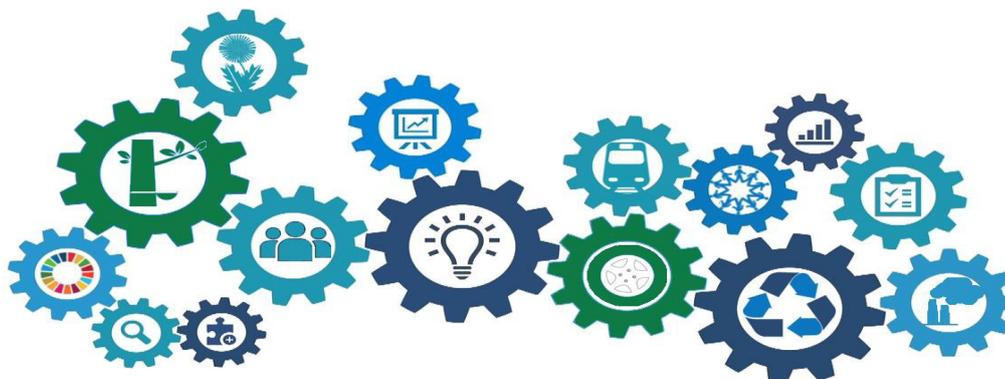




BIO-based, Sustainable, Critical: Natural Rubber and its future - "Jointly Organised Event by IRSG and ETRMA – Raw Materials Week , Brussels



**Hotel Le Plaza, Bld Adolphe Max 118-126, 1000 Bruxelles, Belgium
15th November 2018 15h00 -17h00**

This session organised by the European Tyre and Rubber Manufacturers' Association in partnership with the International Rubber Study Group (IRSG) will bring together European and International stakeholders to look at the forthcoming challenges and the needs of the natural rubber value chain.

The following elements will be explored during this two-hour session:

- **Introduction by the European Commission:** how responsible and sustainable sourcing of natural rubber can support the implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

- **Criticality of Natural Rubber:** The competitiveness and growth of the European industry are dependent from the availability of essential raw materials. For the mobility and health and child care sectors, natural rubber is key and critical to their very survival. With the production of Natural Rubber being concentrated in South East Asia, the EU and its industry need to challenge themselves to find mitigating measures and solutions to lessen such dependency.

ETRMA will take the floor to present the role of natural rubber for rubber and tyre industry and describe the challenges that are ahead, including good practices concerning circular economy.

- **Transparency on the natural rubber market:** The upstream natural rubber sector is dominated by smallholders, about 90% of holding units and 85% of the world production are from smallholders. Reliability and completeness of data is a pre-requisite to assess and define the sustainability of the natural rubber economy. Without reliable information the decision making related to the sustainability area is at risk. Inconsistent data can lead decision makers to misread the true supply and demand trends, prompting them to make ill-informed decisions that can negatively impact the rubber economy.

The International Rubber Study Group will take the floor to present its work towards transparency of the natural rubber market. The IRSG will particularly focus on how new technologies could help to collect, store, maintain, upgrade,

analyse and disseminate reliable information on the production of natural rubber in the main producing countries in South East Asia.

- **Sustainability in the natural rubber supply chain:** the Tyre Industry Project, under the auspices of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development, is looking at improving the supply chain respect for human rights, prevent land-grabbing, protect biodiversity and water resources, improve yields, and increase supply chain transparency and traceability.

The Global Platform for Sustainable Natural Rubber (GPSNR), a multi-stakeholder initiative for the sustainable sourcing and manufacturing of natural rubber, will speak of its initiatives to create a credible Sustainable Natural Rubber Platform. Particular focus will be given to pragmatic and operational goals for the sustainability of natural rubber and that fosters a unified value chain approach.

- **Alternative sourcing of natural rubber:** recent technological developments have brought agronomic improvements for the production of natural rubber, including higher yield and better quality and consistency. Furthermore, conscious of the potential fragility of supply, opportunities may arise for farmers in Europe and North America to provide alternatives to natural rubber from Hevea, especially through the cultivation of guayule and dandelion.

DRIVE4EU, an EU-funded project to demonstrate the technical and economic feasibility of the use of Rubber dandelion, will speak about the challenges involved in the creation of a new agro-industrial "chain" in Europe (growing, processing, guayule seed production, training of farmers, marketing, distribution, ...) involving multiple stakeholders (farmers, agronomic institutes, industrial users of NR, governments, ...) and the optimization of the economic balance of the chain.

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