



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

For the pursued strong impulse, the EU Commission has developed the new *Circular Economy Action Plan* – with the guiding image of a cross-sectoral decoupling of resource use and economic growth while ensuring long-term competitiveness. The following three fields of action show the relevance for the German paint and printing ink industry:

Sustainable Product Policy Framework

The EU Commission bets on the design of sustainable products, the strengthening of consumers and the principle of circularity. For this purpose, an extension of the Ecodesign Directive has already been announced. Furthermore, uniform and transparent environmental information ("green claims") is to enable consumers to make better qualified purchasing decisions. Within its product responsibility, the paint and printing ink industry supports the development of ecological footprint concepts (e.g. the PEF method) and uses existing instruments (such as environmental product declarations/EPDs) where this is sensible.

Key product value chains

This field of action addresses the sectors of packaging, plastics, construction and buildings. Overriding goal is an optimised material efficiency through an increased recycling content and waste prevention. Concrete initiatives have been launched, for example, to reduce packaging waste and to amend the Construction Products Regulation. Further individual measures on microplastics and recycled plastics have been announced. The VdL member companies supply products to all of these sectors, and they will contribute to facilitating the Green Deal goals.

Less waste, more value

For an improved waste policy, the EU Commission wants to drive forward waste prevention and the principle of circularity. In these efforts, the waste hierarchy applies: reduce, reuse, recycle. With this in mind, a well-functioning EU market for secondary raw materials is to be created. The announced initiatives on chemical substances and new directives on extended producer responsibility will be relevant for the paint and printing ink industry.

**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 their contribution to the UN Sustainable Development Goals into account. This includes durability, preserving the value and benefits of goods and infrastructures as well as product safety.

✓ Holistic approach to life cycles

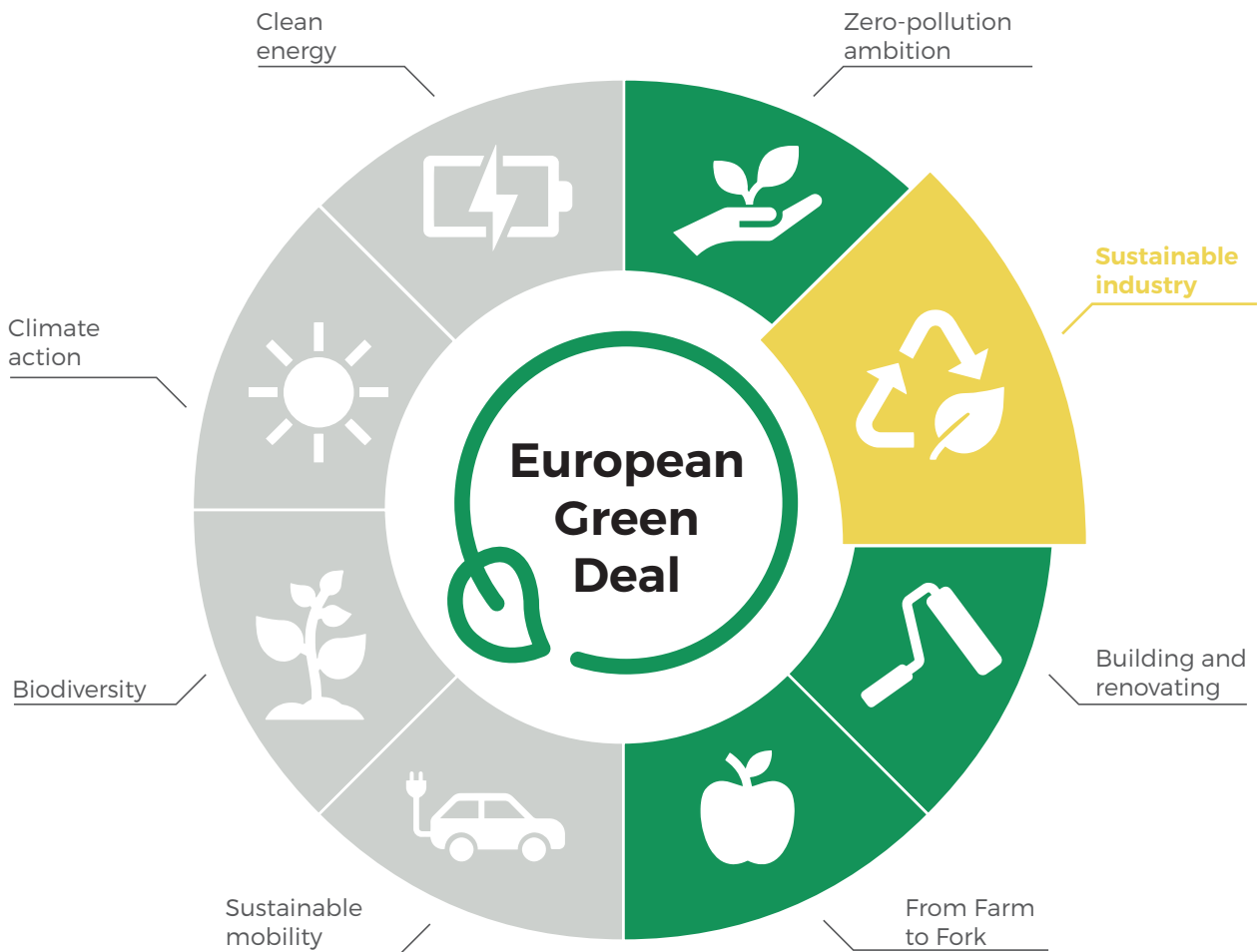
The processability of our products over long periods of time must continuously be possible through the use of certain chemicals. Water-based paints and coatings need to be mixed e.g. with preservatives to ensure their durability. This reduces waste and contributes to resource efficiency. Careful and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



Lucas Schmidt-Wehrich

+49 (0) 69 2556 1702
schmidt-wehrich@vci.de
www.WirSindFarbe.de