



Written on 10 March 2026



5 minutes of reading



News

IFPEN

Plastics recycling

In a context shaped by the strengthening of public policies in support of the circular economy, the tightening of European regulatory requirements, and growing societal expectations regarding the reduction of plastic waste, IFPEN has published two position papers.

Advanced recycling, as a complement to mechanical recycling, is therefore an essential lever for treating plastic waste that is difficult or impossible to recycle mechanically. By enabling the removal of additives and impurities and reverting to purified polymers, it opens the way to higher value-added applications and true closed-loop circularity at the polymer level.

The large-scale deployment of these technologies nevertheless requires substantial industrial investment, and recycled feedstocks are structurally more expensive than fossil-based virgin materials. Their development can therefore only take place within a clear, coherent and stable European regulatory framework capable of securing industrial projects.

In this context, several structuring levers must be activated:

- Reinforce incentives for the use of recycled materials by extending incorporation requirements beyond packaging (automotive, construction, textiles), setting clear and progressive timetables, and ensuring effective controls in conjunction with dissuasive penalties.
- Define and harmonize end-of-waste status (EWS) at the European level, positioning it at the stage of material prepared for recycling, whether mechanical or advanced, in order to streamline flows and facilitate cross-border transfers.
- Promote circularity at the polymer level, rather than specifically at the level of objects or consumption channels, in order to scale up flows, reduce costs, and preserve the economic balance of each value chain.
- Adapt the organization of extended producer responsibility (EPR) sectors, distinguishing more clearly between collection and sorting challenges (related to usages) and recycling and material recovery challenges (related to polymers), and promoting a more cross-cutting approach at the European level.
- Establish a robust accounting system for recycled material (mass balance) that is consistent with European regulations (SUPD2, PPWR3), promoting plastic-to-plastic recycling, and avoiding distortion effects between sectors.
- Strictly regulate the term “recycled material” and imports through certification, traceability, and control systems that guarantee quality equivalent to European standards.

Finally, the development of plastics recycling must be embedded in a territorial approach to the circular economy, prioritising the valorisation within Europe of available waste streams and supporting innovation in tools for the characterisation and control of recycled materials.

YOU MAY ALSO BE INTERESTED IN

[What regulatory framework for a rational, effective and durable plastic recycling sector ?](#)

[La lettre IFPEN #15 – Recyclage des plastiques- Novembre 2025](#)

[La synthèse et le replay disponibles : Table ronde "Recyclage des plastiques : quelles voies d'avenir ?"](#)

IFPEN Position Paper on Plastics Recycling: Proposals to contribute to the Circular Economy Act
10 March 2026

Link to the web page :