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PRESS RELEASE

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Design for recycling: the way forward for the plastics industry

Over 300 participants gathered in Brussels to debate plastics recyclability and latest plastics recycling developments

With 94% of the European citizens declaring that products must be designed to make them recyclable,¹ design for recycling is one of the priority areas for the industry. The challenge has been taken up, as various projects and collaborations have gained traction in recent months.

‘Plastic recycling conveys a positive message about the transformation of the industry,’ said Ton Emans, PRE President. He added: ‘Recyclability is the major engine of improving the efficiency and quality of recycling, and at the same time stimulating innovation in the sector.’

Today, it is essential that plastics products are designed in a way that guarantees their functionality while ensuring their proper end-of-life management, consequently diverting plastics away from landfills and incineration. Improving recyclability is also an indispensable tool for increasing recycling rates.

This vision was shared by the speakers of the conference, ‘Design for recycling: where quality plastics recycling begins’, who presented solutions for various packaging technologies to enhance the end-of-life of a product. The resounding message of the conference is that of the urgency in making plastics circular and improving waste management, with the ultimate objective of changing the status quo in plastics production practices.

‘We aim at helping the industry to support the transformation from a linear to a circular material flow’, said Paolo Glerean, RecyClass Chairman. ‘This is possible thanks to the RecyClass Platform which promotes development and enhancement of Design-for-Recycling guidelines. They are established according to the RecyClass Testing Protocols which are based on scientific methods.’

As the next step, the industry must also lay the groundwork for the recyclability of plastics products beyond packaging as highlighted in the last session, which focused on the examples from the automotive, building and construction and furniture sectors.

Design for recycling, nonetheless, is just one of the aspects of the transition towards circularity for plastics. In order to close the loop in plastic waste management, the industry must, in parallel, work on improving collection, sorting, recycling technologies and boost the uptake of recycled material. The involvement of the whole value chain, at each production and waste management step, is a must.

About

Plastics Recyclers Europe (PRE) is an organization representing the voice of the European plastics recyclers who reprocess plastic waste into high-quality material destined for the production of new articles. Recyclers are important facilitators of the circularity of plastics and the transition towards the circular economy.

Plastics recycling in Europe is a rapidly growing sector representing €3bn in turnover, 6.6 mt of installed recycling capacity, 500 companies and 18,000 employees.

www.plasticsrecyclers.eu

¹ Source: EU Barometer