

## PRESS RELEASE

### ***Extended Producer Responsibility can help achieve plastics' circularity***

**Brussels, 17 January 2018.** The Extended Producer Responsibility Alliance (EXPRA) welcomes the European Strategy for Plastics in a Circular Economy. Our packaging and packaging waste recovery and recycling systems, which are owned by the obliged industry and work on a non-profit basis, have come a long way to help implement the circular economy. We will continue to do so via renewing our commitment to plastics' circularity.

**Stakeholders' shared responsibility.** The Strategy presents today a new platform for stakeholders to cooperate via deeper dialogue and shared responsibility. Actions towards improving the quality of plastics' recycling, curbing plastic waste and littering, driving innovation and harnessing global action require, in fact, concerted efforts to confirm the European leadership in this realm.

**Boosting recycling.** As an efficient resource management tool through which producers take over the responsibility for their products' end of life, EPR schemes have significantly contributed to increasing recycling rates, including for plastics. Their role within the circular economy will now be further enhanced by new EU waste legislation establishing first-ever general, harmonised requirements for their operations, as recognised by the Strategy. In this light, we welcome further Commission guidelines for maximising the impact of new rules on Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR).

**Plastics' quality sorting and recycling.** The Commission is set to work, alongside the European Committee for Standardisation (CEN) and the industry, on developing quality standards for sorted plastic waste and recycled plastics. Over the past years, EXPRA has been promoting quality standards for waste materials, including for plastics. We are already taking this initiative forward under the CEN in an effort to reach stakeholder consensus on high quality and comparable recycling criteria. These will ensure quality input into the recycling industry.

In this light, we welcome the upcoming EU guidance on separate collection and sorting of waste. We also support the idea of a certification for recycling plants in the EU and third countries.

In addition, targeted consumer information and educational campaigns, such as those run by national EPR schemes often in close cooperation with local authorities, can help boost consumer awareness of waste sorting, littering and the importance of recycling.

**Sorting and recycling capabilities.** The EU needs to strike an optimal balance between the production of plastic packaging and the supply of secondary plastics. The EU recycling capacity should be improved, on the one hand. Quality is the key driver, on the other hand. A strong R&D policy is needed so as to assist the industry with applying eco-design and overcoming sorting and recycling infrastructure technical limitations. At the same time, Producer Responsibility Organisations can help enforce high quality collection and sorting while liaising with recyclers on quality and waste specifications when needed.

**Design for recyclability and eco-modulation.** Through Extended Producer Responsibility, producers establish an efficient end-of-life management for their products. This spurs them to design products that are easier to dismantle, reuse and recycle: the uptake of recycled content in products can therefore be particularly stimulated. In this regard, EXPRA welcomes the review of the essential requirements for placing packaging on the market. Likewise, eco-modulation is a targeted means to influence plastic packaging design, whereby producers have a financial incentive to invest and improve their products against lower fees. EXPRA is gathering evidence in a bid to examine eco-modulation's potential and contribute to the EU guidelines in this field. Standardisation could, in future, help make the modulation exercise more transparent and objective.

**Marine litter, an international matter.** When addressing marine litter, the EU should support the introduction of adequate and sustainable waste management and treatment systems in countries surrounding the Mediterranean Sea as well as globally. Our members have been active in this sphere and can help deploy these efforts whenever these countries opt for implementing EPR. We are also well placed to contribute towards international standards on sorted plastic waste and recycled plastics.

EXPRA's Managing Director, Joachim Quoden, commented: *"EPR has a vital role to play within the Plastics Strategy, not only financially but by helping to optimise waste management practice across the value chain through a holistic approach. While the obliged industry focuses on their products' maximum recyclability, stakeholders across the waste management chain work with us towards minimising the overall amount of used packaging under their system."*

*With the right policy framework and adequate enforcement, EPR has the potential to boost recycling while safeguarding the supply and quality of recycled materials, including for plastics. In doing so, we can genuinely help craft a European secondary raw materials' market in a way that will help Europe become truly circular, innovate and grow.*

*Finally, we would like to reiterate that EXPRA and its members would be delighted to share their 25-year EPR experience with all interested stakeholders within Europe and abroad".*

#### **About EXPRA**

EXPRA is the Extended Producer Responsibility Alliance – the organisation for packaging and packaging waste recovery and recycling systems which are owned by the obliged industry and work on a not-for-profit or profit not for distribution basis. EXPRA acts as the authoritative voice and common policy platform representing the interests of its members, which are all founded and run by or on behalf of the obliged industry. Over the past 20 years, our 26 members across 23 countries, including 17 EU Member States, have co-organised the collection, sorting and recycling of used packaging (with a focus on household packaging) on behalf of the obliged industry. In so doing, they fulfil their legal take-back and recycling obligations, serving over 200 million inhabitants and recycling over 18 million tons of packaging per year. For more information, please visit [www.expra.eu](http://www.expra.eu).