

Press Release

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First socio-economic analysis of the fluoropolymers industry

More with Less: The role of Fluoropolymers in EU's

Key Industry Sectors

Each Euro spent on fluoropolymers generates significant environmental, health and safety benefits across a diverse range of applications. Fluoropolymers are special plastics used in strategic industry sectors such as aerospace, automotive, electronics and medical applications. Their unique properties enable innovations in key industry sectors as they allow solutions to complex industrial processes. These are the conclusions of the first “[Socio-economic Analysis of the European Fluoropolymer Industry](#)” study presented at a workshop organised by Euractiv and supported by PlasticsEurope on 21 March in Brussels, Belgium.

“Many modern processes and products depend on the unique characteristics of fluoropolymers as they are virtually chemically inert, non-wetting, non-stick, and highly resistant to temperature, fire and weather”, explained Heinz Christmann, representative of the Fluoropolymer Group at PlasticsEurope. “These unique properties significantly contribute to the innovative strength of European industrial companies and the competitive capability of their products”, he said.

Fluoropolymers save more than 20 billion Euros per year

Although the annual consumption of fluoropolymers is very low in comparison with other plastics, they save at least 20 billion Euros every year, according to the latest study conducted by the British consultancy Amec Foster Wheeler Environment & Infrastructure UK.

Fluoropolymers provide health, safety, environmental and energy saving benefits. In combined heat and power plants, for instance, they contribute up to 8 billion Euros in energy savings, which also means a reduction of CO₂ emissions worth 0.5 billion Euros or 3 billion Euros considering the societal costs of CO₂ emission. In the transport industry, fluoropolymers enable fuel savings of 40 million Euros annually and, in the electronics industry, 10 billion benefits per year in Europe. These are just few examples of the conclusions extracted from the study.

Safety and Environmental Benefits

The study also highlights the safety and environmental benefits of fluoropolymers. In the automotive industry, for example, gaskets, hoses and tank linings made from fluoropolymers prevent the evaporation of petrol and diesel, thus contributing to lower fuel consumption and the reduction of CO₂ emissions. Modern legal requirements in road transport emission standards, such as “Euro 6” could not have been achieved without these materials. In chemical plants and power stations, a variety of components have to be made from fluoropolymers to protect critical equipment and enable secured operation of sensitive industrial processes, which in turn ensures a safe and healthy environment for workers and local communities.

Editors' note

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

The European plastics industry makes a significant contribution to the welfare in Europe by enabling innovation, creating quality of life to citizens and facilitating resource efficiency and climate protection. More than 1.5 million people are working in approximately 60,000 companies (mainly small and medium sized companies in the converting sector) to create a turnover above 340 bn EUR per year. The plastics industry includes polymer producers - represented by PlasticsEurope, converters - represented by EuPC and machine manufacturers - represented by EUROMAP.

For further info see the web links: www.plasticseurope.org, www.plasticsconverters.eu, www.euromap.org.

Three times higher R&D investments than the average

“The European fluoropolymer manufacturers invest 5.5 percent of the turnover in research and development, which is three times the average of European companies,” said Mr Christmann. “Fluoropolymers enable companies to be competitive in the global market and therefore, contribute to the re-industrialization of Europe.” he explained.

In the medical sector, for instance, fluoropolymers facilitate surgical procedures, helping to shorten their duration and the risk to the patient. Looking at 36 different kinds of medical procedures, at least 20 million take place in the EU each year. A reduction of just one minute per operation across the EU not only contribute to reduce the risk to patients, but also save at least 300 million Euros annually.

Last year, the European Commission presented the Industrial Policy Strategy to revitalize Europe’s industry sectors. In this context, the Fluoropolymer sector group at PlasticsEurope has presented this first study that shows how fluoropolymers are profoundly interconnected with a large number of key industries bringing environmental, health and safety benefits while boosting innovation in Europe.

For more information on the study, please click [here](#).

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