

Media Release

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Passionate youngsters debate on the contribution of petrochemistry and plastics in the digital age

For the second year running, the European Youth Debating Competition (EYDC) - a joint project between The European Petrochemical Association (EPCA) and PlasticsEurope - has been launched. The Italian National Finals was organised with the support of the Regional School Office of Lombardy, territory of Milan, gathering 95 students in a successful and enjoyable debate. Three winners will have the chance to debate in the European Finals that will be held on October 1st in Berlin, during EPCA's 51st Annual Meeting, the largest gathering of the global chemical business community in Europe.

95 students between 16 and 19 years old from 8 schools of Milan and its surroundings, emotionally, but also critically debated the theme: "People, Planet, Profit in the Digital Age: With or without petrochemistry and plastics?". The participants were divided into fixed speakers with pro and con factions, and free speakers who have the possibility to argue from any position. Moreover, participants and members of the audience were encouraged to show how convinced they were of the speeches and arguments, by displaying green or red ballot cards, thereby ensuring an interactive and enjoyable debate. While the debate was taking place, the jury, comprising of industry members, journalists, lecturers and experts including from EPCA & PlasticsEurope, were responsible for selecting the final three winners, based on the analysis of their ability to express themselves and interact with each other.

Thus, taking these criteria into account, the three appointed winners are Lorenza Cecalupo and Federico Di Maggio of the School Bernocchi of Legnano, Nicolò Micallef of the School Carcano of Como. They now have the chance to display their public speaking skills with well informed, logical, and persuasive

arguments during the European Finals that will gather all awarded winners from the seven National Finals, on Sunday 1st of October in Berlin, during EPCA's 51st Annual Meeting, the largest gathering of the global chemical business community in Europe.

To begin, an opening speech was delivered by Mr. Marco Bussetti (head of the Office X – Regional School Office for Lombardy, territory of Milan), welcoming participants and expressing the importance of chemistry. "Chemistry - said Bussetti - plays a crucial role. Think about it, especially you who are in the last years of the superiors. The world of work is thirsty for prepared people - even women - in such delicate areas. "

Roberto Frassine of the Politecnico of Milano, in his pro-speech in favour of the discussed theme, underlined the role of petrochemistry and plastics, essentially making our digital age possible.

On the other hand, Giorgio Zampetti of Legambiente, responded with the con-speech, illustrating the side effects of our society's consumerism, and the need for a change in our behaviour to better re-use and recycle products.

Mr. Daniele Petrini, Managing Director of Sabic Italia and member of the jury: "*I very much enjoyed being a juror, listening to so many enthusiastic students debating with conviction. The students were very well prepared, thanks to them and their teachers. I hope to see the Italian students doing well at the European Finals.*"

EPCA Communication and Education Manager Nathalie Debuyst, member of the jury stated: "*this is my second time in Italy as member of the jury, and it was pleasure to attend. It confirms our belief that this competition is a valuable platform for youngsters to express themselves and develop the soft skills that will help them in their future careers, no matter their role.*"

EPCA and PlasticsEurope have joined forces to support STEM Education in Europe. In 2016, this programme was rejuvenated by EPCA and PlasticsEurope with a series of youth debates having taken place in several EU countries, culminating in Budapest with the European Finals in October 2016. These events offer students a platform to express themselves, improve their soft skills and boost their potential future careers as leaders of tomorrow on an international level.

The European Petrochemical Association (EPCA)

Based in Brussels, EPCA is the quality network in Europe for the global chemical business community consisting of chemical producers, their suppliers, customers and service providers. It operates for and through more than 700 member companies from 54 different countries. EPCA provides a platform to meet, exchange information and transfer learning, and serves as a think tank for its members and stakeholders. EPCA promotes STEM education, with a clear focus on gender and diversity inclusion. EPCA also highlight the multidisciplinary approach and the variety of challenging career paths that the chemical industry offers.

PlasticsEurope is one of the leading European trade associations with centres in Brussels, Frankfurt, London, Madrid, Milan and Paris. The association is networking with European and national plastics associations and has more than 100 member companies, producing over 90% of all polymers across the EU28 member states plus Norway, Switzerland and Turkey