



Brussels, 8 April 2020

OPEN LETTER

To the kind attention of European Commissioners and their Cabinets:
President, Ms. Ursula von der Leyen
Internal Market Commissioner, Mr. Thierry Breton
Health & Food Safety Commissioner, Ms. Stella Kyriakides
Environment Commissioner, Mr. Virginijus Sinkevičius

Subject: COVID19 – request for a recast or postponement of the Single-Use Plastics Directive

Dear Ms von der Leyen,

Dear Mr. Breton, Dear Ms. Kyriakides, Dear Mr. Sinkevičius,

We hope this letter finds you and your families & Cabinets well and healthy.

We would like to draw the attention to the benefits of plastic products and in particular single-use applications during the difficult times we are experiencing at this moment in history.

Since the beginning, the Single-Use Plastics Directive 2019/904 has proven to be a difficult piece of legislation to follow and implement both at commercial level and at national level by Member States. Some crucial categories of items have been completely banned or reduced in their availability due to the (alleged) existence of a valid alternative. The Directive also hinders the Single Market and the free circulation of packaging and goods among European countries. When drafted and pushed in an extreme short period this “political” piece of legislation **the EU Commission DID NOT TAKE into account the hygienic consequences of banning or reducing Single-Use Plastics.** It only reflected on littering aspects.

Today and tomorrow we are and will be in a completely different world where hygiene and consumer health will be the number one priority for all of us so it is time to reflect on adjusting strategies for Europe and the world in particular related to the use of plastics.

The term single-use plastics is completely wrong and not justified. To reduce littering an anti-litter regulation will be needed to impact both consumers and force industry in circularity thinking and keep going in this direction. The bashing on plastics followed by many politicians is now backfiring and its time to work together to rebuild the economy and safeguard consumer health whilst driving the circularity of the plastics industry.

Unfortunately, the Corona Virus (COVID-19) has shown us that not all materials are the same. Single-use plastics are not easily substitutable, in particular in keeping the same hygienic properties to safeguard



consumers. **Many independent studies repeatedly show that plastics is the material of choice for ensuring hygiene, safety as well as preservation from contamination.**

The freedom of circulation of these goods is necessary to keep hygiene, health and safety in the supply of many products, such as food contact materials, protective equipment, medical devices and medicines. We cannot afford, in any sense, to forget such basic precautions that plastic products can provide and is already providing in the field right now to assist in the fight against this crisis.

Therefore, EuPC is asking you to inform all EU Member States of the postponement of the deadline for the implementation of the SUP Directive for at least an additional year at national level and to lift all bans on some of the single-use plastics items. Industry will continue to work on the circularity aspects with all value chains and maintain the objectives to reach 10 million T of use of recycled materials between 2025-2030. For this, support will also be needed from the EU Commission by clearly accepting both mechanical and chemical recycling as complementary technologies to the common objectives in the CPA.

The implementation postponement will give all EU MS more time to focus on more urgent measures in the fight against COVID-19 by distributing also SUP in emergency situations, whilst the industry will have the possibility to continue to produce all those plastic products and others that are needed and will be needed in the future.

The Plastic industry and in particular the thousands of SMEs are here to play their role and be part of the European COVID-19 coordination and remains at your disposal for any need, wishing you a great continuation of your and your Staffs' activity.

Yours faithfully,

Alexandre Dangis
EuPC Managing Director

Renato Zelcher
EuPC President

About EuPC: European Plastics Converters (EuPC) is the leading EU-level trade association, based in Brussels, representing European plastics converting companies. Plastics converters use plastics raw materials and recycled polymers to manufacture new products. EuPC totals about 45 national as well as European plastics converting industry associations and represents more than **50,000 companies**, producing over 50 million tons of plastic products every year. The European plastics industry makes a significant contribution to the welfare in Europe by enabling innovation, creating quality of life to citizens and facilitating resource efficiency and climate protection. More than **1.6 million people** are working in EU converting companies (mainly **SMEs**) to create a turnover in excess of € 260 billion per year.