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# The European Composites Industry Association (EuCIA) holds seminar on 'Composites & Sustainability'

Brussels: The Association of the European Composites Industry (EuCIA) held a conference on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> of January in Brussels to examine the increasing role that composites will play in creating a more sustainable Europe.

Members of the European Commission and the aerospace, automotive, shipbuilding, rail, construction sectors were in attendance at the conference. Participants demonstrated the increasing usage and benefits of using the materials to create a more sustainable economy for Europe.

Natalia Matting from the European Commission (DG Internal Market- DG Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs Unit Clean Technologies and Products) said: *"The idea is to go from a linear economy, where we take, make and dispose to a circular economy to a circular economy."*

The circular economy package adopted by the European Commission is a concrete and ambitious program constructed to improve Europe's global competitiveness, enable economic growth and to create new jobs. However, after reevaluating the proposal, which focused on mostly waste management and recycling targets it was withdrawn due to its limited scope.

Early in 2015, the European Commission took a wider look at the types of activities THE EU must address to benefit from a circular economy. The new economy package proposal has incorporated a broader range of activities such as reuse, repair, industrial processes such as Industrial symbiosis and new business models, such as the sharing economy. The new proposal hopes to preserve the value of European products, materials and resources in the economy for as long as possible while minimizing waste generation.

Key benefits of the Circular Economy Package:

- Maintaining the value of products, materials and resources in the economy for as long as possible while minimizing waste generation
- To boost Europe's economy and competitiveness with new business opportunities and innovative products and services.
- For economic, social and environmental gains

Ms. Matting also highlighted links with the Juncker priorities, protecting the environment and maintaining competitiveness go hand-in-hand with a sustainable future for Europe but how will Europe gauge the success of building with composites?

Measuring the impact of composite products on the environment remains fundamental.

[EuCIA](#) President, Roberto Frassine, updated attendees on the innovative [EcoCalculator](#) that allows members to measure the environmental impact of composite materials without the need for Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) know-how. The application creates an easily shareable EcoFactsheet for clients and stakeholders. Reports generated by the tool based on quality data will be compatible with the major analysis programs in the market. Mr. Frassine confirmed the release of the EcoCalculator for Q2 of 2016.

Composite materials have a long life. Ben Drogth ([Biinc](#)), pointed out that due to their long life-cycles there is a need for more sustainable [solutions](#) to the end-of-use for composite based products. Due to their long life cycles, composites often outlive the products they were used to create. Drogth further illustrated this point by showing how in the Netherlands reusable wind turbine blades were 'upcycled' to make playgrounds for children adding to the multiple uses for composite materials.

Composites materials, commonly used in various types of transportation including planes, trains ships & automobiles to reduce the weight of a vehicle for increased fuel efficiency. The [BMW i3](#) is the mass-produced, composite car on the road, but as composite pricing improves more cars are expected to adopt composite materials in their design.

Joachim Starke (BMW) the audience [BMW i8](#), which uses composite materials to boost fuel efficiency and to optimize the automobile's design, giving the car a unique look. The ease of use for composites and their ability to make components in any shape while adding fortification to structures makes them a good fit for the building sector. Demand for composites among European builders continues to rise.

Composite materials are shaping the future of the construction sector of Europe, making it possible to use the lightweight materials in any form, including round shapes. The use of composites is not limited to buildings and home component but also have many industrial applications.

Composites are expanding into new areas of Europe's economy adding sustainable solutions to much of Europe's building and transportations sectors. A [FiberCore Europe](#) representative showed how the company implemented the materials to create massive [lockdoors](#) in Holland. The gates measuring at 12.9 meters tall, and 6.2 meters wide, offering a sustainable solution for Tilburg's water-passageways because Fibre-reinforced plastic polymers (FRP) do not decay, the gates are expected to last over 100 years.

The long-term benefits of using composites are proven to add sustainable solutions for many of Europe's most productive sectors including transportation, electrical, construction, and infrastructure, industrial and energy. Once, exclusively known as 'space-age' materials, the light and durable components are slowly finding their way into the everyday lives of Europeans strengthening EU products and boosting EU competitiveness while protecting the environment.