



The European Green Deal Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability

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.

Zero-pollution ambition

A central element of the Green Deal is the zero-pollution ambition to protect humans and environment. The EU Commission sets the course with the publication of its *Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability* (CSS).

Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability

In the CSS, the Commission pursues the goal of an “inherently” safe and sustainable use of chemical substances. A disproportionate tightening of the existing chemicals regulation REACH, which is deemed the strictest and most progressive worldwide, is planned for this purpose. Over 50 individual measures are to be implemented by 2024, and highly complex issues on chemical substances are to be addressed.

The above includes, inter alia, the introduction of a generic hazard-based approach in risk management – which is less scientific than a risk-based assessment and will significantly reduce the choice of chemicals. However, a wide range of available chemical substances is the basic prerequisite for paints, coatings

and printing inks delivering their required performance and functions. Otherwise, products and entire value chains are in danger.

Moreover, “essential uses” are to be prescribed for substances with a hazard classification. That would hamper the innovation potential of the free market and make it more difficult to achieve the Green Deal goals. This is because paints, coatings and printing inks have a high socio-economic value and make major contributions to sustainability through their very functions. The application of coating materials extends the lifespan of products, articles and critical infrastructures and avoids waste.

An increase in bureaucracy must be expected due to the planned consideration of combination effects in the formulation of mixtures and the definition of key performance indicators for the transition to a more sustainable industry. A matter-of-fact discussion on the safe and sustainable functions of paints, coatings and printing inks would better serve the purpose. This is the only way for the paint and printing ink industry to become a valuable “solutions industry” for the Green Deal.

This is
what
we are
calling
for

✓ Adequate, science-based chemicals management relying on risk assessment

Risk-based approaches enable an effective, efficient and proportionate handling of chemical substances.

✓ Use the industry's innovation potential

Steadily rising amounts of reporting obligations that tie down staff, cost-intensive analytical services and the planned dirigiste measures hamper the innovative strength of the industry – while the industry's full potential is needed to achieve the Green Deal goals. Therefore, it is imperative to reduce bureaucracy and to avoid planned economy concepts.

✓ Resolve conflicting goals in a holistic approach

The ambitious goals of the Green Deal can only be achieved if all conflicting goals are taken into consideration within holistic and sustainable chemicals management, e.g. through life cycle analyses.



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



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