



The European Green Deal

Sustainable industry – Circular economy

The European Green Deal is meant to lay the foundations for a sustainable EU and promises nothing less than a major transformation of the European economy. The new growth strategy is intended to show Europe the way to a modern, resource-efficient and cycle-oriented economy while increasing its competitiveness. All this under the premise of climate neutrality by 2050. These extremely ambitious goals come with a strong pressure for change which will lastingly transform European industry.

The way towards sustainable industry

A clean and circular management style is an essential component of sustainable industry. The EU Commission has already developed two lines of action to provide the strong impetus pursued.

The New Industrial Strategy for Europe aims to develop new markets for climate-neutral and circular products. The focus of the new Circular Economy Action Plan is on breaking the link between resource consumption and economic growth across all sectors – while safeguarding competitiveness in the long term. The following three fields of action show the relevance for the German paint and printing ink industry:

1. Sustainable Product Policy Framework

The EU Commission bets on the design of sustainable products, the strengthening of consumers and public purchasing and the circular principle in production processes. The paint and printing ink industry is aware of its responsibility and, therefore, supports ecological footprint concepts (e.g. environmental product

declarations). Many products are thus designed that they qualify for established environmental labels such as the Blue Angel.

2. Key product value chains

So far, the main focus has been on the categories of packaging, plastics, construction and buildings. The paint and printing ink industry works in all of these sectors. Up to now, we see impacts on our industry through the proposed changes to the provisions for reducing packaging waste. Further initiatives on microplastics and recycled plastics will follow.

3. Less waste, more value

The third field of action wants an improved waste policy to drive forward waste prevention and the principle of circularity. Importance is attached to strengthening the circularity principle of a zero-pollution environment and to creating a well-functioning EU market for secondary raw materials. For the paint and printing ink industry, the announced initiatives on chemical substances will be particularly relevant.

This is
what
we are
calling
for

✓ Design for sustainability – not for recyclability

Recyclability must not be an end in itself and is not always synonymous with sustainability. For example, a sustainable approach to products should also take into account their contribution to the UN sustainable development goals. This includes durability, preserving the value and benefits of goods and infrastructures as well as product safety.

✓ Holistic approach to life cycles

The processability of our products over long periods of time must continue to be made possible through the use of certain chemicals. Water-based paints and coatings need to be mixed e.g. with preservatives to ensure their durability. This reduces waste and contributes to resource efficiency. Careful and responsible application ensures safe use.

✓ An open mind to different technologies

Pre-defined product characteristics for recyclability impair the innovation potential of companies. This stands in contradiction to the intended transformation towards sustainable, circular value creation and adversely affects international competitiveness.



The European Green Deal
for the German paint and printing ink industry



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