

ASOBIOCOM rejects the EASAC report regarding biodegradable and compostable plastics.

European Bioplastics considers misleading the way biodegradable and compostable plastics are described in the report "Plastic packaging in the circular economy" published by EASAC (Scientific Advisory Council of the European Academies). ASOBIOCOM supports European Bioplastics because several points are purely based on emotional considerations without any real scientific basis. For example, the idea those biodegradable plastic products are an "elusive" target because biodegradability and durability are known to be antithetical properties that cannot coexist, is very simplistic and is disproved by the presence of many biodegradable products on store shelves and around us, used daily, such as shopping bags, compostable tableware, coffee capsules, etc. All are biodegradable and resistant products that are used daily by millions of people.

If we were to summarize the study, EASAC - starting from questionable assumptions - comes to rather singular "conservative" conclusions, not in line with the EU's policy on the bioeconomy and the circular economy, making recommendations to the EU institutions and citizens, which we cannot share at all. It is therefore necessary to accelerate on the issues of the circular economy, not intended as reductive and basic concept of material recycling, but as a redesign of production not anymore based on a "silos approach" yet on the creation of interlinks among different sectors. The report also questions how 'soon' and 'well' biodegradable plastics degrade. However, it is necessary to recall that the full compatibility of compostable plastics with industrial composting processes is certified based on a specific European standard (EN 13432) and that numerous studies have certified the exact opposite of EASAC's thesis. A recent study conducted by Wageningen University & Research (WUR) clearly showed that compostable plastic products broke down in an industrial bio-waste treatment facility within a maximum of 22 days. In addition, Project CERES, an initiative promoted by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation (EMF) within the Circular Economy 100 program in Europe, shows how a reduction and substitution of single-use plastic bags with compostable bags in supermarkets can improve the organic waste management. These compostable bags end up in the composting facility and compost correctly there allowing producing a high quality compost.

In short, the EASAC discredits the result of 25 years of research which has given rise to innovation whose benefits have been demonstrated for certain applications and sectors such as agriculture, bio-waste management or packaging. Indeed, EASAC seems to ignore, perhaps by lack of information, the twenty-five years of research, market applications and organic recycling practices of these innovative materials, developed in accordance with current European legal provisions and European standards. The report constitutes a missed opportunity to make an objective assessment about the possible role of biodegradable and compostable plastics within a sustainable circular economy for a new model of European industrial development.

ASOBIOCOM (Spanish Association of Compostable Biodegradable Plastics) promotes the development of the use of compostable plastics in packaging, agriculture and other uses, through education and information. The Association also works through the legislative process to promote the use of compostable plastics and to ensure the application of European standards (EN 13432, EN 14995 and EN 17033).