

Alba Recycling GmbH - Germany

Recycling and the destiny of Danish light weight packaging!

What happens to the Danish plastics when it is sorted and traded in Germany?

Can Denmark influence that handling?

Skype presentation 19th November 2019

Statements to sorting and recycling of plastics in Europe

Statements from “PRE” – Plastics Recyclers Europe

- Plastics are facing increasing pressure from the public (consumers) and legislators.
- Our industry must structure itself to enhance our technical knowledge and accelerate our communication efforts to address this pressure in a constructive and effective manner
- This planning provides an overview and segmentation of the main PRE activities, planned for the upcoming 3 years, aiming at accelerating the transition of the European plastics recycling sector towards increased sustainability and circular economy

Five pillars interlinked to support the development of recycling in Europe

- ➔ ADVOCACY - Voice plastics recycling (pr) during the elaboration of legislation
- ➔ REGULATORY - Supporting pr to implement legislation in an effective manner
- ➔ COMMUNICATION - Promote pr with dedicated communications channels and events
- ➔ TECHNICAL Proj. - Gather essential data on pr to have solid grounds to develop it
- ➔ VALUE CHAINS - Horizontal actions will have to be coordinated via value chain actions

Statements to sorting and recycling of plastics in Europe

- Europe is putting a lot of effort into “increasing recycling rates”
- Regulations and laws were set – including responsibilities of producers to recycle packaging and plastics

BUT

Requirements and regulations are good if, in sum, the measures to be derived from this, ensure that the entire chain of recycling is considered from collection to use in a final product and that the laws and also the laws are applied at all levels of the process chain and also economic support is given, in order to be able to meet the desired objective in the first place

FACT

Currently there are not sufficient and high-quality recycling plants and possible applications for recycling granulates, nor are the existing treatment plants sufficiently supported in order to be fully competitive with virgin material.

What happens to the Danish plastics?

- Danish market is significantly smaller than the Germany market and difficult for German sorters to assess – it's slightly comparable to bigger municipalities who are tendering so called “bins filled with recycling materials “non packaging”
- Often requirements on sorting tenders do not fit to the focus on German plants and possibilities in the recycling market
- Actual sorted materials from a Danish customer in Braunschweig:
 - Metal: 1,5%
 - ALU: 0,5%
 - Film: 13,0%
 - Compounds 2,0%
 - Cardboard 0%
 - PP: 9,0%
 - PE: 5,0%
 - PS: 0,4%
 - PET: 70/30 11,0%
 - Other: 1,5%
 - Mix plastics: 15% to 20% (a portion goes into material recycling)
 - Remains: 10% to 15%

What happens to the Danish plastics? – Experience in Braunschweig

- Actually ALBA is sorting app. 10.000 t Danish LWP in Braunschweig
- The at least delivered material contains more remains than it should be!
- A lot of plastics is “non – packaging” and it’s quality is often not usable for an upcycle (e.g. garden furniture do contain 40% chalk and cannot be recycled)
- Same applies to heat resistant plastics
- What ever might look like plastic does not mean, that it can be recycled like household packaging
- What ever is leaving our plant is delivered to a recycler, in some cases material goes via a second sorting (e.g PET) to separate it more detailed
- Mix plastics at ALBA contains mainly “multilayer” which can not be sorted more detailed – only down-cycling is possible, which is very limited (see price development)

What happens to the Danish plastics? – What should be done?

- Danish tenderer to put more efforts into the analysis how the material looks like and what are the content (even at collection and at collection points as well as after sorting)
- Sorting can and will only sort to the extend what can be recycled! – it shouldn't be a "wish you something" list
- Tenderer should visit several recycling plants to see what is the technical level and to which extend material can be recycled
- Install quality teams to inspect collection to press and ship only material that can be recycled → that would avoid to ship material that is anyway good only for thermal recycled afterwards
 - Sorting today is a high sophistic production and requires a certain quality of inbound
- Do not requires "guarantees" if you yourself can not give any
- Recycling still need to meet an economical factor – reduce recycling rates where only down cycling can be used to meet "quotes"
- More flexibility for price adaptations – sorting companies are first "sorting" and not trading" companies. Trading should be based on "open book accounts" – can be checked by external auditors – this models are already established in Germany – avoids unnecessary surcharges.

What happens to the Danish plastics? – Tender Requirements

- Danish tender requirements are not meeting the “Practise”
- Sorting today is a high sophistic production and requires a certain quality of inbound
- Tenders are set in a way to “Require everything” but guaranteeing “nothing”
- They way of a “long term partnership” requires a contract on eye level and trust
- The recycling market including the selling the re-granulates is not like established over decades than other markets
 - ups and downs in recycling prices can not be set off by sorting plants or recyclers
 - Some materials are already traded on a monthly or quarterly level only
- As long as tenders are not issued in a way that risks will be calculable, we are forced to put in surcharges to hopefully catch up such risk or forgo to participate