



Environment Ministers Discussed Circular Economy And Plastics Strategy –

Description



At Monday's Environment Council, ministers exchanged views on the package presented by the European Commission on January 26, 2018, which aims at delivering on the circular economy action plan. The package consists of the following elements: European strategy for plastics in a circular economy; a Monitoring framework for the circular economy; and Implementation of the Circular Economy package: options to address the interface between chemical, product and waste legislation. They based their debate on a note prepared by the Presidency and took into account the interventions

of Commissioners Vella and Arias Cañete, who were present. Ministers agreed that they welcome the presentation of the new EU plastics strategy. They highlighted the need to move forward with the plastics strategy as it aims to improve how we use and recycle plastics. Plastics have been instrumental in achieving the economic and social standards we have today. However, in recent years marine littering and other undesirable consequences linked to the use of plastic have been a concern to environment ministers. All Ministers welcomed the Commission package and called for an urgent implementation of concrete measures, in particular to increase the recycling of plastics, find solutions to the widespread use of single-use plastic and to find a holistic approach to the value chain of plastic production. Eco-design for plastic products can play a very important role here. In their exchange of views, ministers mentioned several other possible actions to be taken at EU or at national levels: campaigns for raising consumer awareness; increasing the quality of recycled products through setting standards; green public procurement; and the use of the rules on Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), similar to the one which was agreed recently in the waste package, together with financial incentives and voluntary commitments by the industry. Finally, ministers agreed that they are all looking forward to the Commission legislative proposal on single use plastics. “We need to protect our environment from plastic pollution. We also need to protect our seas from microplastic particles.

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