

## **PVC sector is hitting EU recycling targets and going even further**

Written by Brigitte Dero on 9 October 2018 in Thought Leader  
Thought Leader

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Plastics and waste management are increasingly in the public eye, and we in the PVC sector understand why.

We are well aware of our responsibilities and our goal is to ensure that when PVC products reach the end of their lifespan, they are collected and recycled. We want to be part of the solution.

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For nearly two decades my organisation, VinylPlus®, has helped the PVC sector to improve its sustainability performance and invest in effective recycling. We apply this approach to our broad range of long-life applications from window frames, pipes and flooring to sport equipment, furniture and medical devices.

Our activities reflect the MEP's support for the European Commission's Plastics Strategy. That vote highlighted the key challenge facing the plastics industry: to manage plastics in a sustainable way across the whole value chain.

This means changing the way in which plastics are produced and used and subsequently achieving an outcome that is beneficial not only for the economy, but also for the environment and public health.

"Our commitment goes even further. We encourage investment in the recycling sector and collection systems, so we can do more to close the loop. We promote pioneering innovation in the use, production and re-use of PVC, including RecoMed, an award-winning scheme to recycle selected PVC medical devices"

This is exactly what VinylPlus is about. We have already recycled 4.2 million tonnes of PVC since 2000, and our recycling has risen steadily over the years.

Our target is to recycle 800,000 tonnes a year by 2020, which would represent about 31 percent of the total amount of PVC waste created in Europe in 2016.

We are already committed to recycling at least 900,000 tonnes of PVC a year into new products by 2025, and at least one million tonnes per year by 2030.

This recycling effort is not just about end-of-life PVC. It is conducted throughout the entire production value chain, including raw material producers, converters and recyclers, and is reinforced by traceability and certification schemes that ensure the safety and quality of recycled materials and processes.

This is a voluntary commitment. And it works. The VinylPlus programme is rooted in transparent and accountable checks to see that we're doing our job. An independent auditor verifies recycled volumes.

The results are then presented to our Monitoring Committee, which includes representatives from the Commission, Parliament, consumer groups, trade unions, academia and industry.

Our commitment goes even further. We encourage investment in the recycling sector and collection

systems, so we can do more to close the loop. We promote pioneering innovation in the use, production and re-use of PVC, including RecoMed, an award-winning scheme to recycle selected PVC medical devices.

Our programme also helps manufacturers improve the design of PVC products and resource efficiency, cut greenhouse gas emissions and energy along the production chain, and raise sustainability awareness amongst stakeholders.

Our programme is ambitious and action-oriented, with measurable targets. We are committed to ensuring that PVC is used sustainably, and we are proud to be playing our part in supporting the circular economy.

### **About the author**

Brigitte Dero is the General Manager at VinylPlus

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