

A EUROPEAN STRATEGY FOR PLASTICS IN A CIRCULAR ECONOMY



"I want to make our industry stronger and more competitive. The new Industrial Policy Strategy will help our industries stay or become the world leader in innovation, digitisation and decarbonisation."

European Commission President Juncker, State of the Union Address, 13 September 2017

A STRONG AND SUSTAINABLE EUROPEAN PLASTICS INDUSTRY

The plastics industry is very important to the European economy, and increasing its sustainability can bring new opportunities for innovation, competitiveness and job creation. But the way plastics are currently produced, used and discarded fails to capture the economic benefits of a more 'circular' approach and harms the environment. The Commission is taking action to modernise the plastics economy in Europe.

THE EUROPEAN PLASTICS INDUSTRY



Almost **1.5 million**
people employed



Annual turnover of
€350 billion



18% of global plastic
production each year

Action SMEs said they have taken towards better resource efficiency:

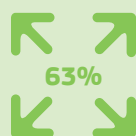
Minimising waste



65%

and

Saving energy



63%

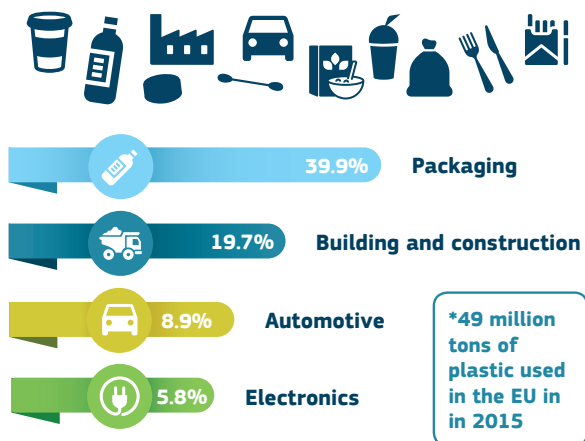
are the most common actions



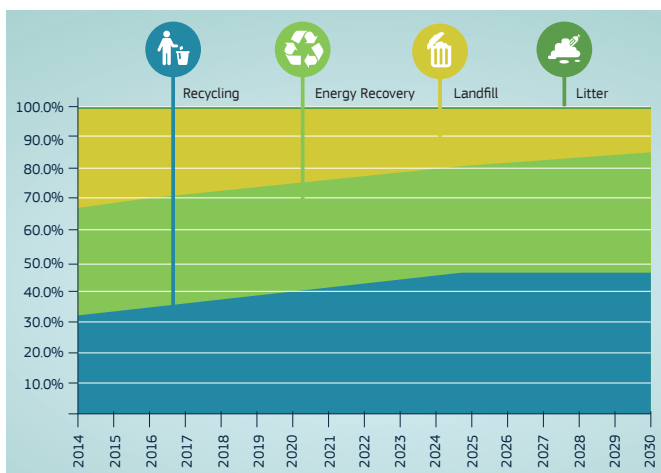
41% of SMEs consider that
resource efficiency actions
decreased production costs.

Source: Eurobarometer, 2018

WHAT DO WE USE PLASTICS FOR IN EUROPE?*



WHERE DOES PLASTIC WASTE GO?



IMPROVING PRODUCT DESIGN

It all starts with design. About 80% of all environmental impacts are determined in this phase. Design has a direct impact on the recyclability of plastics and affects the possibility for products and waste materials to find their way back to the market.

With the Plastics Strategy, the Commission aims to encourage and support product design choices which take into account the entire life cycle of plastics and plastic products, making them more durable, reusable and easily recyclable.

As packaging is one of the main uses of plastics, **by 2030 all plastic packaging should be recyclable.**

BETTER PRODUCT DESIGN MAKES PLASTICS RECYCLING EASIER



**Saving 77-120 EUR
for each tonne
of plastic waste collected**

Source: Ellen MacArthur Foundation (2016)

USING MORE RECYCLED MATERIALS

The quality of recycled plastics is increasing. But the overall uptake of recycled plastics remains low.



Only **6%** of new plastic materials come from recycling



95% of the potential economic value in plastic packaging currently goes to waste



Failure to recycle costs the European economy **€105 billion each year.**

To boost the use of recycled plastics, the Commission is launching a pledging exercise for EU industries. The target is to ensure that by 2025, 10 million tonnes of recycled plastics find their way into new products on the EU market.

ACTION BY THE COMMISSION

- Support design and production of recyclable plastics and products;
- Invest in collection, sorting and recycling infrastructure;
- Improve the traceability of materials and substances to boost recycling rates and ensure clean, safe material cycles;
- Develop quality standards for sorted plastic waste and recycled plastics;
- Develop Green Public Procurement criteria on integrating recycled content;
- Financially support research and development of innovative projects to help businesses in their efforts to increase recycling.