



For immediate release

## PRESS RELEASE

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### PET trays existential dilemma

- Today the design of most PET trays makes them difficult to recycle in the existing waste streams.
- In the future this situation can be reversed by changing the trays' design and allow their recycling.
- PRE will develop recycling guidelines specific for PET trays.

In the last few years there has been a significant increase in the use of PET trays by the packaging industry. Unfortunately, this increase has not been adequately addressed in the end-of-life solutions for these trays. As a result of poor end-of-life thinking, most of these trays cannot be easily recycled.

None of the current recycling streams want to have PET trays in their incoming waste. PET recyclers cannot handle them because of their different composition (multi-layers, multi-material combinations etc.) when compared to beverage bottles. Mixed plastics recyclers do not want them because of their incompatibility with polyolefins.

This is a painful situation as the 700,000 tonnes of PET trays yearly put on the market should be a valuable resource for the EU. Today, these trays are not sorted out separately and are not recycled. Nonetheless, some collection schemes and sorters are trying to push trays into the PET bottles or Mixed Plastics streams in order to achieve higher recycling targets.

The key factor to change this market reality is to act at the design stage of this product. Industry must evolve in order to maintain and grow the market for this packaging product. Without such a change this PET market could be replaced by more resource efficient solutions.

Thus, to overcome this situation PRE will take responsibility and start developing recycling guidelines for PET trays. These first guidelines will enable the value chain to assess the recyclability of the products which are put on the market and move towards recyclable PET trays. In a second step separate sorting streams will have to be created to enable PET tray recycling. As some non-PET trays have similar issues PRE will also develop guidelines for trays made of other plastics.

As a proactive industry, the recyclers are willing to cooperate with more stakeholders to further develop these guidelines. All trays have an important packaging function but need adapt to recyclability requirements in order to grow in the years to come.

**LINK:** <http://www.plasticsrecyclers.eu/news/pet-trays-existential-dilemma>

#### **About Plastics recyclers Europe**

*Plastics Recyclers Europe 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*

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