

## Petrochemical & Chemical Companies Are Isolated in Attempts to Derail UN Global Plastics Treaty

Analysis finds that most opposition to the Treaty comes from the chemical and petrochemical sectors, but this is unrepresentative of corporate engagement with the Treaty overall

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*New InfluenceMap analysis* of corporate engagement on the UN Global Plastics Treaty (the Treaty) reveals intense oppositional advocacy from petrochemical and chemical companies and their industry associations. These sectors' effective and strategic opposition to progressive science-based policy mirrors the way in which the fossil fuel sector has exerted its influence over climate policy in general. It puts at risk the scope and ambition of the Treaty, which is due to be finalized in Korea next week and hopes to tackle the more than **400 million tonnes** of plastic produced each year, primarily with petrochemical inputs.

InfluenceMap examined 311 incidents of corporate engagement (across a range of channels including consultation responses, media interventions, company statements, and social media) on the UN Global Plastics Treaty since March 2022 and found that 93% of unsupportive statements made by companies and industry associations came from the chemical and petrochemical sectors.

However, this negative engagement on plastics regulation is not representative of the corporate sector as a whole. This research finds that messaging from the chemical and petrochemical sectors makes up less than 20% of public corporate engagement on the Treaty to date. Simultaneously, the consumer goods and retail sectors have strongly supported an ambitious science-aligned UN Global Plastics Treaty, forming a coalition that has promoted upstream solutions such as the elimination of problematic plastic materials and chemicals of concern, better product design, and the scaling of reuse and refill systems.

Extensive evidence compiled by InfluenceMap shows how the chemical and petrochemical sectors have consistently advocated for a limited scope to the treaty, one which would prioritize 'downstream measures,' such as recycling, over measures that would reduce plastic production and the use of harmful plastics. They also repeatedly attempted to frame plastics as environmentally friendly and essential for the energy transition. These arguments, as well as the prioritization of recycling over reducing production and scaling-up reuse systems, are misaligned with IPCC guidance on circular economy policy. These positions are consistent with advocacy that InfluenceMap has **observed** from this sector on other regional and national circular economy policies that aim to align economies with science-led circular principles.

Notably, there are several examples of actors in this sector explicitly calling on governments to abandon proposals to restrict virgin plastics production and the phase out of hard-to-recycle plastics. For example, **PlasticsEurope, the ACC, the AFPM, Dow, ExxonMobil, Chevron Phillips, and BASF** have all been found to have directly engaged with EU and US officials (as well as the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee Executive Secretariat during the period 2023-24) to advocate against the inclusion of measures to limit primary plastic polymers production and address harmful chemicals in the Treaty.

InfluenceMap also found that ten companies—**BASF, Chevron-Phillips, Covestro, Dow Inc, ExxonMobil, LyondellBasell, SABIC, Shell, Sinopec, and TotalEnergies**—are members of the **Alliance to End Plastic Waste**, an organization that promotes a vision "to end plastic waste entering the environment and to create circular systems that keep materials and products in use for as long as possible." However, in seeming contradiction to this stated aim, the Alliance to End Plastic Waste did not appear to support an ambitious UN Global Plastics Treaty in 2022-24, and many of its members continued to advocate negatively on the Treaty as well as on national-level circular economy policy—as outlined above. This advocacy calls into question companies' commitment to the stated objective of the alliance and its support for the creation of a circular economy for plastics.

Ines Urman, Senior Analyst at InfluenceMap, said:

*“The intense advocacy by the chemical and petrochemical sector on the UN Global Plastics Treaty directly threatens the scope of the Treaty as well as its provisions on plastic production caps and bans on harmful chemicals—all of which are still up for discussion in the final negotiation in Korea this November. While their advocacy makes up a small part of the overall engagement on this treaty, the fossil fuel value chain has been incredibly successful at shaping discussions and casting doubt on science-backed policy. This presents a clear opportunity for positive industries engaged in this process to call out the misinformation and lack of ambition and to drive science-aligned policy through on this occasion.”*

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