PLASTIC WASTE CODES: REPORTING THE TRANSITION TO THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY

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World Customs Organization (WCO)
1. Who we are and who we represent
The plastic recycling industry in the EU

Who do we represent

- +650 COMPANIES
- €7.7 BILLION TURNOVER
- 9.6 MILLION TONNES INSTALLED CAPACITIES
- +20,000 EMPLOYEES
The benefits of recycling

Hand in hand with EU policy objectives

- Reduces the dependency from fossil fuels
- Diverts valuable resources from landfills & reduces methane emissions
- Decreases energy consumption
- Green jobs creation
- Saves CO₂ emissions
- Conserves natural resources and keeps them in a loop
2. How does recycling work
3. Plastic recycling: cross-border market in the EU
Intra-EU shipments of plastic waste (2013-2022)

Source: PRE visualization from Eurostat data (HS2-4-6 and CN8 (DS-045409))
The recycling of plastic waste

Cross-border waste management operations

- In the EU, intra-EU shipments of plastic waste have rapidly increased to the detriment of extra-EU trade.
- Eurostat provides data for 5 main plastic waste streams: PE, PS, PP, PVC, and “other plastic waste”.
- PE waste represents the larger fraction, which includes LDPE, LLDPE, and HDPE waste materials.
- PET waste falls under “other plastic waste”, but no information is provided on the specific split.

Source: PRE visualization from Eurostat data (HS2-4-6 and CN8 (DS-045409))
4. Missing granularity for plastic waste & recycling
The recycling of plastic waste

Codes for materials, products and economic activities

- Plastic recyclers play a leading role in the circular economy as they participate in the waste management of materials, reducing the amount going to incineration or landfill by reducing the dependency on virgin raw materials (fossil fuels).

- HS codes could be made greener by increasing the granularity of codes to meet the variety of polymers types, in waste as well as in product trade reporting.
Certified traceability and custom operations
The recycling of plastic waste

**Traceability of plastic waste materials**

- Key to achieving the circularity of plastic waste materials, while ensuring the best environmental waste management operation, is enabling traceability by certification.
- **Certified recycling facilities** shall place on the market recyclates (rPET, rLDPE, rHDPE,...) that are accompanied by traceability certifications according to EN 15343 and ISO 17065.
- The **certification supports custom checks** while enabling the monitoring of the plastic recycling market at the global level.
- Traceability shall be ensured by **certificating the recycling facilities**, which must provide transparent and reliable data that can be used at the product level (controlled blending or segregation).
The recycling of plastic waste

Harmonized definitions for any “green” codes

- **Design for recycling** means the design of products, including individual components, in order to ensure their recyclability under the state-of-the-art collection, sorting, and recycling systems.

- **Recyclable products** can be effectively and efficiently collected, separated from the waste stream, sorted and aggregated into defined streams for recycling processes, and recycled at scale through state-of-the-art processes so that it is turned into the secondary raw material of a sufficient quality that it can find end markets to substitute for the use of the primary raw material or organic.

- Recyclability shall be assessed against the compatibility of products against the existing recycling infrastructure available in the market where it is placed.

- End-of-waste materials to be used as fuels or other means to generate energy, or to be incinerated, backfilled, or landfilled, shall not be counted towards the attainment of the recycling targets.
RECYCLASS CERTIFICATIONS

RECYCLASS DESIGN FOR RECYCLING CERTIFICATION

- Technical Assessment: ranking from A to F
- Valid for the EU market
- Based on the European plastic waste streams
- Packaging design, sorting behaviour, end-markets included

RECYCLASS RECYCLABILITY RATE CERTIFICATION

- Quantitative Assessment: Recyclability rate from 0 to 100%, in addition to class ranking
- Country-specific
- Based on the local collection and availability of infrastructures
- Packaging design, sorting behaviour, end-markets included
- On pack use of the logo (class ranking only)
- Based on RecyClass Methodology

RECYCLASS RECYCLABILITY RATE CERTIFICATION

- + 90%
- Based on RecyClass Methodology

RECYCLASS RECYCLABILITY RATE CERTIFICATION

- + 90%
- Based on RecyClass Methodology

RECYCLASS RECYCLING PROCESS CERTIFICATION

- Based on EN 15343
- Segregation/controlled blending chain of custody model described in ISO 22095:2020
- Definitions of waste (pre-consumer/post-consumer) in line with ISO 14021
- Procedures aligned with conformity assessment as described in ISO 17065.
- On pack use of the logo (class ranking only)
- Covers groups of products under 1 certificate
- % based - physical traceability
- Third party certification

RECYCLASS RECYCLED PLASTICS TRACEABILITY CERTIFICATION

- Aligned with Regulation (EU) 2022/1616
- Accreditation for ISO 17065 (ongoing)

- Positive EA evaluation (European co-operation for Accreditation) in line with ISO 17065
Thank you!

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