



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 towards a sustainable industry, 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 attaches great importance to strengthening consumer interests within a circular economy and to designing products. To this end, the introduction of an eco-design regulation for sustainable products and a “digital product passport” have already been announced within the “Sustainable Product Initiative”. In this way, sustainability requirements such as durability, reusability, reparability and recyclability are to become an integral part of product information. 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

The goal of this field of action is optimized material efficiency through increased use of recyclates and waste avoidance. 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.

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**

✓ **Paints and coatings make an indispensable contribution to an efficient and sustainable circular economy**

Long-lasting value retention, reparability and recyclability are already key functions of paints and coatings.

✓ **Circular economy must be understood holistically along the value chain**

The use of paints and coatings can make a significant contribution to sustainability, which is why the entire life cycle of a product must always be considered. The circular economy therefore requires consideration of all steps – from raw materials to product manufacture and recycling processes.

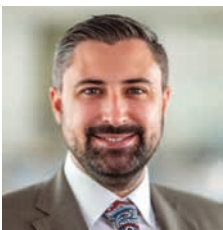
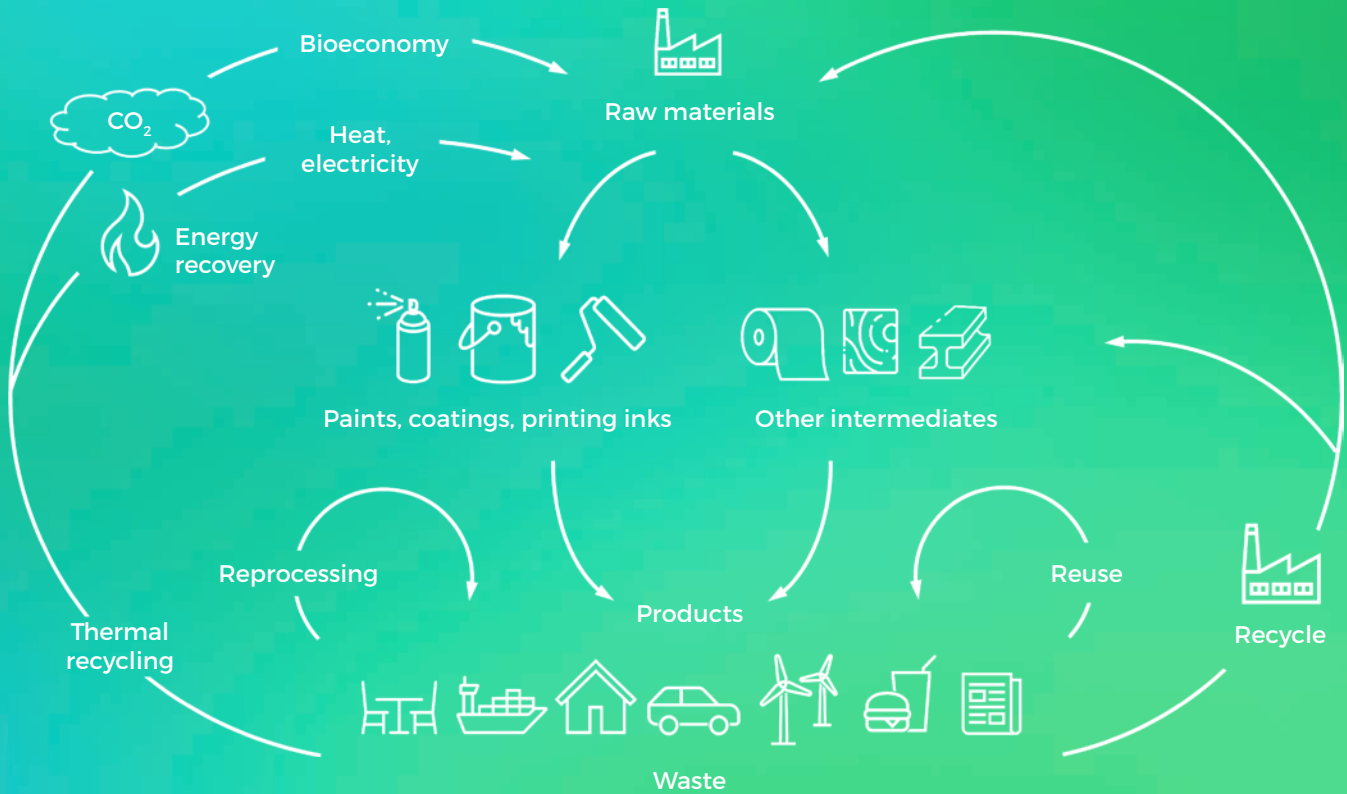
✓ **The implementation of the New Circular Economy Action Plan must take conflicting goals into account**

Measures must be designed to be practicable, realistic and technology neutral so that, for example, product properties that promote sustainability are retained in the use phase despite high recycling requirements.



Paints, coatings and printing inks in the circular economy

Keeping products and raw materials in the loop is complex and requires considering all relevant cycles



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