

# EuPIA Interview

## Jörg-Peter Langhammer

Chairman of the EuPIA Plastics Recycling Task Force



### **Why was the EuPIA Plastics Recycling Task Force established?**

The task force was established in the fall of 2018. The decision was taken because the Circular Economy (CE) concept is quickly being developed and adopted across the European Union where tangible legislation, such as SUP (Single Use Plastics Directive), is already a reality. This new task force complements the already existing Paper Recycling Task Force and focusses on printing ink applications on plastic packaging. Due to the focus of the public discussion and nonetheless of the EU Commission on plastic and plastic waste it was anticipated that there would be questions and concerns from stakeholders, such as converters and brand owner associations, and from recyclers regarding the impact of printing inks on the recyclability of plastic packaging. Ultimately, the goal of the task force is to inform and educate stakeholders (governments, industry and NGOs) about printing inks for plastic packaging and their impact and

influence on the overall recycling process. The key target is to minimize the impact of packaging inks in the plastic recycling process and driving the facilitation of enhanced plastic waste recycling. The task force also tracks legislative activities at the European and national levels, including the Circular Economy approach.

### **What is the modus operandi of the EuPIA Plastics Recycling Task Force?**

The task force is monitoring and disseminating important information on key consortia, projects and trends which pertain to plastics recycling across the European Union. The group also liaises with associations and initiatives across the plastics packaging value chain like for example with the Plastic Recyclers Europe (PRE) and the CEFLEX initiative (of which an increasing number of EuPIA members are at



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the same time CEFLEX members) in order to drive the discussion. We plan to provide guidance and solutions to any problems, questions, or issues as they relate to the recyclability of printing inks on plastic packaging. The task force also monitors legislative developments, recycling methods and stakeholder communications; especially news and information published by brand owners and converters. We also address any issues that arise in our market segment.

## **What has already been achieved? Has the task force produced any tangible results?**

An initial letter was sent to all relevant EuPIA partner associations to inform them of the establishment of the Plastics Recycling Task Force. The response has been positive. Contacts have been established to Plastic Recyclers Europe in March 2020 and the Task Force participated in the open consultation process of CEFLEX on their Phase 1 “Design for a Circular Economy” (D4ACE) Guidelines. Additional tangible results include: The creation of a statement (Customer Information Note) on Carbon Black which was posted on the EuPIA website at <https://www.eupia.org/key-topics/circular-economy> and a leaflet on

“printing inks based on bio-renewable raw materials and biodegradable or compostable inks” soon to be published as well on the EuPIA website. Additionally, there is a document folder available in the “Members Only” area on the EuPIA website, comprising of more than 100 documents related to Circular Economy topics.

## **What are the targets the task force plans to achieve in 2020?**

During 2020 the task force experts will intensify stakeholder discussions and proactively influence and be involved in developing Design4Recycling guidelines driven by various stakeholders. The task force will continue its support on questions as regards the role of printing inks in the different recycling processes, e.g. in mechanical or chemical recycling. We also aim to continue to prepare value-adding statements and positions for EuPIA as a whole. The task force will also expand its liaison with various associations and stakeholders in the plastics packaging value chain, as required.