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Press Release from

PlasticsEurope Deutschland e.V., AGPU – Arbeitsgemeinschaft PVC und Umwelt e.V., BDE Bundesverband der Deutschen Entsorgungs-, Wasser- und Rohstoffwirtschaft e.V., BKV GmbH, bvse – Bundesverband Sekundärrohstoffe und Entsorgung e.V., GKV – Gesamtverband Kunststoffverarbeitende Industrie e. V. and VDMI – Verband der Mineralfarbenindustrie e.V.

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New study confirms:

Planned classification of titanium dioxide brings major impacts on the plastics, waste and recycling industries

Very difficult to substitute – a massive limitation of product quality and product variety – negative for established disposal routes. This is the conclusion from a recent study by the plastics industry, pigment manufacturers and recyclers, should the whitener titanium dioxide be no longer available for plastics production. The study is a response to European Commission plans to possibly classify titanium dioxide as carcinogenic. Industry sees no reason for such a classification, as the existing strict limit values and regulations ensure the correct and safe use of titanium dioxide. Furthermore, various epidemiological long-term studies do not find any health risks for workers in the handling of the substance.

The white pigment is an important input for paints, cosmetics and medicines. In this country, almost all processed polymers contain TiO_2 , nearly 50% of them in quantities above 1%. The study wanted to obtain facts on the use of TiO_2 in plastics processing for different applications and to find out about the effects on the disposal of plastic waste. In the event of a classification, all those plastic waste streams that contain over 1% TiO_2 could become hazardous waste; in particular, this goes for construction and demolition waste. Here an overview of the essential results from the study:

- Given the excellent technical properties of TiO_2 , there is currently no alternative available for plastics manufacturers and processors.
- The recent survey among plastics processors confirms existing fears that a classification would cause a massive limitation of the broad range of applications for plastic products.

- At some points, plastic packaging waste – which is collected in light-packaging systems – might lead to TiO₂ contents above 1% due to sorting in individual plastic fractions. At present, this concerns some 400,000 tonnes of plastics that are currently channelled into mechanical recycling.
- In the construction sector this would affect especially the firmly established collection and recovery systems, for example, for window profiles – where over 90% have TiO₂ contents over 1%.
- The example from waste management shows that the potential consequences of a TiO₂ classification as carcinogenic would stand in contradiction to the EU's plastic waste strategy: Plastic waste that contains over 1% TiO₂ would have to be handled as hazardous waste in the future and could be no longer recycled as is done today.

The study highlights that a TiO₂ classification as a potential carcinogen can be expected to have negative effects particularly for industry and public administration – both in the manufacture and use of plastic products and in recycling.

The study was realised by Conversio Market & Strategy GmbH on behalf of PlasticsEurope Deutschland e.V., AGPU (working party PVC and environment), BDE (industry association for waste disposal, water and raw materials), BKV GmbH, bvse (association for secondary raw materials and disposal), GKV (association of plastics converters) and VDMI (association of the mineral pigments industry).

A summary version of the study can be downloaded from the websites of the organisations that mandated it. The full study is on sale from BKV (www.bkv-gmbh.de).