



For immediate release

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EuPF rejects European Commission figures on plastic bags in EU.

European Plastic Films, a sector group of the umbrella organization *European Plastics Converters*, would like to respond to several media publications following the publishing of the European Commission's public consultation on plastic bags (published Wednesday 18th May 2011) and highlight the inaccuracies of figures quoted.

The European Commission states in its consultation that 2008 saw production volumes of 3.4 million tons of plastic carrier bags in the EU-27. Furthermore the EC implies that on average a European citizen consumes 500 plastic bags yearly.

EuPF strongly rejects the accuracy of these figures as production volumes for all kinds of plastic bags (i.e. not only carrier bags but also garbage bags, fruit & veg bags, freezer bags etc.) in the EU stands at approximately 1.8 million tons for 2008 and carrier bags represent no more than 1/3 of this figure. In the U.K. the figure stands at approximately 100 bags per person per year and as many as 60% of individuals reuse all these bags. Similar figures apply in Austria and Germany, whereas France is even lower with consumption standing at 15-30 bags per individual annually and reuse of these bags being the norm.

EuPF would also question the legitimacy of the public consultation referring to the situation in Italy and their ban on non-biodegradable plastic bags. Italian authorities failed to comply with EU procedural requirements and the legality of their ban is still in question. There is also the question of biodegradable plastics; EuPF believes biodegradable plastics alone are not the answer.

EuPF strongly opposes a ban on plastic carrier bags as we believe the alternatives to plastic carrier bags would see far more environmental harm in the long run as several Life Cycle Analysis studies have proven. EuPF recognizes the environmental aspects referred to in the EC consultation such as littering and marine litter problems and EuPF is willing to open the doors for discussion with EU Commissioner Potočník to tackle these issues. In doing so we believe we can address the failures by Member States to properly implement the Packaging and Packaging Waste Directive (Dir. 94/62/EC) and establish proper systems for the collection and recycling of plastic bags.

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