

EuPC Focus

EUROPEAN PLASTICS CONVERTERS NEWSLETTER
PROVIDING EuPC MEMBERS WITH A BRIEF OVERVIEW
OF EuPC ACTIVITIES AND ISSUES

BUILDING & CONSTRUCTION

September 2009



Construction Product Regulation: toward a new round of legislative discussions

In June 2008, the Commission proposed a recast of the construction product directive which was initially adopted in 1989. The recast was to become a regulation, the main goals of which were to clarify existing rules regarding the harmonised declaration of performance of construction products and to impose its uniform application in the EU Member States and the European Economic Area. The regulation provided for a common language for the declaration of performance, the use of which is shown by the display of the CE mark, since only through such a strong and universal system can barriers to trade be removed. Defining requirements concerning product performance remains a national or even regional decision based on traditions, lifestyles and the local situation. What is not acceptable is to use different technical

specifications in order to protect one local market. The regulation also formalised practices that had developed in the 20 years of implementation of the directive, such as shared or cascading initial type testing, without testing or without further testing classifications.

EuPC was pleased to see that the Commission proposal also extended the performance criteria that had to be declared, such as the sustainable use of natural resources. This issue is indeed high on the political agenda, and not including it in the harmonisation process would have meant a new framework for the creation of technical barriers to trade.

EuPC was largely supportive of the Commission proposal, although it expressed some concerns about competing CEN standards and the European Technical Agreements, as well as the risk of breaking the level playing field through an over-

simplified and uncontrolled declaration for micro-enterprises (via the 'technical file') or in the absence of a web-based declaration of performance.

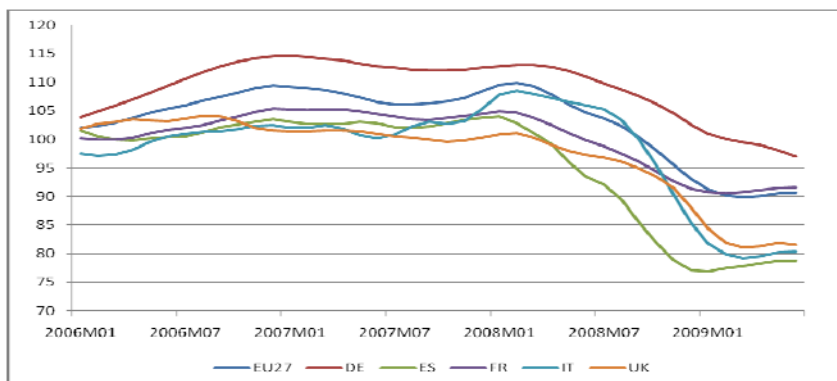
The EC proposal was heavily commented and amended by the European Parliament, resulting in a vote in the Plenary on 24 April 2009.

This last proposal formalises the EC's power to impose minimum requirements on products through this regulation. It provided for an electronic, but not web-based, declaration due to incompatible civil law requirements in the Member States. It also reinforced controls on micro-enterprises whilst decreasing the administrative burden to a maximum.

One major point of concern remains for **EuPC** and the plastics industry (but also for other materials): the Parliament proposed to add a declaration of all 'dangerous substances' contained in the construction products. This proposal is not only unfeasible in practice but it also duplicates part of the REACH chemical legislation and the balance that was achieved between the protection of the public, the principle of precaution, sound science and confidentiality. This proposal could lead specifiers or consumers to deselect products based only on potential hazards, while they are perfectly safe and necessary in order to reach certain performances, such as fire and

Manufacture of plastic plates, sheets, tubes and profiles - Production

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mechanical resistance.

The Council, which could not come to an agreement with the Parliament, has foreseen a sustained work programme during the Swedish presidency in the second semester of 2009 in order to develop common views among the Member States — an action welcomed by **EuPC**.

dustry should reach its 200,000 tonnes post-consumer waste recycling target.

In 2008, post-consumer PVC waste recycling reached 191,000 tonnes. This result has been achieved through sectoral initiatives and their progressive integration within the Recovinyl scheme, which registers and incentivises PVC recycling ac-

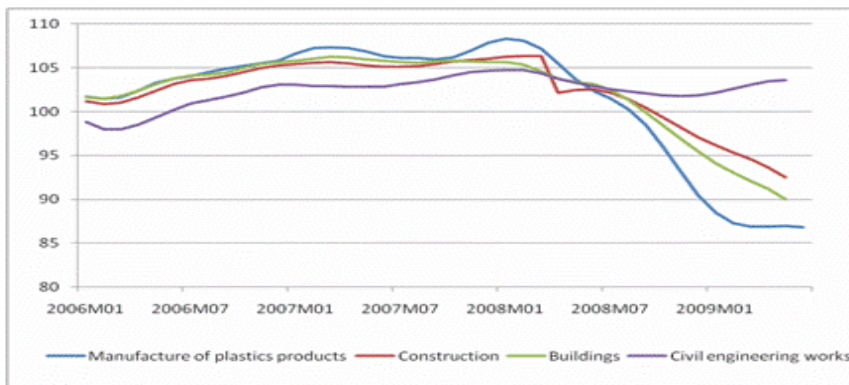
proven that it can deliver, sometimes even in advance. For instance, the 50% lead stabiliser substitution was reached two years ahead of schedule. This substitution has also been extended to the enlarged Europe (from 15 to 27 Member States).

2008 also saw the set up of a new funding mechanism in order to support the Voluntary Commitment activities, the Vinyl Foundation. Contribution from plastics converters to this Foundation exceeded one million euro in 2008. The objective is now to maintain and even increase this contribution in the course of 2009; however, the economic crisis is expected to adversely affect the results.

The Vinyl 2010 board of directors is now consulting with the PVC industry chain in order to decide on the next steps to be taken. There is a strong willingness to continue and set new targets for 2020. Many options are still open. It is clear from the onset that the new voluntary commitment will not be a mere expansion of the old one. New challenges and societal concerns, such as CO₂ emissions and energy consumption reduction, should also be taken into account, as should new policies for waste management.

EU27 Manufacturing Production

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It is not yet clear at which speed the document will be dealt with at the Parliament level for the second reading, however, a final adoption of the text is likely by mid-2010.

PVC industry Voluntary Commitment: a last step to 2010, a new strategy for 2020

In sixteen months the Vinyl 2010 programme shall be assessed according to its main targets. In fact, by the end of 2010 the in-

activities in Europe through a network of local agents. The economic downturn, however, also hit the recycling activity in 2009, as recently stated by Alexandre Dangis, Managing Director of **EuPC**, a decrease in volumes should be expected for this year. Nevertheless, signs of a recovery have been visible since June, and all efforts are made to meet the target by the end of 2010.

Vinyl 2010 has over the years

EuPC Upcoming events

15	September 2009	Packaging Excom	Brussels, EuPC Offices
16	September 2009	Steering Committee Meeting	Brussels, EuPC Offices
22-23	September 2009	NPA Platform Meeting	Copenhagen, Denmark
16	October 2009	Raw Materials Committee	Brussels, EuPC Offices
27	November 2009	B&C Plastics Fire Experts Forum	Brussels, EuPC Offices
1	December 2009	Packaging / B&C Excom	Brussels, EuPC Offices
2	December 2009	Steering Committee Meeting	Brussels, EuPC Offices