



Council of the  
European Union

Brussels, 20 June 2024  
(OR. en)

11359/24

LIMITE

ENV 675  
CLIMA 254  
ONU 80  
RELEX 864

#### NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
Subject:	Bridge to Busan: Declaration on Primary Plastic Polymers - Request by the Commission for authorisation to sign a non-binding instrument (NBI)

#### DOCUMENT PARTIALLY ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC (23.07.2024)

1. Delegations will find attached a note from the Commission requesting authorisation to sign the Bridge to Busan Declaration on behalf of the European Union. The Bridge to Busan Declaration was presented during the 4<sup>th</sup> session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC-4), which took place in Ottawa, Canada (23-29 April 2024) and it has already been signed by 34 countries, including by ten EU Member States<sup>1</sup>. The Bridge to Busan Declaration calls on members to commit to achieve sustainable levels of production of primary plastic polymers, ensure transparency in their production and agree to a global objective regarding the sustainable production of primary plastic polymers.

<sup>1</sup> Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Ireland, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Slovenia, Sweden.

2. The Bridge to Busan Declaration is considered to be a non-binding instrument that contains political commitments, in accordance with the Arrangements for non-binding instruments agreed by the Council, the Commission and the EEAS in December 2017<sup>2</sup>.
  3. The Commission's note was transmitted to the Chair of the WPIEI (Global) on 12 June 2024 and it initiates the second step of the NBI procedure foreseen in the Arrangements. It is to be recalled that the Commission also submitted a note to initiate the first step of the NBI procedure<sup>3</sup>, but given the specific circumstances of the Bridge to Busan Declaration, notably that the text of the declaration has not been opened for negotiations, there was a common understanding to exceptionally proceed with the second step only.
  4. Once examined at working party level, the authorisation for the Commission to sign the Bridge to Busan Declaration on behalf of the EU will be submitted, as an I/A Item, to Coreper and Council for approval.
- 

---

<sup>2</sup> 15367/17.

<sup>3</sup> 9615/24.



EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
Directorate-General for the Environment  
Green Diplomacy and Multilateralism  
Global Environmental Cooperation and Multilateralism

Brussels, 12 June 2024

**NOTE FOR THE ATTENTION OF THE COUNCIL WORKING PARTY ON  
INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENT ISSUES**

**SUBJECT:** Commission's decision to sign, on behalf of the EU, the "Bridge to Busan: Declaration on Primary Plastic Polymers" – request for endorsement by the Council

**CONTACT POINTS:** DG Environment, Unit F.3 – Global Environmental Cooperation and Multilateralism



**REMARKS:**

The United Nations Environment Assembly adopted at its fifth session (UNEA-5) resolution 5/14 "End Plastic Pollution: Towards an international legally binding instrument". The resolution established an intergovernmental negotiating committee to develop a legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment (INC). The committee is mandated to conclude its work by the end of 2024.

In view of the last scheduled session of the INC, which will take place in Busan in the Republic of Korea from 25 November to 1 December 2024, some members of the INC have initiated a declaration on primary plastic polymers. The overall objective is to mobilize support and commitment to reduce primary plastic polymer production in the context of the new instrument, and to send a political message to the last meeting of the INC. The signatories call on members to achieve sustainable levels of production, ensure

transparency and to agree to a global objective regarding the sustainable production of primary plastic polymers.

The issue of primary plastic polymer production is a sensitive part of the negotiation process. Some countries, notably the major oil producers, advocate for a scope that excludes primary plastic polymer production, while others point to the fact that production is a critical point to address in the treaty because of the over-supply of primary plastic polymers as well as the link between production and pollution levels.

The annexed declaration has been signed by 34 countries, including some EU Member States (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Portugal, France, Slovenia, Sweden, Ireland, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands) In addition, more than 40 stakeholders have signed.

**Proposed action:**

The declaration is considered to be a non-binding instrument that contains political commitments in accordance with the 'Arrangement for Non-Binding Instruments'<sup>1</sup>, and it is compatible with the existing EU positions for the new international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution. It calls for members of the INC to achieve sustainable levels of production of primary plastic polymers and that production matches ambitions for a circular economy. It also calls for transparency in the production stage. Regarding a global objective on sustainable production of primary plastic polymers, it is the view of the Commission that the declaration presents potential options for measures.

On that basis, the Commission proposes to sign the declaration on behalf of the EU. The Commission is therefore seeking Council's endorsement for that purpose. The action will have no legal impact on the negotiations, existing policies, or other legal implications, as it is considered a non-legally binding instrument with purely policy goals.

*Annex: Bridge to Busan: Declaration on Primary Plastic Polymers*

\* \* \*

<sup>1</sup> See the Commission's letter of 29<sup>th</sup> April informing the Council of the Commission services to enter discussions on joining the Declaration and the follow up to the WIPEI (Global) of 5<sup>th</sup> June, WK 8375/2024 INIT.

## **Bridge to Busan:**

### **Declaration on Primary Plastic Polymers**

We, the undersigned members of the intergovernmental negotiating committee (INC) and those concerned about the many harms of plastic pollution to human health and the environment, are committed to ending plastic pollution worldwide.

We reaffirm the mandate of United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) Resolution 5/14 to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment, based on a comprehensive approach that addresses the full lifecycle of plastics.

We emphasize that the full lifecycle of plastics includes the production of primary plastic polymers.

Studies show that the world cannot achieve its goals of ending plastic pollution and limiting global average temperature rise to less than 1.5° Celsius if the unsustainable production of primary plastic polymers is not addressed.

Left unaddressed, production of primary plastic polymers is projected to increase exponentially through 2050 and could overwhelm national waste management and recycling programs, even after significant improvements supported by the new instrument.

Addressing the unsustainable production of primary plastic polymers is not only essential to ending plastic pollution worldwide; it also represents one of the most efficient and cost-effective approaches to managing the plastic pollution problem.

Moreover, a balancing of efforts across the full lifecycle of plastics—from production and design through waste management and remediation—is necessary to equitably distribute the overall burden of efforts shared among countries, each of which must contribute to achieving the collective goals of the new instrument.

For these reasons, we call on members to:

COMMIT to achieve sustainable levels of production of primary plastic polymers. This includes ensuring production matches ambitions for a circular economy for plastics, while aligning with the Paris Agreement goal of limiting warming to 1.5°C.

ENSURE transparency in the production of primary plastic polymers. This includes reporting of data on the production of primary plastic polymers to close information gaps, assess progress and inform priorities.

AGREE to a global objective regarding the sustainable production of primary plastic polymers. This may include production freezes at specified levels, production reductions against agreed baselines, or other agreed constraints to prevent the unsustainable production of primary plastic polymers.

---