

Press Release

Brussels, 21-09-2016

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52 students debate on the role of sciences and sustainability

Winners selected at Belgian National Final of 2016

European Youth Debating Competition – heading to European Final in Budapest

On Monday, 19 September, more than 50 students from the European School Brussels II and the British School in Brussels participated in the Belgian final of the European Youth Debating Competition, an initiative organised by the European Petrochemical Association (EPCA) and PlasticsEurope.

Among the 52 students present, three stood out: Kristina Krejza, Gustavs Zilgalvis and Luuk Karmarker, winning this debate. They will be heading to the European final, organised in Budapest during the 50th annual meeting of EPCA on 1-4 October, representing Belgium.

Held in the European School Brussels II, the students debated on the topic "50 years of chemical industry. What's next?". This led to a debate on a wide range of issues, from the future of the petrochemical and plastics



The three winners (from left to right) : Gustavs Zilgalvis, Kristina Krejza, Luuk Karmarker

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.

industry to resource efficiency, sustainability, animal welfare and even prosthesis to help victims of war and terror.

Prior to their debate, all students had the opportunity to perfect their arguments by listening to the debates' pro and con speakers, namely Richard Northcote, Chief Sustainability Officer at Covestro – highlighting the benefits the petrochemical and plastics industry – and Emma Priestland, Marine Litter Policy Officer at Seas at Risk – emphasizing the environmental challenges Europe is facing today.

Commenting on the debate and the importance of such initiatives, Nathalie Debuyst, Communication and Education Manager at EPCA stated “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”. Wolfgang Lange, Senior Manager Communications at PlasticsEurope, added to this that “with the challenges the world is facing today, it is important that we are all aware of the large sustainability potential of plastics and chemistry. This was a unique opportunity to engage in a dialogue with the leaders of tomorrow. I was profoundly impressed and inspired by the overall level of maturity and debating skills the young debaters presented today. “

The three young debaters will now join other selected winners at the European final in Budapest on 2 October. The final debate in this cycle will be organised and held in the Netherlands on 22 September.

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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