

Press Release

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GLOBAL PLASTICS ASSOCIATIONS TAKE ACTION ON MARINE LITTER

BRUSSELS, (23 March 2011): The European plastics industry has been instrumental in bringing together plastics industry organisations from around the world to sign up to a “Joint Declaration for Solutions on Marine Litter”, which was announced yesterday at the 5th International Marine Debris Conference in Hawaii. The Declaration outlines a set of clear objectives for industry action, and advocates close cooperation with a broad range of stakeholders to achieve substantial progress in reducing damage to the marine environment.

In the six-point strategy outlined in the Declaration the industry will:

- Work in public-private partnerships aimed at preventing marine debris
- Work with the scientific community to better understand the scope, origins and impact of marine litter and the range of solutions to the problem
- Promote comprehensive science-based policies and enforcement of existing laws to prevent marine litter
- Promote best practice in waste management, in particular in coastal regions
- Enhance opportunities to recover plastic products for recycling and energy recovery
- Steward the transport and distribution of plastic resin pellets and products to its customers and promote this practice along the supply chain

While acknowledging that the causes of marine litter are many and complex and the problem cannot be solved by one stakeholder group alone, the European plastics industry is determined to drive multi-stakeholder action on the issue both in Europe and at international level.

Speaking on the issue, Jacques van Rijckevorsel, President of PlasticsEurope, said that, *“Plastics litter in any environment is unacceptable. This global industry declaration will act as a catalyst for tangible actions at national, regional and international level. Contributing to substantially reducing marine litter is essential for our industry.”*

It is estimated that over 80% of marine litter originally comes from land as a result of poor waste management. The European plastics industry is already working with public authorities, NGOs, academics and other actors to identify and address gaps in the implementation of waste management procedures across Europe. PlasticsEurope supports the renewed focus on the marine environment at European Union (EU) level and looks forward to continuing to collaborate closely with the European institutions and national governments in the context of the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive and related initiatives.

“Plastics contribute significantly to enhancing the quality of our lives, to preserving our resources and to enabling innovation. However, they should be responsibly used and disposed of either via recycling or energy recovery. By promoting and enforcing practices that ensure plastics do not end up in landfills or in our seas, European countries will be in a strong position to help tackle marine litter. The European plastics industry is committed to being at the forefront of this effort in the coming months and years.” said Jacques van Rijckevorsel.

Notes to editors:

For the full text of the Industry Declaration on Marine Litter and the list of signatories see:

<http://www.plasticseurope.org/plastics-sustainability/marine-litter.aspx>

About PlasticsEurope

PlasticsEurope is one of the leading European trade associations with centres in Brussels, Frankfurt, London, Madrid, Milan and Paris. We are networking with European and national plastics associations and have 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 300 billion € per year. The plastics industry includes polymer producers - represented by PlasticsEurope, converters - represented by EuPC and machine manufacturers - represented by EUROMAP.

For further information see the web links:

www.plasticseurope.org

www.plasticsconverters.eu

www.euromap.org