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Storm over recycling: legacy additives and the circular economy



On December 2nd 2015, the Commission released its circular economy package. It aims to close the loop, "where the value of materials, products and resources is maintained in the economy for as long as possible" and foresees to further increase recycling as well as a landfill ban of separately collected waste. At the same time it plans to develop "non-toxic" material recycling cycles. For construction waste, the target is set at 70% of non-hazardous waste. The setting of end of waste criteria is rather expected to be implemented by the Member States.

This is not auguring well for waste containing hazardous legacy additives, taking into account the recent restrictive approach at European level in the rules for classifying waste as hazardous for instance. On the other hand, the Commission states it will "develop its analysis and propose options for actions to overcome unnecessary barriers while preserving the high level of protection of human health and the environment. This work will feed into the future EU strategy for a non-toxic environment". This, coupled with the plan of the Commission to define a strategy for plastics by 2017, can not only be seen as a threat but as an opportunity as well.

Pragmatic approaches enabling recycling of plastics containing legacy additives should be found. This will only come by properly showing that all risks related to those additives can be addressed in the second life cycle of the product from recycling to disposal. Experience from recent years also shows the need for data to be representative of the whole chain, from all types of companies and across Europe.

This year, we shall progress on specific dossiers. It is of utmost importance to bring evidence on the safe recycling of plastics containing lead – in particular for the construction industry. Whilst a lot of information has been gathered, more information on sound and safe management of this plastics streams is needed. On January 29th 2016, a project kick-off meeting of the recyclers manipulating those plastics will be organized. It is expected that a similar effort will be needed stream per stream for other legacy additives such as flame retardants.

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CEFEP joins EuPC



EuPC is delighted to welcome a new member, European FEF and PEF Interest Group (CEFEP). CEFEP will strengthen the B&C division FEF/PEF Interest Group as it is an interest group of leading manufacturers for technical insulation made of flexible elastomer and polyethylene foams (abbreviated as FEF and PEF) in Europe.

FEF and PEF insulation materials are optimised to minimise energy losses of technical systems and, due to the durability offered by their inherent closed cell structure, the materials retain their energy saving performance over long periods of time.

More information: www.cefep.net

Polymers for Europe Alliance making progress



In a few months time, the Polymers for Europe Alliance has increased its membership to over 230 companies and the numbers are still growing each day. Only polymer users in Europe are accepted as members. One activity of the Alliance is to enhance the competitiveness of the plastics converting industry in Europe. EuPC therefore launched its on-line survey on competitiveness for plastics converters. The result of this study will be presented in next June during the EuPC Annual Meeting and will be offered free of charge to all companies having contributed to the surveys and interviews. More actions by the Alliance on for example EU import duties exemptions on polymers or monitoring Force majeure, etc. are ongoing.

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[Polymers for Europe Alliance Website](#)

Looking to the future: energy saving solutions and upcoming EPPA activities



When facing the challenges of climate change, it is important to turn towards a sustainable use of non-renewable energy, by continuously decarbonizing the energy mix for example. As we debate solutions to climate change, we should not forget to make use of already existing energy saving solutions in the building and construction sector. Both insulated building surfaces and modern windows and doors are products of choice for saving energy. In addition to excellent heat insulation properties, modern PVC windows systems already provide smart solutions for plastic windows with integrated ventilation systems, automated sun shading concepts and solar energy use – just to mention a few qualities.

Following the eco-design concept, however, an additional effort is required already during the process of manufacturing for energy saving qualities. The answer is to use recyclates from used plastic windows. These recyclates may contain substances subject to REACH and RoHS, even if the product does not create any risk to consumers. EPPA, together with EuroWindow, has applied for PVC windows with electric equipment to be exempted from RoHS.

On March 16-19, EPPA and its national association members will be present at the Fensterbau Frontale trade show. EPPA will take this opportunity to strive for an open dialogue with stakeholders from the industry, window manufacturers as well as officials. Two further highlights are to be announced: the Prowindo press conference on March 17th and a workshop on 18th March on European Product Quality Certification, together with CSTB France.

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SlipSafe enters its validation phase



SlipSafe, the large scale collaborative project funded by the European Commission, has now entered its validation phase via case studies and its testing phase with potential end users. The next SlipSafe Consortium meeting is scheduled for 13 - 14 April 2016 at the **EuPC** Offices in Brussels.

This three-year research project addresses the challenges of reduction of slip-accidents on wet floors, in particular resilient flooring used in private and public buildings. The project aims to yield key innovation for the next generation of flooring, and fits within the increasing focus on preventing fall accidents.

More information www.slipsafe.org

Placard, ready to be tested



Placard is a project funded by the European Commission which aims to produce a new bio-based plasticizer for soft PVC with a focus on applications in construction. It is produced by chemically modifying cardanol, an industrial grade yellow oil obtained by vacuum distillation of cashew nut shell liquid. By using a by-product such as cashew nut shells, the Placard plasticizer does not create pressure on food resources. The next Placard meeting will be held at Unisalento premises on the 1st of April.

The project entered into its new phase: to be tested in production of selected applications. Interested in becoming a pioneer? Contact us.

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Towards a single method for assessing environmental footprint of construction products?



EC to propose new mandate for EN15804 amendment

The next 9th and 10th of February 2016, TC350 will discuss the draft amendment to mandate M350 on which EN15804 and consequently EPDs are based. This mandate, written jointly by DG GROW and ENV, but also discussed with the Construction Products Working Group*, TC350 WG1, will then be formally sent to CEN. CEN can decide either to accept the mandate and work on the EN15804 amendment or refuse it. If CEN accepts the amendment and delivers according to expectations (in time and quality) we may finally see the solution to the fact that the Commission has not yet recognised EN15804 as a standard to be referred to for policy purposes (BWR7 or other). If CEN decides to refuse the mandate, the Commission will have no other choice than to only use PEF as the method for LCA based policies, including those related to building and construction products. Timing is also key as the PEF pilots will finish at the end of 2016 and the Commission is expected to come up with a policy proposal somewhere in 2017. If CEN accepts this mandate it should also work relatively fast in order to have at least an advanced draft of the amended EN15804 available by the 2nd half of 2017.

What are the main changes in this draft mandate?

The mandate refers to environmental aspects of EN15804 (methodology) and EN 15942 (communication format). The main changes relate to system boundaries in such a way that information based on module C and D shall always be used when carrying out an environmental assessment; the life cycle impact categories methods also have to be aligned with the ones identified in PEF, like for acidification, eutrophication terrestrial and abiotic depletion.

Aggregation of results and benchmark can certainly be considered as the absolute novelty for construction products as such. It definitively is easier to understand for the assessment at building level, while it is still technically in doubt the added value of benchmarking and having a single score for construction products as such. However this part will not be included in the EN15804 but in EN 15942.

Other proposed changes relate to the way the functional unit is defined, strengthening the idea of a system approach whenever possible, (1m of pipe would not make any sense in this case), it is proposed to also add missing references about offsets, fossil and biogenic (including land use) carbon emissions and removals. As in PEF, carbon storage and delayed emissions should not be accounted for but the method should include data quality requirements and use ILCD nomenclature.

*CPWG, Construction products working group's mission is to provide the basis for future alignment of PEF and EPD. CPE, CEN, DG GROW, JRC and ENV, PEF pilots representatives, of which TEPPFA, are members of this group.

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Activities Update on Working Group 5 Fire



EuPC WG5 Fire is in charge of following all topics related to fire behaviour of construction products inside building. In 2015, together with several other associations, WG5 contributed to initiate a standardization work, intended to create a reference document on the behavior of plastic products in case of fire. This project is currently being drafted under the umbrella of ISO TC61, as ISO/ TR (Technical report) "Guidance on fire characteristics of PVC material used in building applications". If appropriate, this document could be extended to other plastic material than PVC.

WG5 is also monitoring several events that are currently aiming at reconsidering the existing classification on the behavior of construction with regard to fire behavior. The European Commission is about to initiate a tender for the study on smoke toxicity of construction products. In a first step, WG5 has initiated a collection of available studies to feed in this study in collaboration with several other European associations.

Building and construction division and Corporate Social Responsibility



Reporting information about social and environmental performance is crucial for large companies who have relationships with investors, customers and stakeholders at large. The Corporate Social Responsibility Directive, which will enter into force in 2017, foresees that a non-financial report shall be issued covering as a minimum environmental, social and employee matters, respect for human rights, anti-corruption and bribery matters. The Commission has now launched a consultation which will close on April 16th. By 6 December 2016 at the latest, the Commission must establish guidelines on how companies should report on this information.

Being prepared and turning Corporate Social Responsibility into an opportunity has been identified as a target by the **EuPC** Building & Construction Division. In February, a questionnaire shall be circulated to all the division members in order to understand how they report on those elements today. The Building & Construction EXCOM will follow this project during 2016.

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VinylPlus Forum in Vienna



Smart Vinyl for Our Cities is the theme of this year's Vinyl Sustainability Forum which will be taking place on April 28th 2016 in Vienna. Cities are where an increasing majority of the world's population will be living and working in the future and where the challenges to provide essential services – such as accommodation, water, food and healthcare – will be the greatest.

This event will bring together representatives from the entire PVC industry value chain as well as policy makers, consumer groups, retailers, architects and NGOs covering topics such as The Big Global Challenge - Sustainable Cities in the 21st Century; Public Policy for Sustainable Cities; How Public Policy contributes to sustainable cities; New applications and Markets for Vinyl in the 21st Century Cities and Vinyl in Future Cities: Doing Better by Design.

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Demolition of three high-rise buildings: “Urban Mining” in Marl-Hüls, Germany



The selective deconstruction of three high-rise buildings in Marl-Hüls, Germany, which was carried out by order of **Neuma** (Marl, Germany) demonstrates that the “Urban Mining” concept of resource recovery is not just pure theory of future possibilities but has long been common practice in many demolition projects. **Freimuth Abbruch** were able to “unearth” from the buildings constructed in the 1960s, apart from metals and concrete in particular a large quantity of PVC floor covering and PVC windows, which can easily be recycled and raw material is obtained to be reused without any quality loss.

Twenty tons of PVC floor coverings removed from 138 flats were mechanically recycled at **AgPR**, which has been in business for 25 years. **Tönsmeier Kunststoffe**, a recycling partner of **Rewindo**, produced new raw material from more than 500 post-consumer PVC windows of these buildings.

A closer cooperation with the demolition industry as suppliers of raw material will, in the future, become an increasingly important cornerstone to the success of the PVC recycling systems.



New Building & Construction Working Group leaders



EuPC is proud to announce the new leaders within two WGs of the Building & Construction Division. Within WG5, Fire, Mr. Michel Divanach of Aliaxis/Teppfa is succeeding to Mr. Henk Meerman from Dyka/Teppfa. Mr. Jochen Zimmermann from ERFMI has replaced Mr. Marc Madec from Fédération de la Plasturgie. We would like to

thank the former leaders for their support and work and we wish a good start to the new ones.

Interested in joining the WGs? Do not hesitate to contact us.

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Upcoming Meetings

EuPC MEF & NPA Meetings	8 & 9 March 2016 <i>Brussels</i>
EuPC Packaging, Building & Construction EXCOM	10 March 2016 <i>Luxembourg</i>
EuPC Steering Committee Meeting	11 March 2016 <i>Luxembourg</i>
Reach Workshop	17-18 March 2016 <i>Brussels</i>
Plastics Recycling Show Europe	22-23 March 2016 <i>Brussels</i>
EuPC General Assembly	2 & 3 June 2016 <i>Lyon, France</i>
EuPC Packaging, Building & Construction EXCOM	21 September 2016 <i>Brussels</i>
EuPC Steering Committee Meeting	22 September 2016 <i>Brussels</i>
EuPC MEF & NPA Meeting	20 October 2016 <i>Düsseldorf, Germany</i>
EuPC Packaging, B&C EXCOM	17 November 2016 <i>Brussels</i>
EuPC Steering Committee Meeting	18 November 2016 <i>Brussels</i>