

VinylPlus Monitoring Committee

5th December 2017– 10h30 : 12h30

European Parliament
Rue Wiertz 60, B-1000 Bruxelles,
Conference Room Paul-Henri Spaak – P6C011

Minutes

Participants:

Ms Catarina Braganga	Assistant to MEP Nuno Melo, European Parliament
Mr Alain Cavallero	Secretary General, ESPA
Mr Alexandre Dangis	Managing Director, EuPC
Ms Brigitte Dero	General Manager ECVM and VinylPlus
Mr Armand De Wasch	Euroconsumers
Ms Martina Dlabajova	MEP, European Parliament
Mr Joachim Eckstein	EuPC
Paulo Lemos	Policy Officer, European Commission, DG ENV
Mr Eric Liégeois	Team Leader, European Commission, DG GROW
Mr Martin Policar	Advocacy & Regulatory Affairs Manager, EuPC
Ms Noelle Tracey	Events – Project Manager, ECVM / VinylPlus

Apologies:

Mr Werner Bosmans	Sustainable Production, Products & Consumption Policy Officer, European Commission, DG ENV
Prof Alfons Buekens	Chairman, VinylPlus
Mr Sylvain Lefebvre	Deputy General Secretary, IndustriAll European Trade Union
Mr Nuno Mello	MEP, European Parliament

1. **Welcome and Agreement of the Agenda**

Brigitte Dero opened the meeting and extended the apologies of Professor Buekens (chairman of the VinylPlus Monitoring Committee) who was unable to attend the meeting. Brigitte welcomed all the participants. The agenda was approved.

2. **Formal approval of the minutes of the last VinylPlus Meeting on 11th April, 2017**

The minutes of the meeting held on the 11th April, 2017 were formally approved.

3. **Date and Venue of next meeting in 2018**

The following dates were agreed for the meeting in 2018.

26th April 2018 starting with lunch - 12h30 : 17h00 at the European Parliament;

28th November 2018 starting with lunch - 12h30 : 17h00 at the European Parliament.

The organisation of the meetings has been kindly offered by the office of Martina Dlabajova, MEP.

4. **VinylPlus Programme Implementation:**

Recycling Progress – Alexandre Dangis (Appendix 1)

The Recovinyl Board decided to review its audit protocol. Regions were redefined and countries regrouped in order to comply with EU competition law. Volumes are on track and targets of 611kt should be reached with ease.

Eric Liègois asked about the recycled content of products - He said that this calculation is needed by the Commission as well as information on the regional trends in order to encourage the different countries to make progress and that industry would be invited to present their average % of recycle. Alexandre explained that it was difficult to calculate but promised to come up with numbers.

Action: AD - calculation of recycled content of products to be developed.

A short update on country highlights included:

France: There is a 28% increase compared to last year. Signs of recovery in activities among converters and especially among pipe manufacturers.

Germany: Volumes are at the same level as 2016.

Profiles are using more PVC recycles, volumes of cables are lower than 2016 due to DEHP issue. Flexibles react to Chinese competition and are focusing on higher quality recycle. Optimistic forecast promising to surpass 2017 targets, except for cables.

United Kingdom: Shortage of window volumes due to high demand for finished product is leading to price war for old PVC windows.

The market is consolidating towards larger players especially those who are also converters. The larger companies are confident of market through new house builds. Cables remain a risk of losing recycling volumes due to impact of legislation related to DEHP.

Italy: An increase of 16% compared to same period last year.

Restriction of phthalates shifting the focus of the market from flexible to rigid PVC and post-industrial material. Nevertheless, results expected to exceed 2016 levels.

Poland: Almost 70% of Polish production is exported within the EU, especially Germany due mainly to a lack of local qualified workforce which is a challenge, however, a steady increase in the next 5 years mainly in windows/profiles is expected.

Iberia: - soft PVC is switching from PC to PI wherever possible.

Benelux: There is a lack of rigid input material. As China is closing the door, there should be more input to recycle from within the EU, especially flexibles.

Social Charter - Brigitte Dero (Appendix 2)

The new cooperation agreement of the social partners of the European chemical sectorial dialogue committee (ECEG and IndustriAll) and the European PVC industry (VinylPlus) was signed in February 2017. Coverage of the agreement, includes, health and safety, education, knowledge transfer and sector evolutions CCMI (Consultative Commission on Industrial Changes) who are conducting a study on converting/recycling sector.

During the course of the year, VinylPlus has been busy working with ECEG and IndustriAll to define the detailed programme on the way forward from 2018 – 2020. There will be a presentation of the programme to the Plenary meeting of the Sectorial Social Dialogue Committee for the “Chemical industry” on the 8th December 2017.

Some of the priorities we are working on:

Health and Safety

Current proposal amending Dir. 2004/37/EC on the protection of workers from the risks related to exposure to carcinogens or mutagens at work. The potential added value and potential impact on the PVC industry compared to what is already existing, the consequences, the contribution of our partnership, in particular for SMEs.

Recycling facilities: Organise a comprehensive workshop gathering all partners and opening the door for additional workshops in several EU Member States to disseminate findings and information.

Education and Training - In line with the EU Strategic Framework –2020 programme, the industry is preparing a commitment to ensure that Energy and Training is practiced over the whole professional life and signed by all the European partners.

Knowledge transfer - As part of the same EU Strategy Framework 2020 programme, the industry is preparing a commitment to create a formal process to ensure knowledge transfer. Using the experienced employees to distribute their knowledge, skills and behaviour to employees that are expected to replace them short or mid-term and vice-versa. This vice-versa approach is key taking into account the increasingly rapid evolution of the sector.

Sector Evolution - The sector is submitted to a significant evolution in digitalisation, automation etc... which can have an impact on health and safety of the workers, i.e. isolation. The idea is to launch a study on industrial change and their consequences in the converting and/or recycling sectors which could deal with sectoral policy developments, evolution of R&D, innovation and the requested competencies.

A preliminary meeting should be organised with the Commission in order to get their support and as a second step with the Consultative Commission on Industrial change to evaluate the possibilities. The focus should be on SMEs.

5. **Recycling issues and legacy additives update: Alexandre Dangis**

There is a lot of uncertainty on the market due to the legacy additives issue. This in turn might lead to less recycling, hence, no progress towards a circular economy.

- Eric Liégois explained that DG Grow is aware of the issue. In the framework of the Circular economy package, the Commission will look at the consistency between waste and chemical regulations as well as with Product regulations by the end of 2018.
- Mid-year, a Commission communication on “non toxic environment” promoting clear cycles should however be issued. The comments from industry are welcome.
- Martina Dlabajova asked for proper consultation of the industry by the Commission in that respect. She emphasised that VinylPlus is contributing significantly to the circular economy by, for example, ensuring continuous growth in PVC recycling into quality materials.

6. The EU Plastics Strategy - Brigitte Dero (Appendix 3)

In the context of the circular economy package and the plastics strategy, the Commission opened the door for the plastics industry to come up with Voluntary Commitments. The circular economy package, including a strategy on plastics use, reuse and recycling, is scheduled for public release on the 16th January, 2018.

Brigitte gave the example of VinylPlus[®], a voluntary commitment by the European PVC industry to sustainable development. The commitment aims at strengthening the sustainability of PVC products and of the entire industry through a holistic approach including: increasing safe and quality PVC recycling, ensuring a sustainable use of additives, enhancing PVC products' contribution to a low carbon economy, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, as well as energy and resource efficiency throughout the whole production chain, and, finally, building sustainability awareness along the value chain and among stakeholders.

Since 2000, the industry has worked with an independent Monitoring Committee made up of representatives from the European Commission, the EU Parliament, trade unions, academia and consumer organisations. We are committed to delivering concrete and measurable targets within specified deadlines, and reporting transparently the results in an annual progress report, which is audited and verified by third parties. As a result, VinylPlus has become a concrete example of voluntary commitment that works in practice and provides a benchmark for other industry initiatives.

The VinylPlus commitment includes, amongst others, a target to recycle 800,000 tonnes of PVC per year by 2020. To continue the journey, we embarked on in 2000, the European PVC industry will review in 2018, VinylPlus' achievements with a view to defining, in consultation with our stakeholders, new recycling targets alongside a set of other concrete objectives for the next phase of its Voluntary Commitment towards 2030.

The discussion moved to different ways industry can improve and take VinylPlus forward:

- VinylPlus is well recognized as a role model - emphasis ;
- VinylPlus is a benchmark that EU Commission recognises and would like other sectors to use;
- Highlight the importance of financial effort by the industry and to show how serious the industry is in its commitment;

- Global engagement - e.g. Indian PVC industry would like a voluntary programme along the lines of VinylPlus;
- Unido – is very interested and supports the VinylPlus example as a roadmodel worldwide;
- More concrete communications – highlight the advantages;
- Studies where VinylPlus opinion can be incorporated;
- How VinylPlus can work better together with authorities/stakeholders
- Define and fix targets post 2020

Action: to discuss further with the Monitoring committee how VinylPlus can further match with the plastics strategy (voluntary commitment post 2020, pledges)

7. Lead Stabilisers Replacement Update - Alain Cavallero (Appendix 4)

Since the previous 3rd RAC/SEAC session in September 2017, additional information and argumentation were provided to ECHA by the vinyl chain, advocating for a wider derogation (2% instead of proposed 1% and inclusion of articles made from flexible PVC). It is expected that ECHA will forward their opinion to the European Commission by early 2018. The EU Commission will then prepare the draft restriction proposal which will be subject to a Public Consultation. The final decision will be taken in a comitology procedure with scrutiny involving the Member States and the European Parliament. It is not expected that the restriction could enter into force before 2020.

In conclusion, the Voluntary Commitment of the Vinyl chain has been instrumental in achieving the successful replacement of lead stabilisers in the EU. The recycling of PVC articles allow to save the energy embedded in the material, reducing thus the CO₂ emissions associated to the production of new PVC resin. Lead stabilisers remain firmly embedded in the plastic matrix, posing no risk to the Human health or to the environment; recycled PVC articles offer a safe harbour for legacy additives like lead stabilisers.

The proposed Restriction will seal off- the use of lead stabilisers, creating a level-playing field. Additional constraints introduced in the proposed restriction could significantly impact the volume of PVC that could be recycled and with a restriction in place there is no purpose to include lead stabilisers in the Authorisation list.

8. VinylPlus Progress Report 2018 - time line

The draft Progress Report will be circulated for comments 10 days before the next meeting of the Monitoring Committee, i.e. by the 16th April, 2018 at the latest.

9. VinylPlus Sustainability Forum – 16th - 17th May 2018 - Madrid

The VinylPlus Sustainability Forum will take place in Madrid, on the 16th & 17th May, 2018. The theme chosen is “Meeting societal needs”. The 2018 Forum will focus on how the vinyl sector, its products and services can help to meet the diverse needs of a growing global population in areas such as healthcare, housing and related infrastructure. The event will feature high-level speakers and representatives from the EU institutions, the United Nations, academia, politicians, specifiers, designers, architects, recyclers and the PVC value chain.

All members of the Monitoring Committee are cordially invited to join.

The meeting ended at 12h30