

NNZ ‘The Packaging Network’ Our approach to plastics for food packaging



The subject of the circular economy is becoming increasingly important in the plastic packaging industry worldwide. The European Commission developed a vision for the future of the plastics industry in Europe¹. The Commission strategy now being announced lays down essential milestones for guiding the plastics sector in the coming years and sets out relatively concrete targets for the period until 2030. The call for significant expansion of recyclability also pushes ahead the design for recycling. Many of these required measures have already been put into place or will become a reality in the near future as part of the implementation of the new packaging legislation.

The European plastic industry, represented by the IK, is taking an active role in the Europe-wide dialogue on the future of the plastics industry and is committed to seeing the vision of a new circular economy for the European plastics industry becoming a reality. On the whole IK welcomed the European Commission initiative, highlighted and examined its aspects, and added an important point often overlooked by or unknown to customers and consumers:

“European Commission Strategy puts the spotlight on packaging at the end of its life cycle, it pays little attention to its use. It is precisely in the course of the use phase that plastic packaging makes a key contribution to resource efficiency and climate protection. Packaging ensures that products reach the consumer intact. That is essential for our environment, since when goods to be damaged, the resources and energy required for their production would have been wasted. Packaging made of plastic has very special properties, such as offering an oxygen barrier to protect food in particular against spoilage, therefore avoiding the need to throw it away. At the same time, such packaging is very light and hence saves fuel during transport²”.

NNZ agrees, also with regard to importance of the public discussion of the circular economy:

“It is essential to succeed in anchoring plastic as a reusable material of high value in the minds of all involved parties, as plastic packaging in particular protects foods and other products on their way to the consumer and therefore plays a key role in the preservation of resources²”.

In support of a circular economy NNZ ‘The Packaging network’ is committed to contribute by executing packaging design – including plastic packaging - through assessment of the environmental impact of all its packaging throughout its entire use phase. Sustainability criteria applied upon deciding for or against a material include recycling, use of recycled material, the rejection of superfluous or oversized packaging and the importance of product protection.

Date: Groningen, 17-April-2018

¹ A European Strategy For Plastics In A Circular Economy (published on 16.1.2018).

² Statement by the IK Industrievereinigung kunststoffverpackungen on the EU Plastics Strategy (published on 19.1.2018), <http://www.kunststoffverpackungen.de>