Turkish Plastics Industry Foundation

Zero Plastics to Landfill by 2025

- **Resource efficiency starts with using waste as a resource**

Using waste as a resource is one key element to becoming more resource efficient. While a ban on the landfilling of recyclable waste by 2025, including plastics, was included in the initial proposal on waste targets, now withdrawn by the European Commission, we believe that such a restriction should also apply to all other recoverable waste, i.e. waste which can be used for energy production as well. A revised proposal is expected to be published by the end of 2015.

- **Plastics: too valuable to end up in landfills**

Stopping the landfilling of recyclable and other recoverable waste by 2025 will provide the legal certainty required for future planning and investments in the necessary recycling and efficient energy-from-waste infrastructure. In recent years we have seen a significant reduction of plastics being landfilled in Europe: between 2006 and 2012, the amount was reduced by 26% to 9.6 million tonnes. As a result, plastics recycling rose by as much as 40% and energy recovery increased by 27%.

- **A challenging but realistic goal**

By significantly reducing the landfilling of plastic waste within less than 10 years, European countries with a landfill ban have shown that the goal is a realistic one. Nevertheless, while seven Member States as well as Norway and Switzerland landfill less than 10% of their plastic waste, eleven Member States still landfill over 60%. This is the result of the combination of poor enforcement of existing EU waste legislation, insufficient infrastructure and landfilling being the cheapest option.

- **Energy recovery is a valuable complement to recycling**

As shown by the past years' evolution of plastic waste management data, diversion of plastics from landfill will first contribute to plastics recycling. However, it is key to understand that more recycling is not the goal but that more resource efficiency is. While most plastic waste can technically be recycled, recycling is not always the most eco-efficient waste management option. Recycling plastics beyond an optimum level will result in higher costs or low quality recycling with little or no environmental benefits. Such plastic waste (often mixed) should instead provide feedstock for efficient energy-from-waste facilities to produce electricity, heat or fuel for the production of cement etc., thereby saving fossil fuels.

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Key recommendations:

1. The landfilling of recyclable and other recoverable post-consumer waste should be stopped by 2025

The European Parliament and Member States are urged to support our call for a restriction on the landfilling of all recoverable post-consumer waste by 2025 in the revised waste proposal. Turkey, also, is very promising.

2. Efficient energy-from-waste should be part of Europe's energy strategy

Using plastics, which cannot be recycled sustainably, as a secondary source of energy, thereby saving fossil fuels, expands the diversity of the EU's energy supply, improves energy security, and helps mitigate climate change. Using such waste as a resource should have a role to play in the EU's energy and resource efficiency strategies. Turkey has a long way to go in waste-to-energy concept.

3. Support innovation in plastics recycling technologies

In order to further increase the potential of plastic recycling, innovation in recycling technologies is needed. One goal amongst others is to make feedstock recycling viable for plastics, turning them back into their basic chemical building blocks through gasification, pyrolysis or depolymerisation processes.