

Press release

Renewable Carbon Initiative (RCI)

www.renewable-carbon-initiative.com

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Renewable Carbon Initiative Steps up Policy Activities to Push for More Sustainable Carbon Use in the EU

The Renewable Carbon Initiative (RCI) welcomes several policy dossiers that promote more sustainable carbon use and provides recommendations for improvements

Under the Green Deal, the European Union is currently developing and revising a wide range of policies aiming at climate neutrality and a sustainable economy by 2050. The RCI has established a policy working group under the lead of nova-Institute and counting above 40 member companies in order to actively co-shape the huge processes necessary to meet the climate challenge. While it means decarbonisation in the energy sector, it will also entail significant changes in the feedstock base of the material industries. Organic chemistry and derived materials simply cannot decarbonise, as carbon is their central feedstock and building block. It is therefore unavoidable to aim instead for defossilisation in these sectors. The current upheavals present an unprecedented opportunity to adapt our economy and move towards truly circular business models that re-use and recycle carbon indefinitely. As a proponent of a swift transformation in this direction, RCI is getting involved in a number of policy dossiers to put forward ideas that can accelerate that process.

In a multitude of dialogues with policy makers and other interested stakeholders, we introduce the renewable carbon concept and how it contributes to a wide variety of Green Deal objectives, such as climate neutrality, mobilising industry for a clean and circular economy or the zero pollution ambition.

The on-going **revision of the Packaging and Packaging Waste Directive** is a central element that offers opportunities to increase the ambitions for sustainable plastic packaging. As an organisation, RCI argues that the inclusion of bio-based and CO₂-based content as equal to recycled content would be an important step in the right direction. This “renewable content” quota will reduce the plastic packaging sector’s dependence on virgin fossil resources, which is an important step towards climate neutrality. Furthermore, opening the recycle quota to include other renewable materials would offer flexibility to the industry and relax tight markets without compromising climate and circular economy ambitions. We are glad to note that this option is being discussed in earnest by the Commission stakeholders and offer our support in terms of providing evidence and strategic discussions.

The **policy framework on bio-based, biodegradable and compostable plastics** under the Circular Economy Package is expected to be published in November 2022 and is intended to provide support to these plastics where they offer true environmental benefits. RCI answered the comprehensive expert questionnaire, arguing for a well-balanced policy that treats innovative bio-based plastics fairly, while not forgetting recycled and CCU-based materials as equally positive options for defossilisation. We are convinced that sustainability requirements

for bio-based materials should be comparable to the rules set down in the Renewable Energy Directive for biofuels, of course with some adaptations where necessary and that they need to be paired with corresponding supportive measures (the same as for biofuels). The consultation also asked for input on the well-known and often discussed question of whether there should be a minimum bio-based content – such as 30% or 50% – before a product may be labelled as bio-based. We argue against a default minimum value, but suggest instead that any producer, who wants to label their product as bio-based, should be obligated to mention a certified bio-based content share on the said product. This will automatically lead to producers only labelling bio-based products if they can show a convincingly high bio-based content. For biodegradable products, we are proposing that any policy framework should only support those applications that cannot be effectively collected and recycled, or those whose use enables secondary benefits, such as higher collection of organic waste.

The publication of the **Sustainable Carbon Cycles communication** in December 2021 represents a milestone in policy development for sustainable carbon use, since it was the first policy paper to clearly recognise the importance of carbon for industrial uses and to acknowledge the need for its sustainable sourcing. The paper outlines a vision that by 2030, 20% of carbon entailed in products and materials should come from non-fossil sources. We support this vision and will urge policy makers from the Commission to follow up with concrete targets to enable implementation of this goal. In general, we stress the importance of maintaining high ambitions towards reducing emissions and first keeping carbon in a true cycle before focusing on removals, which is a strong focus in the communication itself. The role of industrial carbon cycles is underestimated in the Commission's communication in our perspective. RCI is currently preparing a more detailed position paper on these issues and will continue to get involved.

Furthermore, the **green and digital transition roadmap of the chemical industry** is currently being developed and also here, we are actively cooperating in the stakeholder process. Our main goal at first is to raise awareness that carbon embedded in molecules also contributes to global warming and that we need sustainable feedstock choices, which can only be derived from biomass, CO₂ and recycled carbon. The overarching process around the transition roadmap of the chemical industry is an ideal place to get this idea rooted in the minds of policy makers and RCI has been glad to notice the openness of many stakeholders towards our main principles.

About us:

The Renewable Carbon Initiative (RCI) was created end of 2020, and is today an interest group of more than 40 well-known companies from the chemical and material value chains. The initiative aims to support and speed up the transition from fossil carbon to renewable carbon, which is carbon from biomass, direct CO₂ utilisation or recycling, for all organic chemicals and materials. This way, the RCI addresses the core problem of climate change, which is extracting and using additional fossil carbon from the ground.

Find out more at: <https://renewable-carbon-initiative.com/>

Disclaimer

RCI members are a diverse group of companies, institutions and associations addressing the challenges of the transition to renewable carbon with different approaches. The opinions expressed in this press release may not necessarily reflect the policies and views of all RCI members. The RCI is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information it contains.

The Renewable Carbon Initiative (RCI) was founded in September 2020 by eleven leading companies from six countries under the leadership of nova-Institute (Germany). The aim of the initiative is to support and speed up the transition from fossil carbon to renewable carbon for all organic chemicals and materials. www.renewable-carbon-initiative.com

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