EUMEPS
Ensuring a Circular Economy

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Two main applications for Expanded Polystyrene
EPS – 98% Engineered Air
What is EUMEPS?

- **EU**ropean **M**anufacturers of **E**xpanded **P**oly**S**tyrene
- 23 National Association full voting members
- Associate Members covering raw materials, machinery and recycling
- Representing an industry of over 1000 SMEs, employing ca. 60,000 people, with a turnover of 5-6 billion Euros in Europe.
- ca. 1.8 million MT annual sales. 80% into construction and 20% into packaging applications.
- Expanded Polystyrene insulation is commonly found in most homes in Europe and in a broad range of packaging and protection applications.
Where is EUMEPS?
Circular Economy - Where have we come from?

- EPS is an easily recyclable plastic
- In 1992, the Asian, European and North American EPS industries formed INEPSA, to enhance global EPS recycling and environmental stewardship
- Almost 60% of all EPS packaging waste in Europe is recovered, of which ca. 21% is recycled in a profitable way
- The key challenge lies with collation and sorting waste streams
- The ability and level of recycling is application and country dependent.
- Two very different streams: Construction and Packaging
EPS Recycling has been a reality for years
Circular Economy – Where are we heading?

- Adopting the 2030 EU Commission target
- Making a Voluntary Pledge for 2025 as in Annex 3 of the Plastics Strategy
- Sharing best practices, developing new solutions at the local/regional level
- Working with our colleagues in PlasticsEurope and Styrenic Circular Solutions to find synergies and solutions
- Ensuring environmental solutions are financed and are cost-effective
- Allowing the benefits of EPS to be enjoyed by future generations
Best Practice Example: EPR scheme in Norway

• Norway has a voluntary EPS collection and recycling scheme in place since 1995 as part of the Grønt Punkt Norge (GPN) system.
• Both industry and municipalities participate in this collection system.
• GPN facilitates collaboration with several regional entrepreneurs and municipalities with collection at manned recycling stations.
• Financially self-supporting
Best Practice Example: Innovative collection in Belgium

- Recycling rates in Belgium are above the European average but the industry is always looking for ways to improve on this.
- To reduce logistics costs for collection, the industry is putting a new collection opportunity on trial which could potentially be implemented at 20,000 businesses.
- Tests with woven collection bags and a communication package for businesses have proved successful so that a pilot with 70 companies has been launched.
Best Practice Example: Recycling food grade EPS in Spain

- Fish boxes represent 50% of EPS packaging in Spain, which is similar to other European countries with a large fishing industry.

- There are opportunities to improve collection, pre-treatment and recycling of EPS fish boxes to produce a high value, food grade end product.

- A cross-industry pilot project, with investment of 1.3 million €, with EU LIFE funding, is running from 2017 -2019 to develop a solution to close the loop.
Best Practice Example:
PolyStyreneLoop – Managing legacy additives

- Major industry investment in innovative and entrepreneurial technology to recycle insulation foam waste and generate recycled raw material
- Supported by the EU Life program in partnership with the entire styrene value chain
- Recognised as a best practice in the EU Plastics Strategy and in the Basel Convention and CWP considerations
- Plant due to start operation in 2018
PolyStyreneLoop collection is starting:
Our Commitment

If we don’t recycle it, we will stop selling it.
…..but we need support

• Different plastics have different functions. You can’t simply substitute one for another
• Alternatives to plastics are not necessarily better for the environment
• Environmental impact assessment should drive the agenda
• We need a level regulatory and fiscal playing field
• Humans, not plastics, are the key problem
• Don’t settle for second best