

## Global EPS Sustainability Alliance (GESA) Delegation to Attend UN Environment Programme (UNEP) INC-4 Negotiations

on Plastic Pollution Treaty in Ottawa, Canada on April 23-29

**Summary:** *Members of the Global EPS Sustainability Alliance (GESA) will attend this week's United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) INC-4 session on the development of an international legally binding treaty on plastic pollution. The members will attend as accredited observers, holding consultative roles in the negotiations taking place in Ottawa, Canada.*

**Crofton, M.D. April 16, 2024** – Members of the [Global EPS Sustainability Alliance \(GESA\)](#), an organization brought together to represent the expanded polystyrene (EPS) industry on an international level, are attending the United Nations Environment Programme's (UNEP) Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on [Plastics Pollution's fourth session \(INC-4\)](#), taking place next week in Ottawa, Canada. The GESA coalition represents the EPS industry in North America, Europe, Asia, Africa and Australia. Member organizations the [European Manufacturers of EPS \(EUMEPS\)](#), the [EPS Industry Alliance \(EPS-IA\)](#) and [Expanded Polystyrene Australia \(EPSA\)](#) are accredited observers of the UNEP Plastics Pollution Treaty, holding consultative roles in the negotiations on its development.

**GESA spokespersons Betsy Bowers**, Executive Director of EPS-IA, **Chresten Heide-Anderson**, Project Manager at EPSbranchen – en del af Plastindustrien and Vice President of EUMEPS, and Becher Townsend, Executive Director of EPSA, have issued the following statement:

“While the proposed treaty presents a pivotal moment to tackle plastic pollution with fresh perspectives and innovative problem-solving strategies, we must also remain mindful of the practical challenges that lie ahead in implementation. It's imperative that we harness the expertise of both packaging science and environmental science to navigate these complexities and prevent unintended negative environmental consequences.

Central to our policy recommendations is support for Environmental Producer Responsibility (EPR), a well-established policy mechanism that has amply demonstrated its efficacy. Its implementation could be made even more effective through the support of globally coordinated oversight.

We also strongly support chemical transparency, including for potential alternative materials. The clear disclosure of chemical compositions is crucial for ensuring that global consumers can trust the safety of these materials. In the case of EPS, it has demonstrated its safety for use across a wide range of applications.

EPS packaging is essential in the global distribution of essential goods. We hope that the plastic pollution treaty incorporates novel solutions and proven policies.

Our delegation looks forward to attending the forthcoming negotiations, providing critical information, and supporting the treaty's development. We entrust the United Nations member states to engage in dynamic negotiations, prioritize these aspects of the treaty, and move us closer to a world free of plastic pollution.”



EPS maintains an essential role in key industries including packaging, construction, transportation, manufacturing, and automotive, among others. Applications such as packaging for the safe and effective transportation of food and vital medicines and vaccines, protective gear to prevent injury, refrigeration components, insulation for housing, and car seats are all made using EPS. The treaty could have a dramatic impact on many of these day-to-day products that many rely upon.

## **The Global EPS Sustainability Alliance Supports a Global Plastics Agreement that Creates a Circular Economy for All Plastics and Eliminates Plastic Pollution**

Despite common misperceptions, the EPS industry has maintained long-standing efforts which demonstrate the high recycling efficacy for EPS transport packaging, which continues to show consistent growth and strong market support. In November 2023, several leading resin providers [announced](#) their development of proprietary formulas to help fabricators incorporate at least 30% recycled content in the manufacture of many applications, following a collective EPS industry investment of \$185M.

GESA advocates for the following positions as part of its environmental policy recommendations:

- We support an ambitious plan to eliminate plastic pollution through an implementable agreement.
- We support the creation of a scientific advisory board to determine the best course of action to address potentially problematic plastics.
- We support chemical transparency for materials. Data from reports on EPS' chemical composition and emissions demonstrate that EPS is a safe material.
- We support the creation of independent national plans of action.
- We support flexibility to achieve circularity and oppose lists of banned or restricted polymers, ingredients, and products.
- We support the adoption of science-based tools including life cycle analysis (LCA).

GESA's recommended environmental policy, observer submissions and position papers can be read in full [here](#).

GESA advocates for the responsible use of EPS, as well as research-backed solutions and policies that will positively benefit the environment and the economy. For more information about GESA, visit [globaleps.org](http://globaleps.org).

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### **About the Global EPS Sustainability Alliance (GESA):**

The Global EPS Sustainability Alliance (GESA) is a collaboration between EPS manufacturers, extended producer responsibility PROs, recyclers, and others to advance the circular economy for expanded polystyrene (EPS) packaging in five continents, and works to support environmental policy solutions at local, regional and global levels. This collaborative effort brings together best practices in EPS resource management, sustainable manufacturing, life cycle impact reporting and worldwide recycling data to establish universal resources within the EPS supply chain

### **About EUMEPS:**

EUMEPS, the unified European voice of the Expanded Polystyrene (EPS) industry, is the premier advocate for EPS solutions. Representing every link of the EPS value chain, from large companies to SMEs, we are



committed to fulfilling European environmental objectives. Through our 23 national associations and numerous recycling initiatives, we strive to elevate the circularity of our industry.

As a contributor to making Europe climate-neutral and resource-efficient, we showcase EPS as a smart choice in packaging and insulation. Stand by us in building a more resilient and sustainable tomorrow. [www.eumeps.eu](http://www.eumeps.eu).

**About the UNEP-INC Plastic Treaty:**

In March 2022 at the UN Environment Assembly, a historic resolution was adopted to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution. The resolution requested the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) to convene an Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) to develop the instrument, which is to be based on a comprehensive approach that addresses the full life cycle of plastic, including its production, design, and disposal. The INC began its work during the second half of 2022, with the ambition to complete negotiations by the end of 2024. The fourth session (INC-4) is scheduled from 23 to 29 April 2024 at the Shaw Center in Ottawa, Canada.

