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VinylPlus: nearly 600,000 tonnes of PVC recycled in 2016

The recycling of PVC has reached a new high with 568,696 tonnes recycled in 2016 through the framework of VinylPlus, the European PVC industry sustainable development programme. The latest results were announced at PVC 2017 by Brigitte Dero, VinylPlus General Manager, who opened the conference in Brighton on April 25th.

The triennial event is the world's largest PVC forum providing information, education, debate and discussion on key topics for the industry.

Speaking on the first day, Brigitte highlighted how the achievements of the VinylPlus Voluntary Commitment to sustainable development over the past two decades had helped to turn PVC from 'the black sheep in the plastic family to a pioneer' and a material of choice.

She stated: "VinylPlus is now recognised by external stakeholders and is considered by many as a frontrunner for the circular economy. We reached this position by achieving significant and concrete results and have consistently demonstrated our commitment through action."

A cumulative total of more than 3.5 million tonnes of PVC has been recycled since 2000 thanks to the efforts of VinylPlus. The largest volumes are from window profiles, followed by cables and flexible applications, pipes and fittings. The target is to recycle 800,000 tonnes per year by 2020.

VinylPlus places 'paramount importance' on the safety and quality of recycled PVC, which is supported by traceability and certification schemes for recyclates. With recycling increasing year-on-year, work is underway to include schemes like EuCertPlast as standard criteria for secondary raw materials. This would stimulate demand and help to prevent the loss of these valuable materials from a circular economy.

“Having recycled nearly 600,000 tonnes of PVC last year, we have demonstrated through the VinylPlus Voluntary Commitment that we can divert from landfill significant volumes of PVC waste, thereby contributing to resource efficiency,” continued Brigitte.

Other recent achievements include the development of an Additives Sustainability Framework - a new science-based system for assessing the sustainable use of additives in PVC products. The first ASF is almost complete for window profiles.

Brigitte explained how VinylPlus provides solutions to a ‘number of issues’ highlighted in the EU discussion on Plastics Strategy and the vision that ‘all plastics should be designed, manufactured and used in a sustainable manner, while increasing their durability’.

Concluding, Brigitte Dero said: “VinylPlus has made successful progress across all challenges identified in the Voluntary Commitment increasing the sustainability performance of PVC. This is thanks to the efforts of many companies delivering quality products (virgin and recyclates) safely.

“Our journey continues to address all concerns and engage the PVC industry towards sustainability as a whole through dialogue and practical partnerships. The united PVC industry shows the way!”

VinylPlus is the renewed ten-year Voluntary Commitment of the European PVC industry. The programme establishes a long-term framework for the sustainable development of the PVC industry by tackling a number of critical challenges in the EU-28, Norway and Switzerland.

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