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PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release – 28 May 2018

First Steps Taken on Road to Urban Bioeconomy

Composting and Anaerobic Digestion Now Poised to Play Pivotal Role

Europe has taken an important first step in its ambition to achieve a circular economy by agreeing new rules for separate bio-waste collection and recycling. This is a significant milestone for the composting and anaerobic digestion sectors, which are now poised to play a pivotal role in transforming bio-wastes into valuable resources such as compost, renewable energy and bio-based products. As only about one-third of Europe's bio-waste is currently recycled, this presents a momentous opportunity for the sector to invest in new infrastructure, create jobs and manufacture sustainable products.

At a workshop in Brussels, 28th May, more than 80 delegates heard about some of the barriers and solutions that are likely to be encountered along the way. Representatives of the European Commission, EURO CITIES, European Compost Network, Urban Agenda Partnership for Circular Economy, Municipal Waste Europe and the City of Oslo spoke about research, innovation and successful case studies for improving bio-resource management in urban areas.

Håkon Jentoft, City of Oslo, highlighted the potential within cities for improved utilisation of bioresources, noting: "Cities have identified both barriers and possible solutions for better management of these valuable resources. It is important to help cities through an improved legal framework, access to funding and knowledge to kick start this potential. This needs to be done in partnership with all stakeholders, including citizens, industry, farmers and national and EU authorities."



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European Compost Network’s Chair, Henrik Lystad, commented: “This is a fantastic opportunity for Europe’s bioresource industry. The new circular economy package means that even more bio-waste will now be collected separately and recycled into quality products, with the potential to create over 50 thousand jobs across Europe. This will benefit the economy, citizens and the environment.”

Vanya Veras, Municipal Waste Europe, noted: “Europe’s new waste legislation recognises the value of bio-waste as a source of valuable resources. This will open the door to investment in more separate collection and better management of bio-waste, resulting in building climate resilience and contributing towards the circular bioeconomy. To be successful, we must communicate across value chains and administrations to build recognition of the value of these bioresources. The importance of good governance at local level will be crucial.”

		
Henrik Lystad, Chair of the European Compost Network	Håkon Sandven Jentoft, City of Oslo, Chair of EUROCIITIES working group on waste and coordinator of the Urban Agenda Partnership on Circular Economy	Vanya Veras, Secretary General, Municipal Waste Europe

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Notes to editors:

1. The workshop was organised by the City of Oslo in collaboration with EUROCIITIES, European Compost Network, Municipal Waste Europe, and the EU Urban Agenda Partnership on Circular Economy and was held on the 28 May 2018 at Norway House, Brussels.
2. On the 22 May 2018 the European Council formally adopted the revised waste package agreed by the Parliament in April 2018. Article 22 of the revised Waste Framework Directive states that: “Member States shall ensure that, by 31 December 2023 ... bio-waste is either



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separated and recycled at source, or is collected separately and is not mixed with other types of waste.”

3. In 2012 the EU Commission published the EU Bioeconomy Strategy (COM(2012)60) which promotes the sustainable and integrated use of biological resources and waste streams for the production of food, feed, bioenergy and bio-based products. Based on the review of the 2012 EU Bioeconomy strategy in 2017, the Commission has published a roadmap to underline the importance of the bioeconomy in Europe at the beginning of 2018.
4. Bio-waste plays a key role in sustainable waste management. Bio-waste accounts for the largest fraction (40%) of municipal solid waste. Today only 30% of bio-waste across Europe is collected separately and recycled in a sustainable way by composting and anaerobic digestion.
There is potential for more than 60 million tonnes of bio-waste to be recycled annually, resulting in the creation of 52,000 new jobs.
5. For background information on bio-waste in the circular economy please find ECN’s fact sheet [here](#).

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