

PRESS RELEASE

The PVC Window industry welcomes the Chemical Strategy for Sustainability and the Renovation Wave and calls for the European institutions to connect the dots between both Initiatives

Brussels, 28 October 2020: On October 14, the European Commission published two initiatives as a part of the Green Deal: the Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability (CSS) and the Renovation Wave. Both of them have fundamental importance for the PVC windows. The PVC profile industry supports the implementation of both initiatives, to minimize climate impacts through to reduce energy and raw material use (less virgin PVC, more recycle). EPPA calls on the European institutions to ensure that the most sustainable end-of-life solution for PVC windows is supported and furthered, to make both, the CSS and the Renovation Wave a success.

EPPA welcomes the new Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability, which sets out actions to make chemicals safe and sustainable by design. The initiative shall ensure that chemicals can deliver all their benefits without harming humans or the environment. Simultaneously, the Commission also promotes the use of secondary raw materials, the establishment of non-toxic material cycles, and innovation in industrial production processes. EPPA agrees that knowledge on the presence of substances of very high concern through the life cycle of materials and products is important.

EPPA is also pleased with the publication of the Renovation Wave. It aims at renovating millions of buildings increase the renovation rate to at least 2% in the next decade, boosting the economy in periods of recovery, delivering better houses to Europeans, and supporting the 2050 climate neutrality goal. Moreover, the Renovation Wave is an ally to reduce energy use in the construction sector and to reduce energy costs for Europeans.

“However we notice with concern that the two initiatives do not refer to or reflect each other,” explains Charlotte Röber, Managing Director at EPPA. “We call for the Commission to clarify, via a thorough assessment, how the two initiatives are impacting each other.”

Recycling is the best end of life management option for PVC windows

PVC windows play a crucial role in both of them: For instance, a 40% recycle content in new window profiles saves emissions of 12 kg CO₂-eq. per window unit during the production phase. Already today PVC windows are circular construction products, PVC windows are recycled in controlled and closed loops, ensuring full traceability and re-use of the valuable resource PVC-U. Old windows serve as the raw material supply for new profiles. Life cycle assessments¹ have shown that recycling is by far the best end of life management option for PVC windows. In Europe, there are currently some 650 million PVC windows installed. The replacement of windows (next to insulation and roofing) are the preferred action of choice for energy efficient building renovation. Therefore, in the upcoming years, millions of PVC windows will reach their end of life annually.

Hence, vital synergies for windows on circularity, recycling, and energy efficiency can be identified.

¹ <https://www.eppa-profiles.eu/sustainable-development>

Renovation wave will incentivize the dismantling of old PVC windows

PVC windows are long life products, with a life span of about 40 years. While the use of lead stabilizers was phased out over 15 years ago, around 80% of current PVC window-stock (430 million PVC windows) still contains this legacy additive. Scientific assessments commissioned by the European Chemical Agency (ECHA)² have demonstrated that the lead is safely embedded in the rigid PVC matrix.

The Renovation Wave will incentivize the dismantling of these old windows and sustainability-reasoning demands that these windows are recycled and re-introduced in new windows (as a core material, covered by virgin PVC). For over 20 years, the PVC profile industry has established the corresponding closed loop recycling network, including collection and recycling capacities across Europe. Today, 23% of PVC material used in European window profiles is sourced from window PVC recycle.

For more information about:

Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability

- [EC - press release](#)
- [Communication on Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability: Towards a toxic-free environment](#)
- [Questions and Answers on Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability](#)
- [Factsheet on Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability](#)

Renovation Wave

- [EC's press release on the Renovation Wave](#)
- [EC's Renovation Wave Strategy document](#)

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About EPPA

The European Trade Association of PVC Window System Suppliers EPPA represents the manufacturers of PVC window systems and related building products in Europe. About 25,000 employees process about 1,4 million tons of PVC creating a turnover of €4 billion with profile systems and building products. Based in Brussels, EPPA provides a common platform for bundling national activities in the fields of PVC window technology, recycling, environment and public affairs.

² <https://echa.europa.eu/documents/10162/bf4394ef-7b75-99ec-13c1-134ba7ed713d>