

NOTHING IS LOST

PERMANENT MATERIALS AT THE HEART OF THE EU CIRCULAR ECONOMY

Brussels, 17 October 2016

European Parliament ITRE Committee backs study by acknowledging and incentivizing multiple recycling of permanent materials as part of circular economy package

The study commissioned by FEVE – the European Container Glass Federation – and carried out by the Italian Research Institute ‘Stazione Sperimentale del Vetro’ ⁽¹⁾, confirms that glass is a **“permanent material”**. That means that once it is produced for the first time, and properly collected and processed at its end of life, a glass container becomes the primary raw material for new and endless production loops without any loss of its intrinsic properties. It is at the heart of a proven and well-functioning Circular Economy as also acknowledged by the EP Industry Research Energy Committee (ITRE) with their vote on the Circular Economy package last week.

“By using recycled glass in a closed loop, the industry significantly reduces the use of other virgin raw materials.” commented Vitaliano Torno, FEVE President. Legislative measures should encourage authentic resource efficiency by focusing on real circular business models that keep the same resources productive in the economy over and over again. *“The industry is calling for a recognition of permanent materials, to reduce Europe’s reliance on extractive industries, land use and fossil fuels to produce packaging. We welcome the landmark vote on the Circular Economy Package in the ITRE Committee of the European Parliament, which supports incentives for materials that can be recycled multiple times without losing their intrinsic properties. We hope the ENVI Committee will confirm this important step forward for a truly Circular Economy in Europe”*.

The classification as “permanent” material is also conditional to the effective establishment of stewardship measures enabling efficient multiple recycling in all EU countries. This is the case for glass. On average today, 74% of glass containers put on the market are collected and actually recycled into glass bottles and jars. However, the situation varies from country to country and the remaining 26% of glass bottles and jars are still today lost in landfills in Europe. The EU waste legislation under review in the EU Circular Economy Package should incentivize multiple recycling to provide the industry with good quality and economically viable recycled glass.

The European Container Glass Circular Economy works very well from an economic and social perspective, but above all generates major benefits for the environment: one ton of recycled

glass bottles and jars replaces 1.2 tons of sand and other natural resources. As glass melts at lower temperatures than virgin raw materials, its multiple recycling also reduces CO₂ emissions and energy consumption. In addition, no chemical substances migrate from glass into food or the environment - no matter how many times it is recycled. Glass shares the classification as a permanent material with other ones - like metals - which do not change their inherent properties ⁽²⁾.

- (1) See Study “ Permanent Materials in the framework of the Circular Economy concept: review of existing literature and definitions, and classification of glass as a Permanent Material”, Stazione Sperimentale del Vetro, June 2016 - <http://feve.org/glass-is-permanent-material/>
- (2) See Study “Permanent Materials, Carbotech, October 2014 - <http://goo.gl/8zJpri>

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About FEVE

FEVE is the Federation of European manufacturers of glass containers and machine-made glass tableware. Its members produce over 20 million tons of glass per year. The association has some 60 corporate members belonging to approximately 20 independent corporate groups. Manufacturing plants are located across 23 European States and include global blue chip and major companies working for the world’s biggest consumer brands. See more on www.feve.org

About the Container Glass Industry

The European container glass industry provides a wide range of glass packaging products for food and beverages as well as flacons for perfumery, cosmetics and pharmacy to their European and world customers. With its 160 manufacturing plants distributed all over Europe, it is an important contributor to Europe’s real economy and provides employment to about 50,000 people, while creating a large number of job opportunities along the total supply chain. See more on www.feve.org

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