European institutions and other stakeholders, to ensure that PET is positioned as an outstanding packaging material and recognised as environmentally sound, to support and validate innovative packaging solutions from a recycling perspective, and to work with all interested parties to ensure a continuous increase of PET post-consumer collection and recycling. *More information:* Eva Schneider: eva.schneider@petcore-europe.org | www.petcore-europe.org

The **European Federation of Bottled Waters** (EFBW) is the voice of the bottled water industry, dedicated to promoting the unique qualities of natural mineral and spring water among EU institutions and international organisations. EFBW is a registered international not for profit trade association with a membership base of national trade associations and direct member companies. In total, EFBW represents almost 600 natural mineral and spring water producers in Europe. *More information:* Lisa Strübbe lisa.struebbe@efbw.org | www.efbw.org