



European Plastics Converters
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**EUROPEAN PLASTICS CONVERTERS CONTRIBUTION TO THE
CONSULTATION ON THE FUTURE "EU 2020" STRATEGY**

Dear Sir or Madam,

The European Plastics Converters (EuPC) is the leading EU-level Trade Association, based in Brussels, representing European Plastics Converters. EuPC now totals about 50 European Plastics Converting national and European industry associations, it represents close to 50,000 companies, producing over 45 million tonnes of plastic products every year. 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.



EuPC supports the future Commission “EU 2020” strategy and has the following comments:

1) *Creating value by basing growth on knowledge*

EuPC fully backs the importance of education and research in order to achieve a sustainable growth of the EU economy.

Education should be supported on all levels from the lower education to the higher one. Furthermore, the cooperation between on the one hand the academic world and on the other hand industry must be strengthened. As a matter of fact, industry has a better knowledge of the future skills needed by the labour market.

Additionally, the fundamental research should be particularly strengthened. Incentives should be granted to companies and universities' doing fundamental research together as this type of research is compulsory to secure a long-term growth of the EU economy.

A specific EU platform for innovation and research on plastics processing of products and goods should be set up.

2) *Empowering people in inclusive societies*

The skills needed by companies evolve over time due to developments in their products or services. This leads to a dichotomy between the skill of the employees and the ones needed by the company. Therefore, legislation and academic world should evolve in order to favour continuous training of employees.

The EU labour market is too fragmented in order to efficiently match the labour demand. In a developing single market regional or local labour market segmentation is not a sound policy. The future labour policies should help matching companies demand in specific sectors and regions without barriers. Furthermore, in order to decrease unemployment the mobility of workers should be promoted across the EU.



3) *Creating a competitive, connected and greener economy*

Competitive Economy and Industrial Policy:

The EU construction has enabled the creation of a single market and has led to increase competitiveness. The “EU 2020” strategy should push for further integration and harmonisation of the 27 different EU markets. Technical market barriers between EU Member States must be eliminated in order to have a stronger, more harmonized and competitive European economy.

Resources:

The EU is lacking of natural resources and importing the vast majority of the used resources. Therefore, the EU must secure its supply and rationalise the use of resources.

Furthermore, there is a delocalisation trend of the EU heavy industry outside the EU. This is specially the case for the plastics raw material production which is moving to the Middle East and Far East. This delocalisation cannot be avoided because the raw material prices are much lower than in Europe.

The EU must take measure in order to avoid the delocalisation of rest of the plastics value chain. These companies, mainly SMEs, are vital for the EU as they are significantly contributing to the European employment, research and welfare.

Energy is an essential production factor for the European industry. Therefore, the EU needs a secured energy supply in order to offer a sustainable and competitive energy to its companies.

Even though the EU objective of 20% renewable energy is achieved by 2020 more than 80% of our energy will be produced by carbon based fuels.

Therefore, more attention is needed on the production of conventional energy in order to save the competitiveness of the EU industry.

Additionally, the most efficient path to reduce our energy dependency, environmental impact and to increase the EU competitiveness is via energy efficiency. The EU must take action in order to increase energy efficiency especially by private users (e.g. building isolation).

EUPC

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Regarding waste, it should be seen as a valuable resource instead of an issue. The EU should use all its waste in Europe and stop exporting it to the Far East. The different waste streams should be recycled or used to recover energy according to their respective life cycle analysis.

Trade:

Developing global trade is essential for the EU future strategy in order to make our economy growth in the long-term. Nonetheless, the EU must remain vigilant and unconditional on unfair competition. Furthermore, the EU policy should also aim at reducing the fiscal and legislative burden on our industry in order to strengthen our worldwide competitiveness. This evolution should be done without reducing the environmental and social progress achieved in the past years but should be achieved by simplifying and creating synergies between the different policies.

We look forward to a successful working relationship in the future.

Yours sincerely,

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