

PRESS RELEASE

EMBARGOED UNTIL 15 MAY, 8H00 CET

European bottled water producers make major pledges towards circular economy by 2025

- *European Federation of Bottled Waters' members will be a driving force to collect 90% of all PET bottles.*
- *Producers will include at least 25% recycled PET into the production of new bottles.*

Brussels, 15 May 2018: Today, the European Federation of Bottled Waters (EFBW) is pleased to announce four industry-wide pledges that aim to increase the collection of PET (polyethylene terephthalate) bottles and the use of recycled PET. This will accelerate the shift towards a more circular European economy.

All drink containers used by the industry, be it PET, glass or aluminium, are recyclable. However, the level of collection of PET drink bottles varies substantially across the EU. Some Member States collect more than 90% of PET bottles while others collect less than 20%, meaning our packaging today is part of the unacceptable phenomenon of littering alongside other discarded items.

Europe's producers of natural mineral and spring water believe that PET bottles must be given a second life. Therefore, EFBW is announcing the following pledges towards 2025:

- **Collect** 90% of all PET bottles by 2025, as an EU average. Ensuring PET bottles are collected means that they can be used to produce new bottles or for other products. EFBW will be a driving force alongside all actors involved in the waste management process;
- **Collaborate** with the recycling industry to use at least 25% recycled PET (rPET) in its water bottles by 2025, as an EU average. To increase the use of rPET into new bottles, natural mineral and spring water producers require a consistent supply of high-quality recycled material;
- **Innovate** and invest further in eco-design and research on non-fossil based plastic materials. The bottled water industry has always had sustainability at its heart, and is continuously investing in packaging R&D. This includes optimising its packaging design through light-weighting, eco-innovation, and research on plastics from renewable origin;
- **Engage** with consumers who play a key role in preventing littering. The industry will support initiatives which encourage the proper sorting and disposal of packaging.

Speaking about the pledges, EFBW President Jean-Pierre Deffis, noted that *“Building on our longstanding sustainable approach to resource management, we are committed to achieving these industry-wide actions. PET drink bottles already achieve the highest recycling rate of any plastic packaging material in the EU. But even one bottle ending up as litter is one too many.”* He added: *“It will take a concerted, coordinated effort from many different value-chain actors to drive positive change. EFBW’s members are stepping up to lead the way.”*

To ensure that its members can deliver on the new pledges, the EFBW intends to work with all relevant stakeholders, including Plastics Recyclers Europe (PRE).

PRE’s President Ton Emans welcomed EFBW’s initiative: *“Over the last years the bottled water industry has been a front runner in PET circularity. Recyclers are eager to embark on this new journey. Today PET recyclers do not have enough feedstock to supply the market. The priority is to drastically improve collection and quality sorting.”*

In order to guarantee transparency and accountability, EFBW will report regularly on progress of the pledges announced today.

ENDS

About EFBW

EFBW is the voice of the bottled water industry, dedicated to promoting the unique qualities of natural mineral water and spring waters and healthy hydration habits to EU institutions and international organisations.

Through its membership of national trade associations and bottled water companies EFBW represents almost 600 natural mineral and spring water producers across Europe, EFBW has a membership base of 26 national trade associations, and 7 direct member companies.

European natural mineral and spring water producers have a strong track record on sustainability, including careful water abstraction and extensive source protection in collaboration with local communities.

About PET

PET, or polyethylene terephthalate, is a lightweight, 100% recyclable plastic resin commonly used as a packaging material for water and other drinks. R-PET is PET made from packaging which has been collected after use and recycled. It can be integrated into new bottles or other products.