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The Fluoropolymers Product Group is looking ahead to an exciting year

LAUNCHING 2022 WITH THE KEY ROLE FLUOROPOLYMERS PLAY IN PROTECTING OUR WATER SUPPLIES

Dear Colleagues,

with invigorated spirit, the turn of a new year offers us the chance to look ahead to the upcoming opportunities and challenges we foresee. The first quarter of 2022 presents a unique window of opportunity for fluoropolymers manufacturers and users to engage with relevant policymakers.

We will continue to intensify our efforts to advocate both at the national and EU levels for the recognition of fluoropolymers as a stand-alone category, as well as to develop relevant and formative content.

In this first 2022 edition of the monthly newsletter, we tackle a very critical topic: the role of fluoropolymers in the water sector. From ensuring water quality, to helping to achieve the targets of the European Green

Deal, without fluoropolymers, the water sector would suffer significantly.

Please do get in touch if you would like to be featured as a case study in any upcoming newsletter editions. We believe that the voice of our industry stakeholders should be heard.

As ever, please also feel free to share this newsletter with your wider network and invite people to sign up by emailing me at nicolas.robin@plasticseurope.org. Thank you in advance!

Kind regards,

Nicolas Robin

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Regulatory updates

It is expected to be a busy year for stakeholders of fluoropolymers! As a reminder, there are a number of issues which the Fluoropolymers Product Group is engaged in:

- The REACH competent authorities of Denmark, Germany, Netherlands, Norway and Sweden have committed to submit in July, a group restriction proposal for all per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances. Recently the five countries were also joined by Belgium.
- The European Commission is drafting revisions to REACH and is expected to adopt its proposals by the end of 2022. The revision is likely to contain a

proposal for the registration of polymers under REACH.

- The Commission is also seeking to develop a criteria for what are essential (or non-essential) uses of chemicals by the end of the year. This newly established criteria could have an impact on how and whether the various uses of fluoropolymers are restricted or not in the future.

In each of these challenges FPG continues to advocate for a recognition of the fact that fluoropolymers are a unique family of polymers and a distinctly different group of PFAS. They have a unique set of properties have vital uses with diverse and important benefits to society. We continue to demonstrate that fluoropolymers should be considered as Polymers of Low Concern (PLC) and that they should be regulated separately from other PFAS.



INERT AND HIGHLY RESISTANT: HOW FLUOROPOLYMERS HELP MAINTAIN WATER QUALITY

Cleaner water thanks to fluoropolymers

Fluoropolymers are an essential component of Micro and Ultrafiltration water membranes, which are widely used to improve water quality in a wide range of

applications, like wastewater treatments, pre-treatment of seawater and surface water purification.

A commonly used fluoropolymer is polyvinylidene fluoride (PVDF), which, due to its high resistance, strength and elasticity, ensures that these membranes meet critical quality parameters for both chemical and oxidation resistance.

First developed in 1918 by the Nobel-prize winning chemist Richard Zsigmondy, water membranes have become one of the best available technologies to manage quality of the water. Their high strength, elasticity, and chemical resistance coupled with the fact that PVDF has unique properties that allow the material to be produced into highly porous structures makes it the number one material of choice for Micro- and Ultrafiltration membranes in water filtration.

Fluoropolymers are crucial to improve water quality at different stages of the water cycle. They are widely used in:

- wastewater treatment and wastewater reuse where membranes separate biomass/mixed liquor from the biologically cleaned water in so-called Membrane Bioreactors (MBR)
- pre-treatment of seawater and brackish water desalination by reverse osmosis
- purifying surface water from undesirable constituents, like pathogens, colour, suspended solids for drinking water and process water production.

If you would like to be featured in one of our Industry Spotlight pieces, please do reach out.



FLUOROPOLYMERS ESSENTIAL ROLE IN THE EU GREEN DEAL

Fluoropolymers continue to play a crucial role in helping to drive forward the advances in wastewater treatment technologies, which are essential to achieving the EU's Green Deal objectives.

Fluoropolymer Membrane Bioreactors (MBR) are often used in municipal wastewater treatment plants to effectively comply with the Urban Wastewater Directive (91/271/EEC), to which the protection of aquatic ecosystems, bathing water, and groundwater are closely related.

Membrane filtration also provides high-quality reclaimed water, helping cities to meet the EU's Water Reuse Regulation as well as other legislations fostering the recycling of municipal and/or industrial wastewater.

The potential role of treated wastewater reuse as an alternative source of water supply is now well acknowledged and embedded within international, European and national strategies. The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal on Water (SDG 6) specifically targets a substantial and global increase in recycling and safe reuse by 2030. Water reuse is a top priority in the Strategic Implementation Plan of the European Innovation Partnership on Water, while maximization of water reuse is a specific objective in the Communication "Blueprint to safeguard Europe's water resources".



FLUOROPOLYMERS ARE VITAL TO AVOID WATER SCARCITY

By 2030, over 30% of EU territory is projected to be impacted by water scarcity, as the EU demand for freshwater is expected to increase by 16%. In addition, the percentage of raw water to be treated before use will drastically increase as a side effect of climate change on the water cycle.

Fluoropolymer membranes act as a physical barrier to most of the constituents to be removed from raw water to produce drinking or process water. Membrane-based water treatments are proven to be simple, effective, and of low investment and operating cost. As such, fluoropolymer membranes can play a vital role in the fight against water scarcity by helping future-proof EU water systems against climate change.

Read more about the socio-economic impact of fluoropolymers for Europe in [our report](#).



We hope you enjoyed this edition of the newsletter.

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If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to the Fluoropolymers Product Group or find us on [LinkedIn](#).

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