

**PRESS RELEASE****Global mechanical recycling expected to grow to 77 million tonnes by 2030 despite Covid-19 slowdown 2020-2022**

The plastics mechanical recycling industry has never been under the spotlight to such an extent as it is today. Sustainability is ever more relevant across all societies and geographies, as a result plastics waste is at the forefront of many regional and national policy debates in the drive towards a more circular global economy. Accordingly, the issue of waste is on the policy agenda of national governments around the globe, with new policies and legislation bringing new targets for the recycling of plastics.

The biggest paradigm shift the industry has ever seen, came when in March 2017, China implemented its National Sword Policy aiming to crack down on imports of contaminated foreign waste. Where once China imported over 7 million tonnes of plastic waste, imports reduced to less than a fifth of these volumes. This policy has proven to have a sustained impact on the global plastics recycling industry. As nations grappled with the challenge of finding alternative export markets for their waste, new opportunities arose for countries willing to accept the waste import volumes China used to service. South East Asia subsequently became the new growth hub for plastics recycling, with new recyclate production capacity springing up. However, as quickly as it came, it appears to be leaving, as South East Asian countries introduce their own bans on waste imports, cutting off the supply of feedstock for recyclers.

As the recycling industry restructures itself and settles down following the Chinese National Sword Policy, it is clear that the reliance of countries on being able to export their waste, along with recyclers dependence on imports for feedstock, cannot be guaranteed. The only truly sustainable solution is for domestic waste collection and recycling infrastructure to be adequate to deal with the domestic demand, creating national self-sufficiency.

Over 36 million tonnes of recyclate was produced globally in 2019. Although PET has the highest capture rate of waste, PE makes up the largest volumes of recyclate production. All regions (other than South East Asia) are expected to see an increase in recycling capacity by 2030, contributing to global capacity of over 77 million tonnes by 2030.

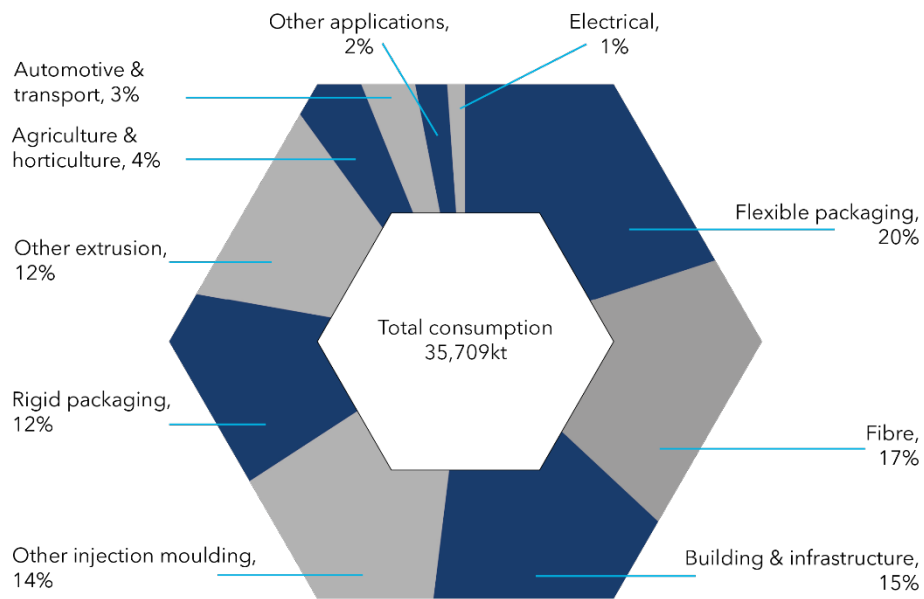
AMI sees within the 2030 timeframe of its report, additional absorption of recyclate volumes into applications that to date absorb negligible levels, particularly in Western Europe. Currently the largest global output for recyclate is flexible packaging, accounting for 20% in 2019. Europe is leading the way in legislation

both with regards to recycling targets and a drive to increase recyclate usage. Other regions in the world lag behind and to date, have not had the regulation to accelerate the industry.

The coronavirus pandemic has had a significant impact on both the volume of waste being collected for recycling as well as simultaneously reducing the demand for recyclate as factories close or reduce production. The forecasted long-lasting effect of this varies by region with some bouncing back quickly and others taking longer to re-establish pre-crisis levels.



## End use applications for global recyclate 2019



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Following on from AMI’s highly successful report *Plastic Recycling in Europe (2018)*, AMI’s brand new study *The Global Mechanical Recycling Industry* quantifies the global market for mechanical recycling, analysing the supply and demand balance, along with an evaluation of current production by region. A detailed review of the end use applications for recyclate has been given, with an examination of potential future absorption.

Impact of the coronavirus pandemic is explicitly incorporated into both the short term and long-term forecasts contained within the study. A working methodology and framework to consider specific polymer

and end use markets is provided and explained to provide insight in relation to the comprehensive data series contained within the study.

The study, [The Global Mechanical Plastics Recycling Industry 2020 – Capacities, Capabilities and Future Trends](#) is relevant to all those involved in the plastics industry value chain, from resin producer through to brand owners/end users of plastic products. The report delivers a comprehensive quantitative assessment of the current industry situation and forecasts where this critical aspect of the global plastics industry will go in the future.

#### **FURTHER INFORMATION:**

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In addition to market intelligence, AMI organises annual conferences and expos including:

[Plastics Recycling Technology Europe - 2020](#) (16-17 September 2020)

[Plastics Recycling World Expo](#) (7-8 October 2020)

[Plastics Regulations Europe - 2020](#) (2-4 November 2020)

[Chemical Recycling Europe - 2020](#) ( 3 - 4 November 2020)

[Plastics Recycling World Expo](#) (4-5 November 2020)

[Plastic: Design for Sustainability Europe - 2020](#) (17-18 November 2020)

[Chemical Recycling US - 2021](#) (4-5 March 2021)