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EU WASTE POLICY: TO BE EU-WIDE AND SECTOR-FOCUSED

“ACE’s members are committed to the EU Thematic Strategy on Waste’s objective - that is, to reduce the environmental impact of waste along the life cycle of products and materials”, said Erika Mink, President of the Alliance for Beverage Cartons and the Environment (ACE) a panelist at a stakeholders meeting organised at the Centre for European Policy Studies in Brussels on 7 June.

“An EU legislative framework adopting the life cycle approach will give business the flexibility needed to respond to the challenge of environmental impact reductions”, she says. “Tackling impacts along the business chain means that a sector-level response is an effective way of meeting the challenge of prevention of waste”, she added. “We therefore warmly welcome the life cycle approach set out in the EU Thematic Strategy on Waste Prevention and Recycling. ACE’s members experience is that this approach enables us to measure the effectiveness of our environmental action”.

Ms. Mink cautioned against the adoption of quantitative targets for prevention, whether at EU or Member State level. “There is a danger of quantitative targets being arbitrary or meaningless – because the amount of waste generated depends on a multitude of factors: the level of economic activity, demographic changes, technological innovation, lifestyle, to name a few.”

The meeting was also attended by European Commission’s official Timo Mäkelä, Director for Sustainable Development, Caroline Jackson MEP, Austrian Presidency’s environment attaché Michael Sebanz and Melissa Shinn from the European Environmental Bureau.

Timo Mäkelä said the European Commission is willing to set convincing and legally binding standards for waste prevention, as so far Europe has not been able to reduce the amount of waste it produces. Caroline Jackson MEP, the rapporteur for the revision of the EU waste framework directive, insisted the waste framework must generate certainty through clearer definitions and called for the current 5-step waste hierarchy to be maintained. On the NGO side, Melissa Shinn asked for practical measures to implement the waste strategy, and the need to set out harmonized indicators and definitions regarding the national prevention plans to ensure consistency in the EU waste strategy.

ACE represents leading beverage carton packaging producers and their main European paperboard suppliers in EU environmental policy developments.

For detailed comments from ACE regarding the EU Thematic Strategy on waste prevention & recycling and the revision of the EU waste framework directive, for further information on the above mentioned CEPS seminar, please visit our website at www.ace.be.