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EU waste legislation recognises benefits of bioplastics



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The provisional agreements reached by the European Council and Parliament on the EU waste legislative package recognise the benefits of bioplastics. The new legislation acknowledges that bio-based feedstock for plastic packaging as well as compostable plastics for separate bio-waste collection contribute to more efficient waste management and help to reduce the impacts of plastic packaging on the environment.

"Bioplastics are recognised for their circular nature. Both directives emphasise the potential of bio-based mechanically recyclable and bio-based compostable plastic packaging to foster a European circular economy", says François de Bie, Chairman of European Bioplastics (EUBP), the association for the bioplastics industry in Europe, and adds: "Substituting fossil-based feedstock with renewable resources is a key transition that is supported by this new legislation."

The revised Waste Framework Directive allows biodegradable and compostable packaging to be collected together with the bio-waste and recycled in industrial composting and anaerobic digestion. By 2023, separate collection of bio-waste is set to be mandatory throughout Europe. Biodegradable plastics verifiably help to collect more bio-waste and ultimately contribute to reaching the new recycling targets. Relevant European standards, such as the harmonized standard EN 13432 for industrially compostable plastic packaging can serve as basis for future standards for composting outlined in the agreed revision.

The Packaging and Packaging Waste Directive acknowledges that bio-based plastics help to minimise the environmental impacts of plastic packaging and to reduce Europe's dependence on imported raw materials. Bio-based and recycled materials are equally viable solutions to make packaging more sustainable. While Member States are encouraged to promote the use of bio-based recyclable packaging and bio-based compostable packaging, the European legislators miss the chance to introduce concrete legislative measures stimulating their use and improving market conditions for such products.

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