

Open letter to:

Frans Timmermans, *Executive-Vice-President of the European Commission*

Virginijus Sinkevičius, *European Commissioner for Environment, Oceans and Fisheries*

Brussels, November 24th, 2021

Subject: Reuse at the heart of EU policies to achieve waste reduction

Dear Executive-Vice-President Timmermans, dear Commissioner Sinkevičius,

Activities across Europe for the European Week for Waste Reduction are revealing the eagerness of diverse stakeholders, from local communities and youth to businesses, to address one of the current challenges we face: waste. In response to this, we would like to emphasize the importance of adopting consistent and complementary EU policies which support reuse in order to achieve significant waste reduction in Europe, and beyond.

Reusable packaging and products within reuse systems provide significant environmental benefits: a reduction in resource and water use; reduced carbon emissions; and prevention of pollution. They would also provide jobs and contribute to the Just Transition. Waste prevention and reuse are at the top of the EU waste hierarchy, higher than recycling; yet, so far, very few concrete EU legislative measures support reusable products and systems.

The upcoming revision of the Packaging and Packaging Waste Directive (PPWD) provides a not-to-be-wasted opportunity to ensure that upstream measures focusing on prevention and reuse are implemented EU wide. They should include binding reuse targets as well as packaging format harmonisation and economic incentives to encourage reuse. In addition, product design for reusability and durability should be supported by concrete measures in the upcoming Sustainable Products Initiative, while claims on reusability should be strictly regulated through the Substantiating Green Claims Initiative to ensure consumers are equipped with the appropriate information.

Beyond product related legislation, the priority given to waste prevention and reuse in the waste hierarchy should be reflected in the EU Taxonomy for the Transition to a Circular Economy, by developing technical screening criteria for reuse (e.g. design for reuse and reuse business models) which are missing from the preliminary recommendations from the Platform on Sustainable Finance. Producers have the ability to ensure a substantial contribution to the reuse system, as they are typically aware of the purpose for which they design products and collaborate with other actors throughout the value chain.

¹ A few examples can be found in the Realising Reuse report available here: <https://rethinkplasticalliance.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Realising-Reuse-Final-report-July-2021.pdf>

Generally, reuse and innovation linked to designing and developing large-scale and interoperable reuse systems (e.g. take-back, cleaning and redistribution infrastructures) should be given a higher priority when it comes to financing the transition to a circular economy, including for research projects and initiatives to develop solutions of tomorrow.

The moment to design how Europe achieves genuine circularity through well-designed, large-scale reuse systems, and their financing, has come. Through the #WeChooseReuse campaign 100,000 citizens, hundreds of businesses and tens of cities across Europe have signed open letters demanding the EU to deliver ambitious measures.

Reuse is also critical to prevent pollution in Europe and beyond by ensuring materials, products and packaging are durable and keep value overtime, and by preventing (plastic) waste being created and exported to third countries. Normalising reuse would be a game-changer in contributing to the EU achieving its climate and biodiversity targets.

Yours sincerely,



The #WeChooseReuse campaign is a European campaign coordinated by the Break Free From Plastic (BFFP) movement, which consists of over 100 core members (organisations and networks) in Europe, including the Rethink Plastic alliance.



Break Free From Plastic is a global movement envisioning a future free from plastic pollution made up of more than 2,000 organisations from across the world demanding massive reductions in single-use plastic and pushing for lasting solutions to the plastic pollution crisis.

More info : www.breakfreefromplastic.org



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