

Voluntary Report – Voluntary - Public Distribution

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Report Name: European Commission Publishes Roadmap on a Policy Framework for Biobased Biodegradable and Compostable Plastics

Country: European Union

Post: Brussels USEU

Report Category: Policy and Program Announcements

Prepared By: Sophie Bolla and Tania De Belder

Approved By: Joseph Taylor

Report Highlights:

On September 29, 2021, the European Commission published a roadmap outlining its intention to publish a Communication on biobased, biodegradable and compostable plastics. This is a first step towards proposing legislation on these types of products for the EU market. Stakeholders can comment on the roadmap until October 27, 2021.

General information:

There is currently no EU law in place that applies to biobased, biodegradable and compostable plastics in a comprehensive manner. As part of the [EU Circular Economy Action Plan](#), the Commission announced the adoption of a policy framework on the sourcing, labeling and use of biobased plastics, and the use of biodegradable and compostable plastics.

On September 29, 2021, the European Commission published [a roadmap](#) outlining its intention to publish a Communication on biobased, biodegradable and compostable plastics. This Communication is the first step towards proposing legislation. For the European Commission, the future policy framework must address the sustainability challenges linked to the sourcing, labeling and use of biobased plastics to ensure their use results in genuine environmental benefits, going beyond reducing the use of fossil resources.

Therefore, the initiative aims to clarify the role biobased, biodegradable and compostable plastics can play to deliver on the Commission's Green Deal commitments of carbon neutrality by 2050. It also aims to improve the understanding of the full lifecycle environmental impacts of these plastics and the applications which are likely to provide superior environmental benefits compared to conventional plastics. To do so, the Commission will look at several policy options such as:

- Establishing clear definitions and overarching principles applying to both biobased plastics and biodegradable and compostable plastics in light of the circular economy and waste hierarchy principles;
- For biobased plastics, clarifying the measurement method and labelling of the part of a plastic product that is entirely or partly derived from biomass (the 'biobased' content) as well as the sustainability of the biological feedstock used to produce biobased plastics by considering sustainability criteria;
- For biodegradable and compostable plastics, clarifying definitions, applications and criteria for such applications, as well as the role of testing, labeling and certification to ensure effective biodegradation, alignment with actual disposal infrastructure, and avoid consumer confusion.

The Commission also wants this initiative to influence global value chains through the setting of EU standards for biobased, biodegradable and compostable plastics.

Next Steps:

Following the roadmap, the Commission will adopt a Communication during the first quarter of 2022. A Communication is a first step towards proposing legislation. Following the publication of the Communication, the Member States and the European Parliament will weigh in on the topic and adopt a report. The Commission can then decide to propose legally-binding legislation.

Feedback Period:

On September 29, 2021, the European Commission launched a consultative feedback period on the roadmap. Feedback will be taken into account while the Commission is finalizing this initiative. U.S. stakeholders who would like to comment can do so via the following link:

https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/13138-Policy-framework-on-biobased-biodegradable-and-compostable-plastics_en

The deadline for input is 12:00 a.m. (Central European Summer Time or Universal Time Coordinated + 01:00) on October 27, 2021. Please note that all comments made within the consultative framework may become public.

Attachments:

No Attachments.