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PRESS RELEASE

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RECYCLING PLASTIC, ONE OF THE CHALLENGES OF THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY

SUEZ ENVIRONNEMENT CONFIRMS ITS LEAD ON THE PLASTIC RECOVERY MARKET

Given that 25 million tonnes of plastic waste are produced in Europe every year, of which only 25% are recycled, regulations are constantly changing and industrial companies' expectations are increasing, the plastic recycling market is growing rapidly. **Christophe Cros, Executive Vice-President in charge of SUEZ ENVIRONNEMENT's Waste Europe business, set out these challenges at a press meeting dedicated to plastic recycling.**

To deal with the environmental challenges posed by the rise in the global population and the increasing scarcity of resources, turning waste into resources is essential, and now represents the very essence of the circular economy.

The legislation on waste recycling in France and in Europe is constantly changing. The Grenelle Environmental Round Table Laws I and II, the Brussels Circular Economy Package, and the draft law on the transition to a low-carbon economy confirm the waste recovery strategy that the Group introduced several years ago.

Although plastic is completely recyclable, only a small percentage of plastic waste is currently recovered in France¹. 70% of municipal waste must be recycled and prepared for re-use by 2030, along with 80% of packaging waste and 60% of plastic packaging, at a time when the amount of plastic produced has increased 150 fold in 50 years. Accordingly, the recovery market is set to experience strong growth in France and Europe, where 25 million tonnes of plastic waste are generated every year. This output is growing significantly due to an ongoing increase in demand, especially in the packaging sector.

This is why SUEZ ENVIRONNEMENT is making the circular economy the key point of its strategy, and is offering innovative solutions for recovering plastic via its SITA subsidiary, thanks to its nine specialised plants in Europe, which treat over 400,000 tonnes of plastic waste and recover 135,000 tonnes of new plastic resources every year.

¹ either in the form of recycled plastic waste or energy (electricity or heat).

✓ **Recycling plastic: an opportunity for industrial companies**

SUEZ ENVIRONNEMENT has introduced partnerships that go to the heart of its plants in order to meet industrial companies' expectations. The aim is to improve the quality of the recycled raw materials on an ongoing basis. Industrial companies are becoming aware that the "battle" for raw materials is a battle for competitiveness: producing secondary raw materials has become a genuine industrial challenge, in order to deal with the increasing scarcity of resources and with the rise in the price of raw materials.

Every plastic waste item poses a different recycling problem, including food waste and its packaging, industrial waste, agricultural waste, plastic bags, etc. Nowadays, recycled plastic can be used by industrial companies; the waste is transformed on-site into products that can be used directly (granules and powders), using grinding, pulverising and granulation techniques. The granules and powders are packaged and redirected towards the industrial sectors that will give them a second life. The trend towards using recycled raw materials is becoming more widespread: it is estimated that 66.5 million tonnes of plastic will be offered on the European market by 2020.

The use of recycled plastic is therefore an economic driver for industrial customers, which enables them to improve their energy-efficiency and environmental performance: the use of recycled plastic reduces energy consumption by between 80 and 90% compared with producing virgin plastic.

✓ **Through innovation, SUEZ ENVIRONNEMENT is improving its plastic recycling techniques, and therefore its recovery ratio**

SUEZ ENVIRONNEMENT has a strong development outlook, and intends to double its production of recycled plastic within the next five years. The Group will open an R&D laboratory dedicated to plastic and its recovery in the very near future. This "Plast'Lab" will enable plastics to be analysed, tested and classified, and new ranges of plastic resources for industrial companies to be produced, thereby anticipating future requirements.

Technical innovation naturally plays an important role in the development of this sector. SUEZ ENVIRONNEMENT invested in this area very early, as illustrated by its partnership with Cynar, the Irish start-up that specialises in new waste conversion technologies. In this case, the aim is to convert end-of-life plastic into diesel fuel (SITA UK), a world first. It is also illustrated by the development of specialised units, for example in Bayonne, where plastic bottles are turned into new materials used to make food trays and new bottles, or in Limay (Yvelines), where the facility enables 40,000 tonnes of bottles, which can be directly re-used in the form of granules, to be recycled every year.



Plastic bottles
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Recycled plastic
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Plastic granules
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SUEZ ENVIRONNEMENT's Plast'Lab
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ABOUT SUEZ ENVIRONNEMENT

Natural resources are not infinite. Every day, SUEZ ENVIRONNEMENT (Paris: SEV, Brussels: SEVB) and its subsidiaries take up the challenge of protecting resources by providing innovative solutions to millions of people and to the industrial sector. SUEZ ENVIRONNEMENT supplies drinking water to 96.6 million people, provides wastewater treatment services for 66.3 million people, and collects the waste produced by 50 million people. SUEZ Environnement has 79,550 employees and is a world leader exclusively dedicated to water management and distribution services, with a presence on five continents. SUEZ ENVIRONNEMENT generated total revenues of EUR 15.1 billion in 2012.

SITA, a SUEZ ENVIRONNEMENT subsidiary

SITA a SUEZ ENVIRONNEMENT subsidiary, is the French market leader in the waste management and recycling solutions sector, and is an expert on the entire waste cycle. SITA has 20,000 employees and generated revenues of €3.6 billion in France in 2013, providing services to 80,000 corporate and local authority customers.