



About the initiative

PlasticsEurope initiated the *Zero Plastics to Landfill by 2020* project in 2005. It aims at a total reduction of post-consumer plastic waste by 2020, envisaging the push for international legislation and further construction of facilities that help reach that goal. The basis of this initiative is an open dialogue with all relevant stakeholders from all over Europe, including the exchange of specific know-how and expertise compiled via studies and thorough evaluations of practices in high-performing member states.

Objective & key activities

Data on amounts of plastics waste, recycling and recovery in Europe will be regularly compiled and made available to the broader public. The waste management strategy focuses on re-use as a first priority, and then to sustainably recycle plastics whenever it's possible to do so. Non-recyclable plastics can be put through an advanced thermal process to recover power and heat. No plastic is worthless enough to finish in landfill.

In the first phase, the project focuses on five countries that, in total, landfill more than 80% of Europe's plastic waste: UK, Italy, Spain, France and Poland. The second phase addresses 'Zero Plastics to Landfill' in other European countries. Without decisive actions, the 'zero' goal won't be reached before 2037!

Societal challenges

Every year, 10 million tonnes of plastic waste are landfilled in the EU. As many as eleven EU Member States landfill more than 60% of their plastic waste.

These materials contain important resources. By re-using or recycling them, we can make our society more resource-efficient. If we bury them, they are lost forever.

Expected impact

If Europe was exploiting the full potential of plastics for recycling and recovery by applying today's best practices and technologies in an eco-efficient manner, this would lead to a:

- saving in natural resources equivalent to 25% of France's annual oil consumption
- reduction of 9 million tonnes/year of CO2 emissions

Quick facts

Plastics are derived from organic products. The materials used in the production of plastics are natural products such as cellulose, coal, natural gas and, of course, crude oil.

The production of plastic begins with a distillation process in an oil refinery, involving the separation of crude oil into fractions. Each fraction is a mixture of hydrocarbon chains differing in molecule size and structure

Plastics can be grouped into two main polymer families: thermoplastics (which soften on heating and then harden again on cooling) and thermosets (which never soften when they have been moulded)

Contact

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