

Press Release

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37 Dutch Students debate on the role of sciences, chemistry and sustainability Winners selected at Dutch National Final of 2016 European Youth Debating Competition – heading to European Final in Budapest

At the Dutch edition of the 2016 European Youth Debating Competition, an initiative organised by the European Petrochemical Association (EPCA) and PlasticsEurope, 37 youngsters from all over The Netherlands discussed the overarching theme "50 years of chemical industry. What's next?". Three young debaters were selected to represent The Netherlands at the Grand Finale to be held in Budapest from 1-4 October, during the 50th EPCA Anniversary Annual Meeting.

Supported by PlasticsEurope the Netherlands, 37 students from 5 different secondary schools and universities took part in the debate, which was organised in the heart of Amsterdam at Hotel the Dylan.

"This competition is a unique opportunity for students to express themselves in a convincing way and for our industries to connect, listen and learn about their views" stated Cathy Demeestere, CEO of EPCA. "Learning from a youth debate on this topic contributes to our reflection on the future development of our industry in helping the growing global population having access to sustainable agriculture and clean water supplies whilst making sure valuable

Editors' note

The European Petrochemical Association (EPCA)

Based in Brussels, EPCA is the quality network in Europe for the global chemical business community consisting of chemical producers, their suppliers, customers and service providers. It operates for and through more than 700 member companies from 53 different countries. EPCA provides a platform to meet, exchange information and transfer learning, and serves as a think tank for its members and stakeholders. EPCA promotes STEM education, with a clear focus on gender and diversity inclusion. EPCA also underscores that the chemical industry is a good industry to work for.

PlasticsEurope is one of the leading European trade associations with centres in Brussels, Frankfurt, London, Madrid, Milan and Paris. We are networking with European and national plastics associations and have more than 100 member companies, producing over 90% of all polymers across the EU28 member states plus Norway, Switzerland and Turkey. The European plastics industry makes a significant contribution to the welfare in Europe by enabling innovation, creating quality of life to citizens and facilitating resource efficiency and climate protection. More than 1.45 million people are working in more than 60,000 companies (mainly small and medium sized companies in the converting sector) to create a turnover around 320 bn EUR per year. The plastics industry includes polymer producers - represented by PlasticsEurope, converters - represented by EuPC - and machine manufacturers - represented by EUROMAP.

For further info see the web links: www.plasticseurope.org, www.plasticsconverters.eu, www.euromap.org.

resources are not wasted but used in a way that future generations can continue to benefit from them.”

Dr. Margie Topp, Professor Polymer Engineering at the Hogeschool Windesheim, praised the students’ debating skills, stating that “It is incredible to see them grow during the debate and how they anticipated on each other’s and speaker’s statements. You hear they know a lot about the benefits of plastics and the contribution to society. They do see the environmental challenges and need for a circular economy. But when you are talking about the petrochemical industry, it is not only the packaging of e.g. medication, but it is also about what’s in the pill, and that is something they don’t recognize yet”.

The jury, composed of industry, academia and media representatives, faced a difficult challenge in choosing the three winners. The three best speakers were Ezra Pardovitch (17) from the Amsterdams Lyceum in Amsterdam, Romme Te Velde (15) from the Calandlyceum in Amsterdam and Manon Heerts (16) from the Ety Hillesum Lyceum in Deventer. Winner Ezra “I am really excited and curious about what is going to happen in Budapest.”

They will now join the selected winners from the other National European Youth Debating Competitions, for the final in Budapest in October. With this last competition in The Netherlands all finalists are known.

Editor’s Note:

The main objectives of the European Youth Debating Competition and its organisers from the petrochemical and plastics industry are to promote STEM education (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) as well as to inform about sustainability and resource efficiency, all of them being key ingredients for the future of both industry sectors and the overall competitiveness of the European Union. To reach this, EPCA and PlasticsEurope have launched this new series of the European Youth Debating Competition (www.eydc.eu) targeting young students aged 16 to 19, throughout nine EU countries.

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