

# EuPC focus on Packaging



EUROPEAN PLASTICS CONVERTERS NEWSLETTER  
PROVIDING EuPC MEMBERS WITH A BRIEF OVERVIEW  
OF EuPC PACKAGING ACTIVITIES AND ISSUES

November 2007

## EuPC Packaging Forum 2007 Edition

Noordwijk aan Zee, in the Netherlands has been the host city for the Plastic Packaging event of 2007, organized by **EuPC**. The **EuPC** Packaging Forum has become a traditional occurrence for the Plastic Packaging Industry, thanks to the consolidated experience gained in many years of organization and promotion. The event has occurred in occasion of the **EuPC** General Assembly. Mr Bernhard Borgardt chaired the conference, as Packaging Division President within **EuPC**. This year event, which has encountered the appreciation of the audience and of the speakers, saw, and as now become a tradition, important speakers and a very numerous audience; the high level speakers came from Schoeller Arca, DOW Chemicals, DSM Engineering Plastic, Novamont SPA and Danone Europe. The first presentation gave an insight of a plastic converter and recycler; the second and the third presentation introduced a supplier's vision into plastic packaging converting; the fourth looked at a relatively new material and the applications for the plastic converting industry; the fifth speaker presented the vision of an important customer into the plastic packaging industry.

**EuPC** is currently developing statistics on the European packaging market; statistics that will be available for all **EuPC** members. The first draft of statistics has been presented to the Packaging Excom; these will be further elaborated and presented to the entire Packaging Division.

**EuPC** has almost finalized a Q&A on bioplastic; a sector in which **EuPC** is looking at with great interest.

## EU Regulatory Affairs

1999/177/EC: Commission Decision of 8 February 1999 establishing the conditions for a derogation for plastic

crates and plastic pallets in relation to the heavy metal concentration levels established in Directive 94/62/EC on packaging and packaging waste. According to Commission Decision 1999/177/EC, the exemption for heavy metals in plastic crates recycled in a closed loop will end in 2009. **EuPC/EuPR** met in September the TAC (Technical Adaptation Committee), composed of representatives of Member States and the Commission, in order to ask for an extension of the transition period for the closed loop recycling of heavy metal containing crates or at least for the confirmation that crates manufactured before the end of the transition period could still be used for a certain period of time or until the end of their life.

Decision 1999/177/EC introduced a control system of what was allowed to be marketed which is very strict and has functioned very well in the past 10 years; however, if one of the two above conditions will not be approved by the TAC, the consequences would be loss of business for the entire sector of the plastic recycling & converting industry.

**EuPC/EuPR** will follow up closely on this issue with the European Commission, Council and Parliament.

## Revision of EU Waste Legislation

The European Council, under the German presidency, reached the political agreement on 29 June 2007; this agreement will be followed by the Council Common position in November/December 2007, elaborated under the Portuguese presidency of the European Union. The second reading will formally begin in 2008 under the Slovenian Presidency and the final text of the Waste Framework Directive should be approved under the French presidency.

The text approved in June 2007 left unsolved a number of issues for the plastic converting industry, namely:

1. The Definition of recycling which continues to be a narrow one. While

the definition, as it stands today, is positive for certain sectors of the plastic converting industry others, instead, are worried by its consequences;

2. The status of by-products; there is a political disagreement between the European Commission and the European Parliament regarding the status of by-products. On one hand the EC has elaborated guidelines (issued in February 2007) expressing its intention to keep them out of legislation and on the other hand the EP expressly calls for a legislative status to be incorporated in the WFD. The European Council has, for the time being, decided to take on board the view and the interpretation of the EP. The legal status and the definition of "secondary raw materials"; **EuPC** has lobbied to have this very important definition approved in the WFD.

**EuPC** will concentrate its advocacy efforts to make sure that this definition will be incorporated into the legislative text. This definition is very important especially looking at the status of recycling into the REACH regulation.

Other issues instead have been favorable to the plastic converting industry, namely the Waste hierarchy and its intention to be conceived as a "guiding principle" instead of a more strict interpretation.

Next EU Presidencies:

Portugal	July-December 2007
Slovenia	January-June 2008
France	July-December 2008

## EuPC: Q&A on BioPlastic



As stated at the beginning of the current newsletter, **EuPC** is developing a Q&A on BioPlastic. Some of the questions that the

current document aims at responding are:

- What is BioPlastic?
- Is there an official recognized standard?
- What is Biodegradation?
- Are all Bioplastics biodegradable?
- Difference between biodegradable plastic and compostable plastic?
- How does the composting function?
- The raw materials?
- Benefits for the Plastic Converting Industry?
- Traditional Plastic Vs BioPlastic?
- GM = Genetic modification?
- The consumption of Bioplastic in the EU?
- Which are the recycling possibilities?
- Role of agriculture?
- Are Bioplastics better than traditional plastics?

### LabelAgriWaste project

LabelAgriWaste in its second year of activities has mapped the current situation in Europe concerning Ecolabelling systems. The state of the art results as follows:

In the EU there are numerous Ecolabelling systems at national level which creates obstacles and impedes the development of the EU Ecolabel flower. Rarely this tool has been used or developed as a marketing tool for products. Furthermore most of the schemes analysed are voluntary. Therefore, to make the system workable, the Ecolabel system needs to be recognized also to be a commercial tool for companies. A future Ecolabelling system for agriculture plastic waste that includes all types of agriculture plastic waste, needs to be able to serve two purposes:

- Environmental
- Economical

Germany (Palmira) and Norway (Plastretur) represent the most advanced agricultural waste systems on

the continent.

The next meeting is foreseen on 9, 10 and 11 January 2008 in Stuttgart. The LabelAgriWaste partners will meet for its 5<sup>th</sup> meeting since the beginning of project.

### National issues FRANCE

The European Commission Directorate General for Enterprise & Industry has received on 23 March 2007 the notification regarding a draft French decree on the obligation to incorporate matter of plant origin in plastic for certain uses (as ingredients). According to the notification the products concerned are:

1. Plastic waste (bin bags) with a half perimeter less than or equal to 69 cm or of a length of less than or equal to 85 cm.
2. Plastic cotton buds

**EuPC** sent a formal reply to the European Commission in July 2007. The EC has confirmed to **EuPC** that France will withdraw such decree. In relation to the to the prohibition as of 1<sup>st</sup> January 2010 of "single-use carrier bags made of non-biodegradable plastic", the Commission sent a detailed opinion in which they affirmed that the draft French decree did not comply to the packaging Directive. **EuPC** has learned, from the Commission, that France based their argumentations, against the Commission detailed opinion, on art. 95 of the EU Treaty. The answer of the Commission was that if this is the way they want to go then a special procedure will apply. France hasn't responded yet. For more information please contact: Françoise Gerardi: [f.gerardi@packplast.org](mailto:f.gerardi@packplast.org)

### BELGIUM

The Belgian ecotax on 'throw away' articles, the so-called "picnic tax" came into force from July 1<sup>st</sup> onwards. There is an ecotax of 3 €/kg

on one-way plastic carrier bags, but reusable and biodegradable ones are excluded, 3.60 €/kg on one-way plastic cutlery 'for use at special events' (servicing packaging for fast food retail outlets are excluded, but drinking cups included), 2.70 €/kg on plastic film for household use and 4.50 €/kg on aluminium foil for household use. The ecotax has been used by some retailers, such as Delhaize, as an argument to stop the free distribution of one way carrier bags and to offer reusable and biodegradable ones for sale.

For more information please contact: Mr Geert Scheys: [gscheys@fedichem.be](mailto:gscheys@fedichem.be)

### SPAIN

In February this year the Spanish Ministry of Environment announced an Integrated Waste Management Plan (PNIR in Spanish) in which they intend to promote the use of biodegradable materials, mostly into the urban waste sub-plan and the agricultural waste sub-plan: (The PNIR involves 13 sub-sectorial plans). In the first one (PNRU: Urban Waste Management Plan) the goals established for this item are:

- Substitution of, at least, the 70% of the commercial and distribution bags by biodegradable materials at 2015
  - Reduction in a 60% of the biodegradable waste from landfill in 2009
- Regarding agricultural waste, the draft plan promotes clearly the use of biodegradable plastics and asks for the reduction of the 10% of waste non photo and non biodegradable, for 2015.

These are the only references to biodegradable materials into the Spanish regulations for the moment. For more information please contact Enrique Gallego: [direcciongeneral@anaip.es](mailto:direcciongeneral@anaip.es)

## EuPC Upcoming events

16	November 2007	REACH Workshop	Brussels, EuPC Centre
26	November 2007	Communications Committee Meeting	Brussels, EuPC offices
3	December 2007	Packaging Plenary	Brussels, EuPC Centre
4	December 2007	Steering Committee Meeting	Brussels, EuPC offices
14	December 2007	REACH Workshop	Brussels, EuPC Centre
14	February 2008	Innovative Polymers Conference	Brussels, EuPC Centre
27	February 2008	HSE Meeting	Brussels, EuPC offices
21-24	May 2008	EuPC Annual Meeting	Athens, Greece
22	May 2008	Packaging Forum	Athens, Greece