



PRESS RELEASE - EuPR

OXO DEGRADABLE ADDITIVES ARE INCOMPATIBLE WITH MECHANICAL RECYCLING

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Europe is leading the market in terms of sustainable development thanks to the abundance of European legislation aiming to protect the environment. The European Treaty of Lisbon goes even further than previous Treaty regarding environment. The new Treaty lays down that the European Union should aim to the “improvement of the quality of the environment” and not only protect it. New technologies are the one way to achieve the above mentioned objective. Nonetheless, after our analysis, some technologies bring more drawbacks than advantages for certain uses. This is the case of the OXO degradable additives used in plastics for several reasons.

Firstly, plastics are like an energy bank. Once the energy is stored by a polymerisation one can transform this energy into stable products. Depending on the product cycle the waste produced can be mechanically recycled or energy recovered to recuperate the enclosed energy. Therefore, in both cases the plastic has an energy value. On the opposite the use of OXO degradable additives will completely destroy the stored energy of the material. It is an economic and environmental nonsense to destroy this value. Moreover, it is the most unsustainable - together with landfill - way to use the valuable oil transformed in plastic. The claim that greenhouses gases are being saved by the use of OXO degradable additives is not a proven fact. Regarding plastics mechanically recycled several values can be discussed but all studies show clear emissions savings.

Secondly, the joint efforts done by all the stakeholders in order to achieve the European recycling targets is currently at risk. The OXO degradable additives will jeopardise mechanical recycling as they will pollute the existing waste streams. As a matter of fact, the consumer will not differentiate the different type of plastics and will throw everything in the same bin. Lack of accepted recyclability standards and over kill in labelling are not presenting a clear message to the consumer. Consequently, these uncontrolled presents of additives will create an uncontrolled quality of recycled material as these additives cannot be eliminated or detected. Furthermore, independent evaluations of the recyclability of these materials are missing.

Thirdly, these additives will not solve the littering issue. One way to tackle littering is through education. Moreover, the public attention will be diverted from recycling by thinking, “it will degrade by itself”. This thinking will damage the recycling rates achieved after decades of efforts from industry, authorities and population. Furthermore, it might increase littering instead of solving the problem as people will be less cautious to put their waste in adequate bins.

In conclusion, OXO degradable additives can be seen as hidden actor which is not bringing a clear message in finding a sustainable solution to waste generation. They destroy the stored material’s value, will not reduce littering and will jeopardise the benefits of mechanical recycling. EuPR calls industry to be watchful not to destroy the achievements of the past years in plastics recycling by using unsustainable technologies for plastics.



EuPR is the professional representative body of plastics recyclers in Europe. EuPR promotes plastics mechanical recycling and conditions that enable profitable and sustainable business, while offering a service platform to its members. EuPR members bring together 80% of the European recycling capacity processing more than 5 million tonnes of collected plastics per year. For more information please contact Antonino Furfari: Antonino.furfari@euapr.org