



EPPA ivzw

The European PVC Window Profile and  
related Building Products Association EPPA  
Avenue de Cortenbergh 71, B-1000 Brussels  
Phone +32 2 739 63 81  
Fax +32 2 732 42 18  
www.eppa-profiles.eu

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Recycling – Is EPPA's core "Controlled-Loop-Recycling" threatened by the upcoming vote in the EU Parliament?**

*Brussels: 06 February 2020 – The European PVC Window Profile and related Building Products Association (EPPA) is repositioning itself. At its recent Board meeting, the EPPA Board adopted a new five-year plan. The mission is to support the sustainable growth of EPPA members in all European countries in terms of sustainable and environmentally friendly building products. To achieve this goal, EPPA defines two main areas of work: On the one hand, the priority is the political work for the PVC window. On the other hand, the focus is on the implementation of a European recycling strategy within the voluntary commitment of the Circular Plastics Alliance (CPA) – and this despite the currently discussed ban on lead and cadmium in window recycle (recycled material).*

In EPPA's new five-year plan, the European manufacturers of PVC window systems (system suppliers) commit themselves to becoming an EU-wide model for closed loop recycling. EPPA promotes the recycling of old windows in the most important European markets, especially in Germany, France, Great Britain and Poland. Over the next few years, clearinghouse concepts in these countries will be supported or set up. By 2025, EPPA members intend to use an average of 25 % recycled material in new products.

#### ***Increasing recycling volumes: with VinylPlus and CPA***

EPPA is supported in this project by the European VinylPlus® sustainability programme. The members of the voluntary commitment aim at recycling at least 900,000 tonnes of used PVC by 2025 and to use it for manufacturing new products. "We can only achieve this if we find a common European solution that is implemented at all national levels," explains Charlotte Röber, Managing Director of the Trade Association of European suppliers of PVC window systems. EPPA coordinates the projects from Brussels

Also the Circular Plastics Alliance is giving EPPA a boost in its recycling efforts. The aim of the EU recycling initiative is to use at least 10 million tonnes of recycled plastic in new plastic products by 2025. EPPA is an active member of the alliance and provides solutions from system houses that have been recycling PVC windows for more than 20 years.



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### ***Regulatory activities against the background of the current lead/cadmium discussion***

In the field of European legislation, EPPA calls on the European Parliament to continue to make post consumer recycling possible in the future. In the second week of February, a motion from the ENVI (Environmental) Committee will be submitted to the plenary for a vote. The aim of the motion is to reject the amendment proposed by the Commission on the registration, evaluation, authorisation and restriction (REACH) for lead and its compounds (lead restriction). It contains a derogation for some applications where lead stabilized recyclate from end of life products is re-used. EPPA calls on the Parliament to reject this motion. The proposed lead restriction and derogation are based on a thorough scientific review by the European Chemicals Agency ECHA, which took several years. This consideration has shown that recycling is the most sustainable solution for handling lead stabilizers in PVC. Recognition of the lead restriction and its derogation also sends an important signal for another legislative process that threatens window recycling in Europe. According to the European Directive RoHS II, electrified windows may not contain more than 0.1% lead and 0.01% cadmium.

EPPA and EuroWindow, representation of the interests of European window, facade and door manufacturers, have already applied for an exemption for PVC recyclate in windows in 2015. In view of the parallel REACH procedure, the Commission has repeatedly postponed a decision in order to create a uniform legal situation. This alignment has now been achieved and a corresponding proposal will be sent to Parliament in the coming weeks and months. Parliament will therefore once again be called upon to agree (or not to oppose) a 2% lead derogation for window recycling. Otherwise, we must expect a speedy implementation of RoHS law by the member states and immediately stop our use of the recyclate.

In this case it is irrelevant for our industry whether and how the Commission deals with the rejected REACH lead restriction. Even if the Commission presents a modified derogation in the REACH procedure, clarifies open questions and even if Parliament can agree to this proposal, next week's vote will have a signaling effect producing irrevocable consequences for the PVC window industry. "Should the use of lead and cadmium in the recyclate be prohibited, this would call into question the voluntary commitment of VinylPlus and CPA – as well as post-consumer plastic recycling in Europe as a whole," warns Charlotte Röber.

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## Press Contact

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Public Relations

[info@eppa-profiles.eu](mailto:info@eppa-profiles.eu) | +32 2 739 63 81

## **About EPPA**

*The European PVC Profiles and related Building Products Association 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.*

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