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Flexible Packaging Europe endorses Common Vision of the New Plastics Economy Global Commitment

Flexible Packaging industry takes active lead towards development of a circular economy

In line with its commitment to actively lead the way towards a more resource efficient society, Flexible Packaging Europe (FPE) has issued a strong endorsement of the New Plastics Economy Global Commitment led by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation (EMF).

The Global Commitment has a clear vision to create a future where plastic packaging is designed, used and the materials then made available again in the circular economy by 2025. This means they should not leak into the natural environment and, therefore, would continue to play an essential role in helping society live and consume sustainably.

Flexible packaging is one of the most resource efficient packaging formats due to its basic concept. That is to minimize at source the use of packaging material by intelligently selecting and possibly combining very thin films and foils to meet particular requirements and optimal performances. By applying prevention – the option at the top of the waste management hierarchy – material waste is avoided by using no more than necessary to develop the packaging solution in the first place.

Guido Aufdemkamp, Executive Director of FPE said, “The industry is already making significant progress ‘closing the loop’ to ensure flexible packaging plays an active part in the circular economy. But it also is important that the value of flexible packaging in a sustainable economy is recognised and fully appreciated.”

In recognition that end-of-life is more challenging for flexible packaging, due to its very light weight and its material composition, the association has been at the forefront of instigating a number of initiatives. The CEFLEX collaborative project, in which the entire flexible packaging value chain is working to establish an infrastructure for collecting, sorting and recycling across Europe, will make flexible packaging fully relevant in a circular economy.

“Clearly it is important to maintain momentum to increase recycling. And we are one organization who called for a separate collection of all packaging to avoid any cherry-picking of materials, so that wider adoption of recycling is feasible,” added Mr Aufdemkamp. “But it is important to realise that while packaging recycling is essential in a circular economy, it should not be a means to an end as the sole focus on packaging end-of-life can lead to undesired outcomes.”

To this end, Flexible Packaging Europe welcomes the Global Commitment’s aim to consider “the full-life cycle and systems perspective, aiming for better economic and environmental outcomes overall”. This holistic and responsible vision is fully in line with the industry’s approach to developing sustainable solutions.

Further information:

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Flexible Packaging Europe’s (FPE) members manufacture all types of flexible packaging. FPE comprises more than 80 small and medium sized companies as well as the major European producers of flexible packaging for all materials. These companies cover more than 85% of the European flexible packaging turnover. Also, six national flexible packaging associations are members of FPE ensuring consistency between national and European activities and lobbying. www.flexpack-europe.org