

Press release

EMBARGOED UNTIL 00:01 WEDNESDAY 16 DECEMBER 2020

The European Plastics Pact Roadmap – tackling plastic waste across Europe

The European Plastics Pact, which launched in Brussels on 6 March 2020, today publishes the **European Plastics Pact Roadmap** to direct and drive forward urgent action by the 143 signatories, across 20 countries. This ambitious Roadmap will help signatories develop cross-border connections and share innovations that harmonise and accelerate the Europe-wide development of a circular economy for plastics, and significantly reduce the huge challenge of plastic wastage and littering.

The European Plastics Pact was established by the Netherlands, France and Denmark to establish a public-private coalition specifically to tackle the challenges of creating a circular economy for plastics and packaging. It comprises of 15 national governments, 82 businesses, 3 regional governments and 43 other organisations, including business/trade associations and NGOs. The European Plastics Pact is part of the Ellen MacArthur Foundation's global Plastics Pact network, working towards a common vision of a circular economy for plastic, in which it never becomes waste or pollution.

The **European Plastics Pact Roadmap** was developed by the four Working Groups under the Pact with the assistance of the secretariat; provided by WRAP. It has four targets, which will bring economic, social and environmental benefits for Europe.

- **Target One: Design for reusability and recyclability** - Design all plastic packaging and single-use plastic products placed on the market to be reusable where possible and in any case recyclable by 2025.
- **Target Two: Responsible use of plastics** - Move towards a more responsible use of plastic packaging and single-use plastic products, aiming to reduce virgin plastic products and packaging by at least 20% (by weight) by 2025, with half of this reduction coming from an absolute reduction in plastics.¹
- **Target Three: Collection, sorting and recycling** - Increase the collection, sorting and recycling capacity by at least 25 percentage points by 2025, and reach a level that corresponds to market demand for recycled plastics.
- **Target Four: Use of recycled plastics** - Increase the use of recycled plastics in new products and packaging by 2025, with plastics user companies achieving an average of at least 30% recycled plastics (by weight) in their product and packaging range.

¹ Reduction of plastics could be achieved through the removal of unnecessary packaging, alternative packaging design, innovative or rediscovered business models or different product design, while avoiding unintended environmental consequences.

The Roadmap details the collective action, commitment and investment required to achieve these goals, and has been designed to help coordinate a systemic shift and largescale re-evaluation of the way we produce, use and reuse plastics in Europe. It is aligned with existing European initiatives such as the European Commission's Circular Plastic Alliance , the national Plastics Pacts, the global commitment from Ellen Mac Arthur foundation and international ones: the UN Global Partnership on Marine Litter, the Basel Convention.

The Roadmap also conveys the crucial role that the various stakeholders operating in the plastics economy will play in reaching the Pact targets. These include national government departments, city authorities, NGOs, investors, packaging and product designers, brand owners, retailers and others who are not currently members of the European Plastics Pact.

Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management of the Netherlands, *"If we want to tackle climate change, we need to look beyond energy to materials. We have to start treating plastic as the valuable raw material it is and keep it out of our oceans. We strive to reuse all plastic in the future. From your daily chocolate bar wrapper to the shampoo bottle and everything in between. This is no easy task. We need the chemical industry to develop easily recyclable plastic. We need more recycling capacity and we need new product design. I am proud that with all these front-runners we are putting together our efforts to make this work."*

Ministry for the Ecological transition, France, *"Every minute one garbage truck of plastic is dumped into our ocean to the point that we now have a "seventh continent of plastic" on the surface of the globe. We need to act, with determination. We need to deliver. And this Pact provides us all with a unique opportunity, to exchange ideas, display good practices and discuss the key challenges ahead."*

Ministry for the Environment, Denmark, *"As we all know, plastic is a remarkable material. It is essential for many products and it helps us solve many problems. The European Plastics Pact is not about abandoning the use of plastic altogether. It is about adapting to a use of plastic that is greener, smarter and more sustainable. Where plastic no longer ends up circulating in our oceans but is recycled by our companies. I believe the pact is a unique opportunity for governments and businesses to work together across the whole value chain for a greener future. A future we need to seize!"*

Ministry of the Environment, Sweden, *"For the Swedish Government it has been important to support the European Plastics Pact as it shows willingness from ambitious countries and front running companies to go beyond what is required to achieve a sustainable use of plastics. Our hope is that the success of this Pact will show other regions what is possible to achieve and that both countries and companies from the whole value chain are ready to move towards ambitious global action on plastics."*

Marcus Gover, WRAP CEO, *"The European Plastics Pact Roadmap is about action on one of the most pervasive environmental issues – plastic pollution. It will mobilise signatories to act, and*

focus on key outcomes that deliver these ambitious targets. It will transform our use of plastics across Europe, just as we're doing in the UK through the first Plastic Pact. I am delighted that WRAP was asked to act as secretariat and technical support. Let ours be the generation that hands those who follow the solution to the problem of plastic pollution."

Signatories of the European Plastics Pact have agreed to deliver on the Pact's targets and engage in cross border connection, co-operation, innovation and harmonisation. Signatory organisations are from different parts of the value chain² and are represented in the Pact's Steering Committee:

"This roadmap gives a clear direction of travel for the European Plastic Pact. One where we can find new ways across the value chain to reduce, reuse and recycle plastic packaging in line with our Unilever commitments." **Hanneke Faber, President, Global Foods & Refreshment, Unilever**

"The European Plastics Pact provides an important forerunner platform for close collaboration among the Plastics Pact partners accelerating the shift towards a circular bioeconomy for plastics by 2025. The publication of the roadmap is an important milestone in our efforts to speed up this comprehensive sustainability transformation that will require the utilization of all the available renewable and circular technologies and solutions." **Mercedes Alonso, Executive Vice President, Renewable Polymers and Chemicals, Neste**

"SUEZ is pleased to be an active member of the European Plastics Pact and to accompany the environmental policies of our customers and stakeholders. This roadmap provides a clear means to achieve the ambitious targets set by the Pact. Through shared goals between industry and national governments, we have set a strong framework which will lead us to succeed in increasing the recycling of plastics and in producing high-quality polymers." **Jean-Marc Boursier, COO GROUP and France CEO, SUEZ**

The European Plastics Pact covers all plastic packaging and single-use plastics products consumed in European Economic Area, and in the Member States of the European Free Trade Association, regardless of place of production. Its actions cover Governments, businesses, the recycling sector and citizens. It will prioritise and coordinate activities through working groups, with the expectation that each stakeholder embeds the Roadmap within their organisation to align it with their own targets and policies.

In total, 51.2 million tonnes of plastic was used in Europe in 2018. Forty per cent of this was packaging, and 1.5 million tonnes of plastic waste was exported in 2019.

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Notes to editors

² View the current list of signatories: <https://europeanplasticspact.org/signatories/>

- **European Plastics Pact Roadmap:** <https://europeanplasticspact.org/roadmap/>
- **European Plastics Pact** website: <https://europeanplasticspact.org/>
- **WRAP** is an environmental charity founded in 2000 which works with governments, businesses and citizens to create a world in which we source and use resources sustainably. Its impact spans the entire life cycle of the food we eat, the clothes we wear and the products we buy from production to consumption and beyond.
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