

## Press Release

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### Contacts

PlasticsEurope AISBL  
c/o Agence ACCOM'S  
Fanny Milcent-Baudoin  
Phone: +33 (0)1 76 21 54 06

### EPCA

Nathalie Debuyst  
Communication and Education Manager  
Phone: +32 (0)2 741 86 66  
[nathalie.debuyst@epca.eu](mailto:nathalie.debuyst@epca.eu)

## 78 students debate on the role of sciences and sustainability French National Final of 2016 European Youth Debating Competition – 1' to debate a future with or without plastics

**At the French edition of the 2016 European Youth Debating Competition, an initiative by the European Petrochemical Association (EPCA) and PlasticsEurope, nearly 80 students' youngsters from across France debated the overarching theme "50 years of chemical industry. What's next?". Three students were selected to represent France at the Grand Final to be held in Budapest from 1-4 October, during the 50th EPCA Anniversary Annual Meeting.**

On Thursday, 15 September, 78 students aged 15-19 years, participated in the French final of the European Youth Debating Competition held at the "Espace Hamelin" in Paris. They debated a wide range of issues, from the future of the petrochemical and plastics industry to resource efficiency, protecting the environment and reducing climate change, while ensuring technical progress and innovation.

Michel Loubry, West Region Director for PlasticsEurope kicked off the debate as pro speaker in favour of plastics, followed by the con speaker Isabelle Poitou, Head of "Mer Terre" developing her arguments against. The jury, evaluating the debating skills of the young debaters, was made up of Caroline Ciuciu (EPCA), Gilles Mignard (SABIC), Rovani Sigamoney (Unesco), Christophe Journet (MPE Media) and Alain Giocosa (SFIP).

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### 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](http://www.plasticseurope.org), [www.plasticsconverters.eu](http://www.plasticsconverters.eu), [www.euromap.org](http://www.euromap.org).*

Held in English, each of the 78 students debated the pros and cons of plastics' contribution to everyday life. Taking the microphone for a minute each, they developed their arguments for or against the materials, the role of petrochemicals and their impact on the environment. Students overall recognised the important contribution of the plastic and petrochemical industries to modern day life, but also pointed out the concerns. Many agreed that proper waste management was critical and that consumer behaviour had to change.

At the end of the day, the jury faced an arduous task in choosing winners, as the overall level of debate was excellent. They finally named three winners: Gaïa Jeannot (Lycée international des Pontonniers de Strasbourg), as well as Alessandro Colossio and Eric Bertschy (both from the International School of Paris (ISP)).

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](http://www.eydc.eu)) targeting young students aged 16 to 19, throughout nine EU countries.

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