

## Press Release

Brussels, 17 June 2008

# Plastics producers welcome agreement on EU Waste Framework Directive

## Today's decision will cut greenhouse gas emissions and benefit climate

PlasticsEurope, the association of European plastics manufacturers, welcomes today's adoption of the revised EU Waste Framework Directive by the European Parliament. The directive marks an important step towards improved resource efficiency and the reduction of landfill in Europe, thus decreasing greenhouse gas emissions and protecting the climate.

Jan-Erik Johansson, Advocacy Director at PlasticsEurope, commented: "Europe can no longer afford to waste its waste. Today's vote recognises the importance of waste as a valuable resource. Calorific waste is a valuable and energy-rich resource that must not be landfilled. Every item that is recycled or recovered saves harmful methane emissions from landfills." A recent study by the Prognos research institute showed that diverting calorific waste from landfill across Europe could save up to 27% of the EU's 2020 CO<sub>2</sub> emissions reduction target.

The directive adopted today notably contains a definition of recycling that encompasses both traditional 'mechanical' and novel 'feedstock' recycling technologies. This is essential to ensure continuing innovation in recycling technologies and gives stakeholders an incentive to keep using and investing in environmentally-friendly technologies.

Moreover, the plastics industry welcomes that the approved text recommends flexibility in the application of the waste hierarchy, which sets a priority order of waste treatment options. Treatment can deviate from the hierarchy, says the revised directive, if this is justified from a life-cycle perspective. Flexibility to use the best environmental and economic option for each waste stream will contribute to resource efficiency and climate protection.

This is also why the European plastics industry welcomes that the directive approved today paves the way for classifying energy-efficient energy-from-waste plants as recovery. "Together with the Landfill Directive this classification will create strong drivers in Member States to divert waste from landfill. Given the scarcity of energy resources, we need to make use of every viable complement to fossil fuels," Jan-Erik Johansson added.

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Note to the editor:

1. The study *Resource savings and CO2 reduction potentials in waste management in Europe and the possible contribution to the CO2 reduction target in 2020* by Prognos AG, in co-operation with the Institute for Environmental Research at the University of Dortmund and the IFEU – Institut für Energie- und Umweltforschung Heidelberg GmbH, can be downloaded from [www.prognos.com](http://www.prognos.com) According to the study, introducing more recycling and recovery across the EU alone could save emissions of up to 234 Mt CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent by 2020, compared to 2004 levels. This amounts to 27% of the EU's 2020 emission reduction target, according to the authors of the study.
2. The revised Waste Framework Directive states that the term 'recycling' encompasses feedstock as well as mechanical recycling. Unlike alternative materials, plastics offer an additional level of recycling, e.g. by breaking down the polymer into its elementary chemical building blocks, such as monomers and other chemical intermediates, which can be used to either produce new materials similar to the original or for other purposes. The 'feedstock recycling' is an integral part of many vital industrial processes, for example in the production of metals in blast furnaces or smelters. End-of-Life plastics can be used for making synthesis gas, which then can substitute coal or oil as feedstock in these processes, where they act as a reducing agent to produce metals from ore. In case of mixed plastic waste this can be more eco-efficient than mechanical recycling.
3. For more information, please contact Jan-Erik Johansson, Advocacy Director at PlasticsEurope, [jan-erik.johansson@plasticseurope.org](mailto:jan-erik.johansson@plasticseurope.org), +44 7789 9231 88 or Susanne Kiefer, Blueprint Partners, [susanne.kiefer@blueprintpartners.eu](mailto:susanne.kiefer@blueprintpartners.eu), +32 2 289 09 47
4. PlasticsEurope is one of the leading European trade associations with centres in Brussels, Frankfurt, London, Madrid, Milan and Paris. It is networking with European and national plastics associations and has more than 100 member companies, producing over 90% of all polymers across the EU27 member states plus Norway, Switzerland, Croatia 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 1.6 million people are working in about 50.000 companies (mainly small and medium sized companies in the converting sector) to create a turnover in excess of 280 billion € 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](http://www.plasticseurope.org) [www.plasticsconverters.eu](http://www.plasticsconverters.eu) [www.euromap.org](http://www.euromap.org)