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Proposed new packaging rules acknowledge environmental and climate benefits of compostable plastic packaging

Berlin (ots) -

Commission misses opportunity to fully embrace necessary shift to biobased feedstock

European Bioplastics (EUBP) welcomes the proposed new rules on packaging and bioplastics adopted today by the European Commission. “We appreciate the Commission’s first comprehensive policy framework on innovative bioplastic materials, acknowledging their potential to provide genuine environmental benefits. EUBP in particular commends the Commission’s endorsement of the important role of compostable plastic packaging in the proposed packaging rules in reaching the ambitious waste and climate targets,” says Hasso von Pogrell, Managing Director of EUBP, “however, we would have expected stronger support for the use of biobased feedstock”.

“We are especially relieved to see that an initially proposed partial ban on compostable plastic packaging was eventually lifted and compostable packaging solutions will continue to be allowed to be marketed and recycled in the EU”, says von Pogrell. The Commission’s proposal for a Regulation on Packaging and Packaging Waste (PPWR) recognises the contributions of compostable plastics in increasing the volumes and quality of separately collected biowaste and reducing the contamination of (organic) waste streams. By making several packaging applications mandatory to be compostable in industrial composting facilities, including tea bags, filter coffee pods and pads, fruit stickers, and very lightweight plastic carrier bags, the Commission is taking a first step in the right direction, EUBP states.

“Unfortunately, a few persistent misconceptions remain in the Communication on the policy framework for biobased, biodegradable and compostable plastics with regards to land-use, the methods used to evaluate environmental benefits, alleged risks of cross-contamination of waste streams, as well as biodegradability in different environments. It prevented the Commission from fully embracing the shift to biobased products that would enable Europe to reduce its dependency on fossil resources and achieve its ambitious climate and circularity goals,” says von Pogrell.

Notably, the Commission’s proposal for a PPWR falls short on promoting biobased content equally to recycled content through targets to help secure feedstock availability, to achieve recycled content targets, and to meet the strict requirements for contact-sensitive materials. Prioritising recycled content and mechanical recycling will not be enough to replace the EU’s dependence on fossil resources and to stop the current trend of over-packaging and excessive waste in the EU, EUBP argues.

“We call on EU policymakers to show more ambition and clear vision in their political support to biobased and compostable plastics by improving and further clarifying the proposal with the aim to decisively support innovation in the sector of sustainable materials and packaging solutions, ensuring that investments, jobs, and innovation remain in Europe”, concludes von Pogrell. During the upcoming ordinary legislative procedure, EUBP will continue to provide evidence and expertise in order to make sure that the potential and benefits of bioplastics in the transition to a climate-neutral circular economy are being fully acknowledged.

European Bioplastics:

European Bioplastics represents the interests of the European bioplastics industry. Its members include companies from the entire value chain. The members produce, process and distribute plastics that are made from renewable raw materials, are biodegradable or combine both properties. Further information can be found at: www.european-bioplastics.org.

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