



For immediate release

Brussels, 9 September 2013

EuPC calls on legislator to support separate collection of degradable plastic materials and ban oxo fragmentable plastics

During its 2013 Annual Meeting in Bruges the Brussels based association of plastics converters , EuPC, representing 50.000 companies in Europe informed its membership about the long awaited test results of degradable/fragmentable plastics materials affecting the quality of plastics recycling.

In 2012 EuPC initiated independent testing of different sorts of degradable materials used in the production of carrier bags in Europe through its membership. The objective was to measure the impact on the current recycling streams and the quality of the recyclates for the production of new PE film.

Companies supplied all kinds of plastic carrier bags which are available on the European market and industrial scale trials were conducted during more than eight months at a state of the art plastics recycling machinery producer. Pre-consumer waste was used to perform the tests (non-contaminated and not aged material). Seventeen different mixtures of theoretical end of life situations were reproduced and 3,740 measurements were made in order to carry out the research and measure the impact

Independent laboratories conducted mechanical tests, such as tensile properties, tear resistance and puncture impact on newly blown PE films.

Evidence is now showing clearly that as from 2% oxo fragmentable material in the input waste stream there is already a visual negative impact, thus affecting the PE film quality. This means that oxo fragmentable plastics have a very negative impact on plastics recycling already at very low percentages. The research is on-going to deal with impact from other bioplastics on the market in order to clarify the ambiguous situation. Oxo-fragmentable plastics have no positive environmental impact on the existing waste streams and should be forbidden in Europe.

It is crucial in terms of resource efficiency for Europe to ensure that biodegradable materials do not end up in the current plastics recycling streams and that they should be kept separate from collection of conventional plastics waste. European Legislators should act accordingly and the Green paper on plastics in the environment will hopefully trigger action in this direction.

END