



Brighton, 12 April 2011

PRESS RELEASE

EUROPEAN PVC INDUSTRY MEETS TEN YEAR TARGETS ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND LOOKS TO THE FUTURE WITH OPTIMISM

Final progress report of Vinyl 2010 voluntary commitment sees targets met or exceeded in all areas

The European PVC industry today released the final Progress Report on Vinyl 2010 – the ten year voluntary commitment launched in 2000 to enhance the sustainable production and use of PVC. The report highlights the huge advances made by the industry over the past decade in waste management, innovative recycling technologies, stakeholder engagement and responsible use of additives.

Vinyl 2010 has succeeded in meeting or exceeding all of the targets set by the industry in 2000.

As it comes to an end, a new industry commitment towards sustainability will be launched later in 2011 which will require the ongoing active support of the PVC value chain and a wide range of other stakeholders in the public and private sector.

The achievements of Vinyl 2010 are particularly notable when it comes to collection and recycling. In 1999 there was no infrastructure for recycling of PVC in Europe and it was dismissed by many as an “unrecyclable” material. Today, the audit results show that in the last year alone 260,842 tonnes of unregulated post-consumer PVC waste were recycled by Vinyl 2010’s network of PVC recyclers across Europe - well beyond the initial goal of recycling an additional 200,000 tonnes on an annual basis by 2010.

Speaking at launch of the report at PVC 2011, the 11th International PVC Conference in Brighton, United Kingdom, Josef Ertl, Vinyl 2010 Chairman said, *“Vinyl 2010 has been a clear success and is a perfect example of industry self-regulation working in practice. It is no exaggeration to say that it has helped to revolutionise the PVC value chain in Europe. It has allowed our sector to remain competitive while meeting the needs of society and has significantly enhanced PVC’s credentials and appeal as a material of choice for sustainable purchasing. Along the way, it has also contributed to the creation of a new recycling industry across Europe.”*

The final Progress Report also confirms that the phase out and replacement of certain additives from the PVC production process is ahead of schedule across the EU – with cadmium phased out quickly, and lead substitution well ahead of schedule and fully on track to be replaced completely by 2015. Other achievements of note include the ongoing development of innovative new technologies to expand the scope and volume of PVC recycling and the launch of a number of multi-stakeholder platforms to discuss and promote sustainable resource management. In addition major EU Risk Assessments on PVC plasticisers were completed and published by the European Commission and Member States with the support of producers. These risk assessments were the culmination of 10 years of in-depth evaluation.

Building on the success of Vinyl 2010, the European PVC industry is committed to setting even more ambitious targets for the future. For the past 12 months, the industry has been working with the globally respected Swedish Sustainable Development NGO, The Natural Step, to develop a progressive new commitment for the next ten years.

Vinyl 2010 was set up and is run by the four associations which represent the European PVC industry: the European Council of Vinyl Manufacturers (ECVM), the European Plastics Converters (EuPC), the European Stabiliser Producers Association (ESPA) and the European Council for Plasticisers and Intermediates (ECPI).



Among the factors that will influence the success of this new initiative will be the active support of all companies in the PVC value chain, increased recognition of the market value of recycled PVC and ever greater efforts by public authorities and other stakeholders to divert waste from landfills. Commenting on this, Josef Ertl added, *“certain companies in the value chain have managed to get away with reaping the benefits of Vinyl 2010 without signing up to it. As sustainability criteria become increasingly important in public and private procurement, these free riders risk seeing their products excluded from the market. Procurement officials, specifiers and buyers have an important role to play here by actively supporting the responsible purchasing of PVC.”*

VinylPlus, as the new voluntary commitment will be unveiled formally in June 2011.

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Note to the Editor

About Vinyl 2010

Vinyl 2010 was set up and is run by the four associations which represent the European PVC industry: the European Council of Vinyl Manufacturers (ECVM), the European Plastics Converters (EuPC), the European Stabiliser Producers Association (ESPA) and the European Council for Plasticisers and Intermediates (ECPI).

The implementation of Vinyl 2010 has been overseen by an Independent Monitoring Committee, consisting of representatives of the European Commission, the European Parliament and trade unions and consumer associations. Since October 2004, Vinyl 2010 has been a Partnership registered with the Secretariat of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development.

The main elements of the voluntary commitment adopted in 2000 included:

- A plan for full replacement of lead stabilisers by 2015, in addition to the phase out of cadmium stabilisers;
- Ongoing research on the part of the plasticiser industry in order to provide scientific studies and expertise to help policy makers develop well informed decisions
- The recycling by end 2010 of an additional 200,000 tonnes/year of unregulated ‘post-consumer’ PVC waste beyond what was already covered by European legislation on end-life-vehicles, electric and electronic equipment and packaging and the amount of post-consumer waste already recycled in Europe in 1999¹;
- A Research and Development programme on new recycling and recovery technologies, including feedstock recycling and solvent-based technology;
- The implementation of a social charter signed with the European Mine, Chemical and Energy Worker's Federation (EMCEF) to develop a social dialogue as well as training, health, safety and environmental standards

¹ From ‘Vinyl 2010 – Voluntary Commitment of the PVC industry’, October 2001 (p.2): *‘The recycling in 2010 of 200,000 tonnes of post-consumer PVC waste. This objective will come in addition to 1999 post-consumer recycling volumes and to any recycling of post-consumer waste as required by the implementation after 1999 of the EU Directives on packaging waste, end-of-life vehicles and waste electronic and electrical equipment’* (www.vinyl2010.org/library/voluntary-commitment.html)

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