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Plastics Recycling WORLD

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COVER PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK

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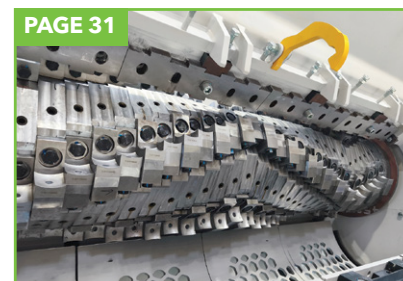
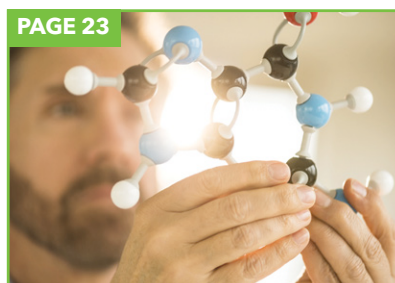
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Europe lags in switch to plastics circularity

Plastics Europe has published its biennial report, entitled *The Circular Economy for Plastics: A European Analysis*, providing the latest data and insights into Europe's circular plastics transition, including recycling.

Key findings include evidence that the pace of Europe's transition has slowed, with annual growth in circular production declining from 13.6% in 2022 to 1.2% in 2024, resulting in 8.7 Mt in circular output (15.8% of total production). By contrast, annual growth in global circular plastics production has accelerated from 5% to 7.7%.

"It is deeply concerning that, just when Europe should be accelerating the transition to a circular



economy, we see a dramatic slowdown," said Rob Ingram, President of Plastics Europe and CEO of Ineos Olefins & Polymers Europe. "As a result of high energy and feedstock prices, emissions costs and a lack of fair trade, Europe's plastics manufacturers are in survival mode."

Despite this, recycling rates have improved to 29.6% and Europe still main-

tains the largest share of circular plastics (15.8%) in relation to its total production mix, driven by a sharp decline in fossil-based plastics production, which fell by 8.3% between 2022 and 2024.

Plastics Europe said urgent action is needed to restore competitiveness and unlock investment in circular plastics.

➤ <https://plasticseurope.org>

Funds raised to scale recycling in Asia

Circulate Capital has raised \$220m for the first close of Circulate Capital Asia II fund, which has an overall target of \$300m. The Fund will now deploy growth capital to scale circular supply chains and recycling

businesses across South and Southeast Asia, with a focus on plastic solutions and packaging.

It is targeting key markets such as India, Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam, the Philippines, and Malaysia,

with real-world examples including scaling mature plastic recycling streams and building nascent markets for other plastic materials. Dow took part in the fundraising.

➤ www.circulatecapital.com

Portugal starts DRS scheme

Portugal has officially launched its deposit return scheme (DRS) for single-use drink containers, becoming the 19th European country to implement such a system and the first sizeable market in Southern Europe to do so.

The country is using Tomra reverse vending technology in the national DRS scheme. Paulo Borges, Managing Director at Tomra Collection Portugal, said Tomra's focus has been on delivering solutions that are user-friendly for consumers, efficient for retailers, and designed to support the ambitious collection targets set for Portugal.

Under the new system, managed by SDR Portugal, consumers will pay a €0.10 deposit when purchasing eligible drink containers, including PET plastic bottles as well as aluminium and steel cans up to 3L, and receive a full refund when the containers are returned via designated collection points.

➤ www.tomra.com

New US medical plastics recycling facility

Clym Environmental Services is opening a third medical plastics recycling facility in Frostburg, Maryland, US, using novel technology to sanitise biologically contaminated items and preserve plastic to be diverted from landfills.

The company has received \$1m from the Maryland Technology Economic Development Corporation to support operations at the new facility.

The company offers services under three categories; safety support, waste

management, and decommissioning services.

In Frostburg, the company is focused on waste management and helps customers dispose of hazardous waste properly.

➤ <https://clymenvironmental.com>

Austrian plant to sort complex polyolefin waste streams

Altstoff Recycling Austria (ARA), Bernegger, and GreenDot subsidiary Der Grüne Punkt, are building a new plant at the site of the TriPlast plastics sorting facility in Ennshafen port, Austria.

The Sort4cycle plant is described as a “unique flagship project” for the future of Europe’s circular economy. Using the Upcycle process, it will be able to process up to 41,000 tonnes/yr of plastics that previously could only be reclaimed through energy recovery, keeping more valuable raw materials in circulation and conserving resources.

The goal is to produce recycled polyolefin materials suitable for contact-sensitive packaging through



ARA and its partners will use the advanced Upcycle process to prepare polyolefin materials

chemical recycling and, eventually, also mechanical recycling.

“ARA has been working for over 30 years to continuously advance the circular economy in Austria,” said ARA CEO Thomas Eck. “With Sort4cycle, we are setting a true milestone –

not only nationally, but with a signal effect far beyond Austria. The plant is a decisive step toward closing plastics loops and preparing the use of recyclates in sensitive areas such as food packaging. This is essential for climate protection, resource conservation,

European raw material independence, and the resilience of our economy.”

A central component of Sort4cycle is a novel, AI-based, high-performance, post-sorting system which enables the extraction of high purity materials from complex waste streams. This combines with ARA’s patented Upcycle process. Backed by an investment of more than €40m, the owners say the new facility will help strengthen raw material sovereignty, innovation capacity, and supply security in Austria and Europe.

Commissioning is planned for mid-2027 and construction work is already underway.

➤ www.green-dot.com
 ➤ www.ara.at
 ➤ www.bernegger.at

IN BRIEF...

Tomra Recycling has opened its new Americas Test & Training Center in Charlotte, NC, featuring a testing circuit equipped with the latest sorting technologies, plus warehouse and training facilities.
www.tomra.com

Nova Chemicals says that Syndigo1, its PE recycling facility in Connersville, Indiana, US, has earned the Association of Plastic Recyclers post-consumer recycled and ISO 9001 certifications.
www.novachem.com

ERDE reports on agri plastics recycling in Germany

In 2025, a total of 37,342 tonnes of agricultural plastics were collected and sent for material recycling within the Erntekunststoffe Recycling Deutschland (ERDE) initiative take-back and recycling system established by RIGK and its partners. Despite an overall reduction in market volumes, the initiative further increased its recycling input rate compared to the previous year, making the system even more efficient.

“The high level of participation from agricultural businesses, trade and collection points shows that circular economy principles are increasingly being implemented in agriculture,” said Boris Emmel, System Manager of the ERDE initiative. He said that every returned agricultural plastic item helps to keep valuable raw materials in circulation and sustainably reduce environmental impact.

Under the umbrella of

the IK packaging industry group, manufacturers work together with RIGK as system operator, agricultural businesses, collection partners, recyclers, and the agricultural trade to ensure a functioning take-back and recycling system with more than 700 collection points.

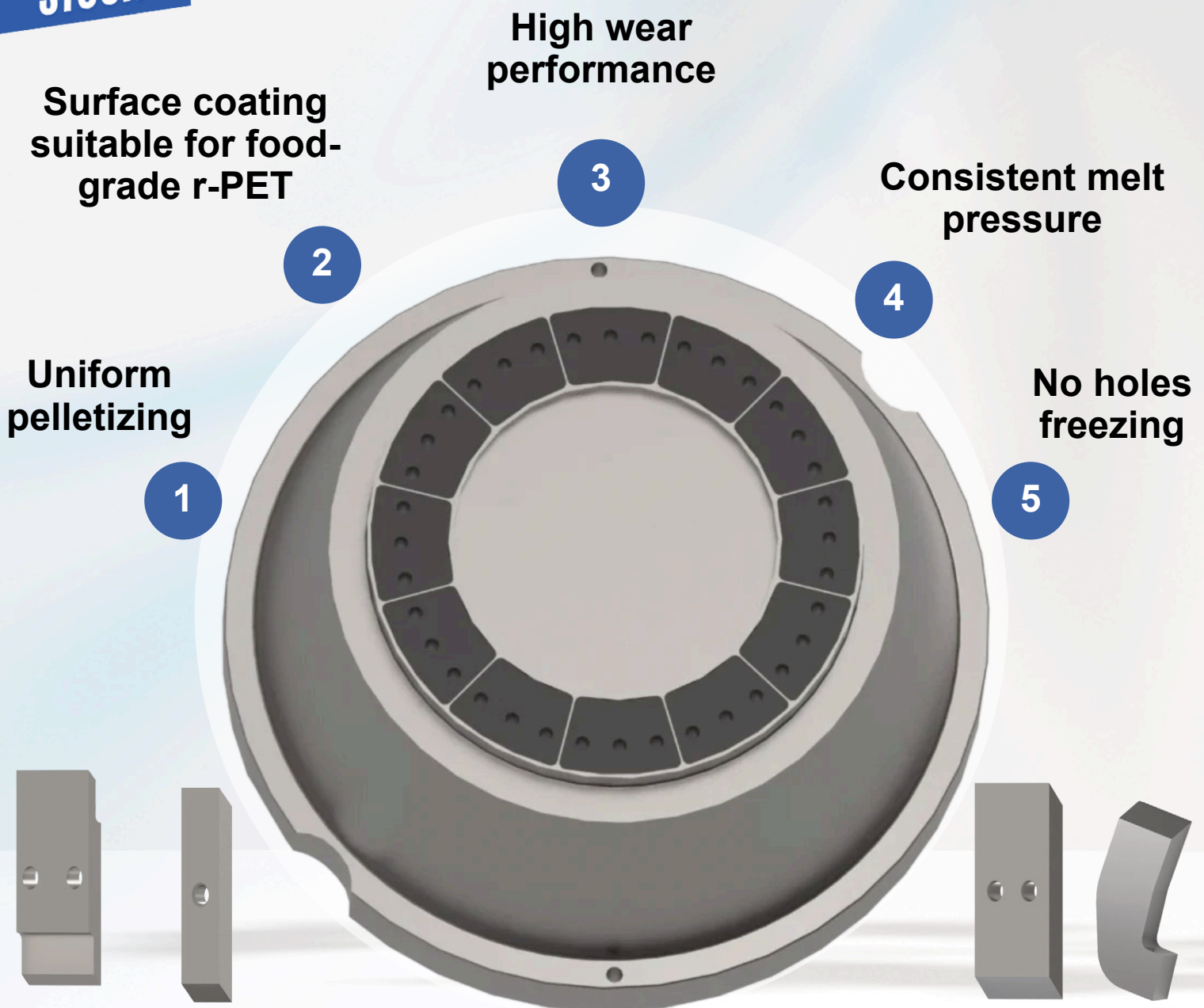
Greenhouse films and drip irrigation pipes have now been integrated into the collection system, said the ERDE initiative.

➤ www.erde-recycling.de



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Coveris demo plant uses Nextek technology

The COtooClean demonstration plant is now fully operational at Coveris' ReCover site in Lincolnshire, UK. The plant highlights what has been called a "breakthrough" purification technology designed to convert post-consumer polyolefin film waste into high-quality recycled resin suitable for food-grade applications.

Developed by Nextek and scaled in partnership with Coveris, COtooClean addresses the persistent issue of embedded contaminants in plastic films. Using supercritical CO₂ extraction, the process effectively penetrates deep into the polymer structure to remove oils, odours, and legacy substances that conventional mechanical recycling cannot fully eliminate.

"With COtooClean now fully operational, we are taking an important step in preparing to solve the food-grade recycling challenge for flexible films," said Bernhard Mumelter, Group Innovation Manager



COtooClean technology for polyolefin film waste

at Coveris Group. "Together with our advanced de-inking technologies, this innovation strengthens our mechanical recycling capabilities and opens the next phase of solutions for more demanding applications."

By enabling significantly higher decontamination performance, the partners expect the technology to pave the way for increased availability of food-grade recycled content, supporting regulatory compliance and reducing reliance on virgin materials.

This first-of-its-kind plant, built with funding from the Alliance to End Plastic Waste, will allow the project to enter its industrial phase. Trials have now begun to generate the two years of data required by European regulators while also showcasing the technology to the wider industry.

According to Edward Kosior, founder of Nextek, COtooClean's high purification performance adds a critical complementary step.

> www.nextek.org
> www.coveris.com

Cedo buys Italian PE recycler

Films producer and recycler Cedo has acquired polyethylene recycler Polimero, based in Rovigo, Italy.

Polimero has nearly 40 years of experience in transforming flexible plastic waste into high-quality recycled LDPE granulates and currently supplies around 9,000 tonnes/yr for a range of industrial applications.

"This marks another key milestone in executing our growth strategy and reinforces our commitment to advancing circular solutions in our industry," said Thierry Navarre, Cedo CEO.

Cedo said the acquisition strengthens its position as a vertically integrated circularity platform for flexible plastic films. It expands the company's operational footprint into Southern Europe, and adds to recent acquisitions such as Plasta Group and Vinatic.

> www.cedo.com
> www.polimero-srl.it

New PS recycling collaboration in Mexico

North American coalition the Polystyrene Recycling Alliance (PSRA) has announced a strategic collaboration with the Mexican Plastics Pact (PPMX) to collect and recycle high-impact polystyrene (HIPS) dairy packaging in central Mexico.

"This partnership allows us to strengthen the system around HIPS - testing practical solutions, generating

real-world insights, and demonstrating how collaboration across the value chain can advance broader circularity goals in Mexico," said Liseth Cordero, Member of the PPMX and CEO of Ecolana.

The partnership brings together leading consumer brands, including Danone, Lala, and Yakult, alongside specialised recycling networks, to

create an integrated value chain.

With support from PSRA, the initiative will establish operations spanning Mexico City, the State of Mexico, Querétaro, and Puebla, channelling recovered HIPS through Resirene's recycling facility over a 14-month implementation timeline.

> <https://psrecycling.org/>
> <https://pactodelosplasticosmexico.org>

Polykemi adds recycling line and expands to Thailand

Polykemi Group is expanding with the launch of a subsidiary company in Thailand and the addition of recycling capacity in Sweden.

Group company Rondo Plast has installed a ReadyMac recycling machine at its plant in Ystad, Sweden, adding 2,500 tonnes/yr of capacity.

Until now, the focus of PCR materials had been on PP and PE but in future, engineering plastics such as PC, ABS, PS, and PA can also be processed. According to Polykemi, this is made possible in part by laser

filters that remove impurities down to 100 µm.

"With the ReadyMac, we manage a larger part of the process and can handle recycled plastic at an earlier stage than before," said Magnus Andersson, Production Manager at Polykemi Group. He said the investment allows it to add process stabilisers to the material during upgrading and improve quality.

Over the past two years, Polykemi and Rondo have invested almost SEK 25m (€2.3m) with a view to increasing production

capacity by around 7,500 tonnes/yr.

Separately, Polykemi announced it has established an office in Rayong, Thailand, adding that it "is continuously evaluating the possibilities for a future production facility for plastic compounds based on high-quality virgin and recycled raw materials".

Magnus Lindahl, CEO for Polykemi Asia, said: "We have established a local office in Thailand and will supply materials from our factory in Kunshan, China. Depending on how our

local sales in the region develop, a future production facility in Thailand may become a possibility."

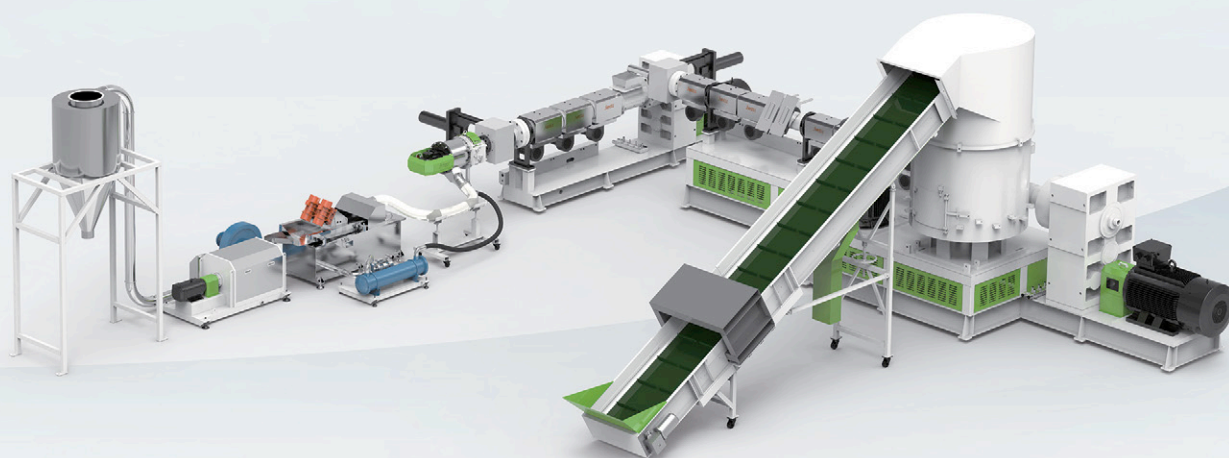
With two production units and two sales offices established in China, Polykemi said its production capacity for the Asian market is already strong. The office in Thailand is the next step in its plan to increase local sales presence. It enables faster and more direct service to customers such as suppliers to Japanese automotive companies.

➤ www.polykemi.se

➤ www.rondoplast.se



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Advanced plastics recovery line for electronics waste

Quantum Lifecycle Partners has opened a new Advanced Plastics Recovery Line at its facility in Toronto, Canada. The \$4m system integrated into Quantum's existing \$10m electronics processing infrastructure uses innovative float-sink separation technology to sort mixed polymer streams recovered from end-of-life IT equipment such as computers and printers. The output is clean, sorted plastic flake that meets Basel Convention standards for international trade.

"This facility represents a meaningful step forward in what's possible for electronics recycling in Canada," says Clayton Miller, VP Recycling, Quantum Lifecycle Partners. "For the first time, we're able to take the plastic fraction from end-of-life devices and produce a consistent, high-quality output that can re-enter the supply chain."

The electronics waste stream has



Quantum Lifecycle Partners installed the line at its facility in Toronto, Canada

heterogeneous polymer mixes, flame retardants, and contamination which have historically made it difficult to produce material that meets the quality threshold for markets.

Quantum said the new line expands its ability to offer producers a

complete, end-to-end solution for their electronics recycling under Ontario's EPR framework. Ontario is currently the only province in Canada operating a fully competitive EPR system for electronics.

➤ <https://quantumlifecycle.com>

Better latte than never

Italian companies Sirmax and De' Longhi have joined forces to develop Eletta Ultra, a coffee machine featuring exterior parts made from 70% recycled content designed to combine Italian style and coffee culture with an increasingly responsible industrial vision.

To meet De' Longhi's specific requirements Sirmax developed the Green Isoter compound from domestic WEEE streams for non-food-contact aesthetic components.

➤ <https://sirmax.com>

WPU plans Dutch pyrolysis plant

WPU, Vitol's plastics recycling business, says it plans to build a new chemical recycling facility at the Port of Rotterdam in the Netherlands, alongside Vitol's refinery, VPR.

The new plant will have the capacity to process

80,000 tonnes/yr of post-consumer plastics and when completed is expected to be one of Europe's largest chemical recycling plants. The location makes it well-placed to connect recycled output with existing industrial infrastructure.

WPU has developed batch pyrolysis technology which converts plastic waste into pyrolysis oil and already applies the technology at its plant in Denmark, which currently has a capacity of 20,000 tonnes/yr.

➤ www.vitol.com

Recycling ready meal packaging

Ausolan, Awayter, ITC Packaging and Aimplas are collaborating on the Reloop project that integrates the automatic dispensing of prepared food and the return of reusable, traceable containers in a closed-loop system.

One of the project's main objectives is the development of reusable and traceable food packaging, designed to withstand multiple cycles of use throughout its lifespan. To achieve this, the consortium is researching new materials

that can withstand washing and drying processes without compromising the quality of the packaging.

The project is also investigating solutions that allow the journey of each container to be tracked.

➤ <https://aimplas.net>

To increase content of recycled plastics in automotive applications, the value chain is working with car groups to develop new technologies and applications. By Laura Florez

IMAGE: SHUTTERSTOCK

Round and round: making automotive plastics circular

The automotive sector is facing a new era, where circularity is gaining the same relevance as electrification. Driven both by legislation and environmental concerns, the industry is focused on finding new ways to incorporate recycled content in plastic applications.

During the conference at the IKV Colloquium in Aachen, Werner Tietz, Head of Group Research and Development at Volkswagen, emphasized that upcoming regulations will reshape material strategies across the automotive value chain. These regulations imply 15% of recycled plastics content from post-consumer sources in automotive applications by 2032, and 25% by 2036. Amongst this share, about 20% should come from end-of-life vehicles (see box on final page of article).

The barriers to increasing the uptake of recycled materials in vehicle manufacturing arise from several factors: contamination due to a combination of materials such as fibres, paint, or textiles;

difficulties in sorting different plastic types, particularly black components. And the economic viability of different recycling methods.

OEMs and technology suppliers are working on several solutions to overcome these challenges. The latest technological developments demonstrate the protagonism of chemical and solvent-based recycling as solutions to achieve the required recycled content targets, without sacrificing material performance. In addition, sorting technologies hold the promise of improving the purity of the end-of-life (ELV) vehicles waste streams.

Chemical recycling is proving to be a valuable alternative for contaminated plastic waste streams. **BASF** announced a research project together with **ETH Zurich**, where alternatives are being investigated to recycle mixed plastic ELV waste. In this case, the shredded residue is mixed with biomass (in a proportion of 1:3 in weight) and chemically recycled via gasification.

Main image:
Will automotive plastics recycling gain traction from EU-mandated targets?

ETH Zurich has shown in a new study that gasification of automotive shredder residue mixed with bio-waste saves greenhouse gas emissions if compared to incineration with energy recovery. At the same time a new, circular feedstock for the chemical industry is generated



IMAGE: BASF

Instead of incinerating plastics and biomass separately for energy recovery, co-gasification procures steam and synthesis gas, used as feedstock for several chemicals. The results show so far that greenhouse gas emissions can be reduced by more than 3 kg of CO₂-equivalent¹, as compared to their incineration for energy recovery.

The volume potential for non-fossil feedstock from automotive plastic waste is estimated at over a million tonnes currently. This is the fraction of automotive plastic waste being either incinerated or landfilled in Europe per year. And whereas the fraction that can be recovered through other mechanisms (such as mechanical recycling) increases, there will always remain a mixed plastic waste as residual.

Another project gasification project involved the cooperation between Porsche, BASF and the technology partner BEST - Bioenergy and Sustainable Technologies. In this case, mixed ELV waste made of plastic, film, paint and foam residues was chemically recycled together with renewable raw materials. The resulting material - synthesis gas and its derivatives - was used as raw material in the manufacturing process of steering wheels.

"We are testing new recycling technologies with our direct partners in order to increase recycle quotas, gain access to previously unusable recycle sources and evaluate new processes for waste streams that are currently being thermally utilized," said Robert Kallenberg, Head of Sustainability at Porsche.

The method is seen as a complementary alternative to mechanical recycling, to enhance the quality of the material obtained. "In our plant, we have previously converted biomass such as wood or straw into chemical raw materials. In this pilot project,

together with BASF and Porsche, we have now used this gasification technology for the first time to convert complex plastic waste streams together with biomass into synthetic crude oil, known as syn-crude," said Matthias Kuba, Area Manager Syngas Platform Technologies at BEST in Vienna.

Solvent-based recycling

Audi has partnered with the **Fraunhofer Institute for Process Engineering and Packaging IVV**, among others, to recover high-purity PC/ABS from shredded automotive plastics on a pilot scale. Shredded automotive plastics are a mixture of polyolefin, PC/ABS, ABS, PC, ASA and polyamide. Through physical solvent-based recycling, the fraction of PC/ABS can be separated from PC and ABS, by being selectively dissolved in a special, non-hazardous, solvent formulation. This fraction is then purified and recovered as granules, obtaining a material with good mechanical and rheological properties. The undissolved components are mechanically removed, and contaminants are separated at the molecular level using special purification steps.

After purification, molecular weight of the obtained polymer is claimed to be similar to that of the virgin material. The target material is recovered from the solvent by precipitation and dried. To improve the impact strength, the physically recovered PC/ABS regranulate is treated with specific additives and compounded with 50% pre-consumer regrind. Finally, decorative frames from the bumper area were tested. Dimensional stability, paint adhesion and odor criteria were met.

A similar project, funded by the Volkswagen foundation, is developing a solvent-based recycling process, which allows engineering plastics to be separated, purified and recovered from the plastic mixture in ELV waste. The recycled plastics are tailored as a compound with virgin material, to optimize the mechanical properties, the processability and to reduce the odour emissions.

Spanish research centre **Aimplas** has launched the H₂O₂Odor project, focusing on PCR polyolefins for their use in vehicle interiors. By incorporating water-based decontamination and deodorization technologies, the objective is to significantly minimize the presence of volatile compounds inside the vehicle. "Our goal is to demonstrate that it is possible to manufacture high-quality recycled materials with low environmental impact and reduced odour that are competitive for use in vehicle interiors," said Juan Alfonso Naranjo, Researcher in Sustainable and Future Mobility at Aimplas.

H₂O₂Odor involves the participation of **Fych**

Technologies, a Spanish start-up which has developed an innovative odour elimination technology based on water vapour. The process is based on the principle of internal diffusion of toxic substances and odorous compounds. During the treatment, high temperature generates a decrease in the boiling point of these compounds, which do not mix with water, enabling their evaporation from the polymer surface.

Improved sorting

The quality of the recycled plastics depends heavily on the purity obtained in the sorting process. Basic sorting methods, such as floating separation, are not useful because engineering materials used in automotive applications often share very similar densities.

A Danish Recycling Company called **Trebo** has developed a new technology for sorting different types of plastics, using fluid mechanics. The granule plastic is immersed in a liquid where it is subjected to a pre-defined movement, set according to parameters such as density, shape and size, which will suit a specific plastic mix.

"When plastic particles of different types are

subjected to a specific fluid-mechanical movement, they behave differently - for example, one type of plastic will seek to move upwards, another downwards. If the process continues for a sufficiently long time, all the particles will eventually be completely separated into two different layers. Just like in a layer cake," said Christian Lundsgaard, Partner and Development Engineer at Trebo. The company's chemical-free separation technology enables the sorting of complex material mixtures, a promise for automotive industry. The method does not harm the materials and allows for extremely high purities, according to declarations from the company.

Another breakthrough in sorting was recently announced in the identification of black plastics. **Canon** announced a new Raman plastic analyser under the reference TR-A100. This innovative technology enables advanced material identification, particularly relevant to sort black plastics, commonly found in automotive upholstery. So far, it was not possible to sort black plastics via near infrared spectroscopy. The new technology employs an advanced laser scanning method, where the laser irradiation position oscillates to reduce energy density. By ensuring sufficient, tailored measure-

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Right: The VW T-Roc incorporates around 40 kg of plastic components from recycled sources

ment time, Canon affirms that it can accurately identify even black plastics, which typically present weak signals to other technologies.

Honda announced a new “chemical sorting” technology, which sorts and extracts reusable plastics from waste plastic parts, containing solid contaminants associated with automotive waste: rubber hoses and gaskets, reinforcing materials (such as glass fibres) and metals. The solid contaminant separation technology uses chemical sorting, which dissolves the resin into a solvent to remove contaminants and extract a high-purity material.

Waste plastic parts contain solid contaminants of various sizes. Conventional separation methods require filters and sorting processes for each target contaminant. Since the sizes vary, the filter mesh must be set very fine, causing clogging.

By using coarse-mesh filters that are less prone to clogging to sort out millimeter-sized coarse contaminants, and using centrifuges to physically separate micrometer-sized fine contaminants, the new chemical sorting technology developed by Honda eliminates the need to adjust the specifications of removal filters depending on the size of each contaminant, enabling the thorough removal of contaminants of all sizes.

Recycled content

The use of the newly developed chemical sorting technology enabled Honda to improve the solid contaminant separation rate to more than 99%. “After undergoing mechanical and chemical recycling processes, reusable plastics extracted through the chemical sorting technology will be reused as automotive materials, enabling closed-loop recycling”, explains the company in a press release.

Honda will build a pilot facility with a maximum processing capacity of 350 tonnes/yr and verify the



IMAGE: VOLKSWAGEN

technology by the end of 2026, striving to put it into practical use by around 2029.

Applications incorporating recycled plastic content and developments of new grades based on post-consumer recyclate are increasing day by day. A noticeable example is the new Volkswagen T-Roc, a pioneer for the brand in terms of recycled materials incorporation. Up to 140 exterior and interior components are manufactured entirely or partially from recycled materials, accounting for around 40 kg, which is 16% of the total plastic mass installed in the model. The largest components made from recycled materials include the underbody paneling and luggage compartment trim, headliner, front door trims, wheel housing liners and floor coverings. Also, up to 85% of the textiles used contain recycled materials, largely sourced from PET bottle flakes.

Toyota announced in July last year that its model Crown Sport has incorporated for the first time recycled plastic derived from ASR (Automotive Shredder Residue) in the front fender seal. The group company KK Planic is the supplier of the material, and is one of the largest recycled plastic manufacturing companies in Japan. This success derives from a new technology, called advanced gravity separation, used by Planic to overcome the challenges associated with the sorting of collected plastics that include ASR.

As for new grades, **Borouge International** announced the global launch of Borcycle GE2331SY, a new high-performance, recycled PP compound designed for demanding structural automotive components. The launch builds on the success of Borcycle GD3600SY, introduced in 2024 with 65% PCR content, expanding the global reach of the Borcycle M portfolio.

The glass-fibre reinforced compound combines 40% post-consumer recycled material with 20% glass fibres to deliver the strength required for interior structural parts. It is already being used by



IMAGE: BOROUGE

Above: Borouge International has developed Borcycle GE2331SY, a high-performance recycled PP compound designed for demanding structural automotive components

several OEMs for high-end structural automotive components, including centre console carriers and dashboard carriers, demonstrating its suitability for premium applications.

Covestro has announced a collaboration with Chinese plastics recycling company Ausell, to accelerate the recycling of plastics from end-of-life vehicles. Ausell already recycles 1 million PC water barrels annually, converting them into high-performance recycled PC. With this addition, Ausell will supply recycled polycarbonates from discarded automotive headlamps, which Covestro will process into high-quality recycled materials for automotive engineering applications.

"This partnership underscores the importance of cross-sector collaboration in driving the circular economy forward," said Martin Hansen, Regional Director of GIZ in East Asia. "By bringing together key industry players, we are not only creating viable solutions for recycling high-value plastics from end-of-life vehicles but also fostering innovation that supports a sustainable, closed-loop material flow in the automotive industry."

Strategic source

The **BMW Group** and **PreZero**, the international circular economy company that forms parts of the Schwarz Group, signed a strategic cooperation agreement to substantially advance circular economy across the European automotive industry. The aim of the collaboration, according to BMW, is to develop a business model for the recycling of end-of-life vehicles, creating a closed loop for both materials and recycling.

The core of this collaboration is to develop a viable business model, using ELVs as a strategic source of materials. Within the framework of the collaboration, innovative and efficient recycling processes for end-of-life vehicles will be jointly tested and brought to series maturity, while new approaches to material flow management will also be developed.

A core element will be knowledge transfer: from the assembly line to the recycling pipeline, the BMW Group will contribute its "design for recycling" know-how and insights gained from the recycling of ELVs at its in-house Recycling and Dismantling Centre, as well as materials and manufacturing expertise. PreZero will share its expert knowledge of European material flows and sorting technologies.

In May this year, **The Global Impact Coalition** (GIC), a CEO-led platform enabling the chemical industry and its value chain to transition to a circular and net-zero chemicals future, announced



IMAGE: BMW

that **Jaguar Land Rover** (JLR) joined GIC's Automotive Plastic Circularity project as a founding member, to scale automotive circularity. This industry platform works to build a market for recycled automotive plastics. The objective is to overcome chain barriers related to cost coordination, material quality standards and cross sector alignment, to move from pilot projects to real-world material flow infrastructure.

JLR operates a Circularity Lab that brings together cross-functional teams and external partners to solve challenges around recyclability and material recovery. The collaboration could show how coordination between manufacturers, material suppliers, and recyclers can create standardised approaches to end-of-life vehicle plastic recovery. By aligning procurement specifications with recycling capabilities, the partnership seeks to establish commercially viable circular material flows.

JLR is one of three OEMs getting involved and will work together with chemical companies to provide expertise in vehicle design and circularity innovation. The company will help prioritize vehicle components, define specifications for recycled automotive plastics, and contribute to the development of a business case and an industry roadmap for end-of-life vehicle plastics recycling.

Charlie Tan, CEO of the Global Impact Coalition, welcomed JLR to the project as an important step forward, stating that if automotive plastics recycling is going to scale, OEMs need to be a part of the solution: "Today, the challenge is not technology. It is that the plastics value chain was never designed to recover materials at the end of life. As a result, recovery remains complex, inconsistent and often uneconomic. Our Phase 1 pilot and report showed that meaningful recovery is possible. The next phase is about addressing the structural barriers and moving towards implementation at an industry scale. This requires coordination across the value

Above: BMW Group and PreZero signed a cooperation agreement to develop a business model for the recycling of end-of-life vehicles

EU is on the road to ELV Regulation

In December last year, a provisional agreement was reached between the European Parliament and the European Council regarding the End of Life Vehicle Regulation (ELVR).

Following the positive vote from the European Parliament's committees, it was published on 25 February, and it will become law if the wider European Parliament Plenary and the European Council vote through the agreement.

Recycled plastic content mandates will be phased in over a ten-year period with a minimum 15% recycled

content six years after entry into force of the regulation, and a minimum 25% recycled content required ten years after entry into force of the regulation. Also, at least 20% of these recycled content targets must be sourced from end-of-life vehicles. Only recycled material from post-consumer waste will be allowed to count towards the minimum recycled content target.

The ELVR will also introduce design requirements for new vehicles, to improve disassembly and mono-material designs, criteria regarding when

a vehicle is considered an ELV and a ban on the export of ELVs. It will also consider a cross-border extended producer responsibility (EPR) scheme.

Chemical recycling will be allowed to contribute to ELVR targets using a mass-balance accounting approach. The EU Commission will need to adopt an implementing act to establish verification methods for the recycled content targets, including mass balance, by 24 months after the entry into force of the regulation.

➤ <https://environment.ec.europa.eu>

chain to make automotive plastics circularity commercially viable."

Digitalization

A research project to improve automotive plastics circularity is under development at the **Brunel University of London**. The project, named EcoPlast, is developing an integrated digital platform to optimize the circular economy in automotive plastics. The comprehensive approach integrates eco-design tools, Life Cycle Assessment, Circularity Index measurement, Digital Product Passports for traceability and AI-driven process automation. Under this approach, the objective is to optimize material recovery, enhance process efficiency and improve the availability of information to track recycled content. Additionally, a circular marketplace will be established to promote trading of recycled and upcycled materials

In Germany, the new RezyPart research project uses AI to improve the quality of recycled plastics from ELVs. It encompasses a partnership between the automotive component manufacturer **Brose**, German Research Centre **SKZ**, the software development company **LabV Intelligence Solutions** and the materials expert R-Plast. The objective is to use software aided by AI, to precisely predict the effects of contamination in automotive parts.

It may be then possible to decide whether to reincorporate or not recycled materials into automotive applications. "With RezyPart, we are developing an AI solution based on our data platform to be able to precisely assess the quality of recyclates in the future and make reliable statements about component properties," said

Stefan Thomas, Managing Director at LabV Intelligent Solutions.

SKZ also sees the pooling of expertise as an important step for the industry: "With RezyPart, we are paving the way for meeting legal and customer-specific requirements and see it as the start of a comprehensive recycled materials initiative," said SKZ Project Manager Tobias Göbel. "We are creating the foundation for integrating recycled materials into sophisticated components in a targeted and high-quality manner. In this way, we are promoting a true circular economy in the automotive sector."

1. GHG emissions measured in CO₂ equivalent (CO₂-eq) on a cradle-to-gate basis.

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BOOK YOUR PLACE TODAY

Plast progress: Italian show reaches 20th edition

The Plast 2026 show in Milan in June will offer opportunity amid market challenges, the exhibition organisers said at an event for media in Italy recently. By David Eldridge

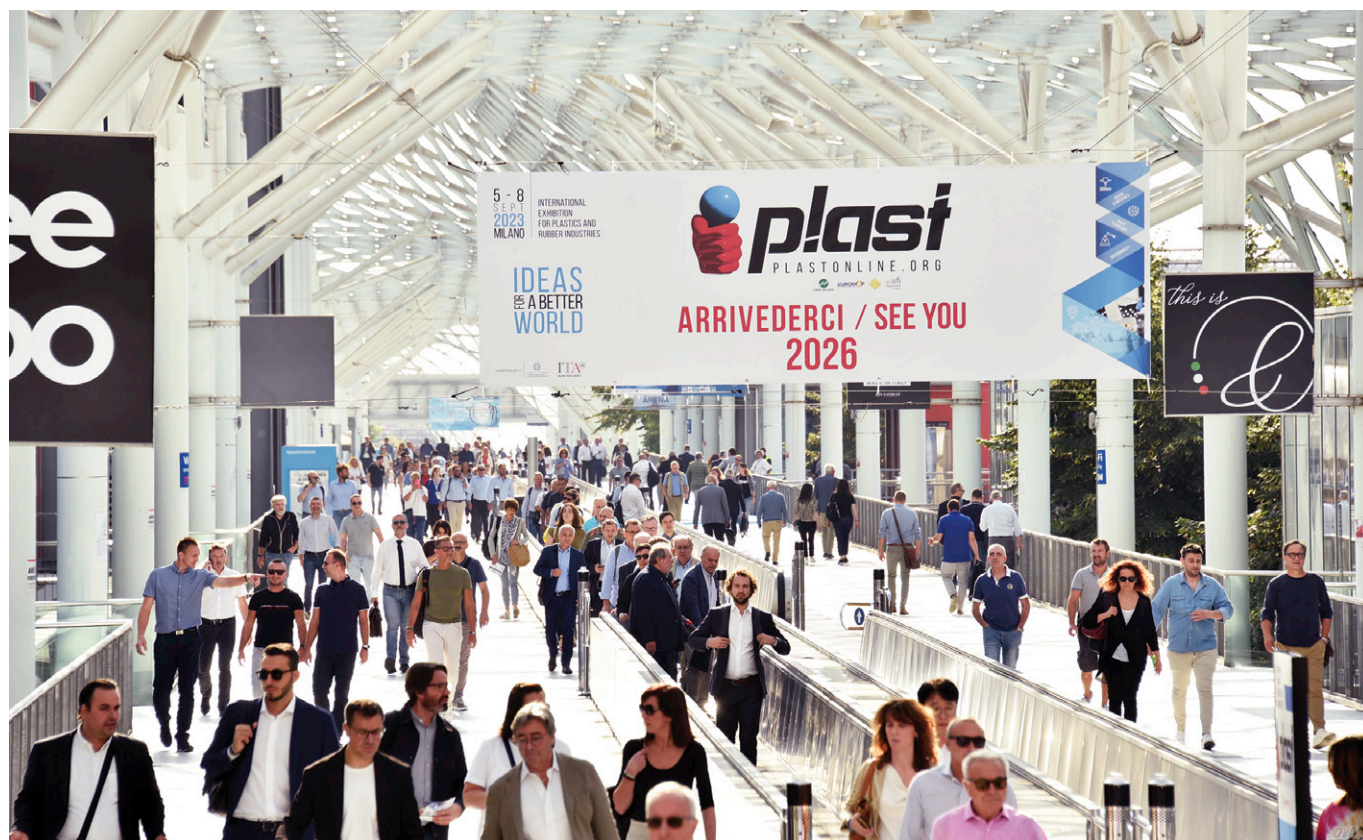


IMAGE: PROMOPLAST

Main image: Plast last took place in 2023 and is expected to attract visitors from around the world in 2026

The Plast exhibition returns on 9 to 12 June at Fiera Milano, Rho, to once again become the showcase to the world for Italy's plastics and rubber industry. This is the 20th edition of Plast, indicating the ability of the long-established event to promote the Italian industry as a destination for foreign investment and as a leading exporter of machinery and materials.

Plast editions have mostly taken place in a three-year cycle, apart for occasional unavoidable interruptions, for example during the Covid pandemic. The event has continued to adapt and evolve, thanks to the efforts of the organiser Promaplast to maintain interest by introducing new features for visitors to the show, and create new events in the cycle, such as GreenPlast in 2025.

As in 2023, Plast will take place this year with three satellite shows – Rubber, 3D Plast (3D printing and additive technologies) and PlastMat (focusing on materials innovation) – altogether occupying six halls of eight at MaTec. The MaTec project brings together Plast with two other manufacturing shows: Composites Future and Xylexpo (wood and furniture technologies).

International profile

At the first of a series of press events in Italy in February, a group of international journalists heard comments from the Plast team led by Mario Maggiani, CEO of Promaplast, which is owned by Amaplast, the Italian Plastics and Rubber Processing Machinery and Mould Manufacturers Association.

Gabriele Caccia, Vice-President of Amaplast, spoke of the international profile of the Plast event, claiming it to be the second most important plastics trade fair in Europe after the K Show. Plast 2026 is taking place against a background of market challenges and geopolitical uncertainty which has made companies reluctant to invest in new technologies, he said. "We consider Plast 2026 to be a unique opportunity to give new life to markets that have been decreasing," he said.

Research by Amaplas on Italian exports of plastics and rubber machinery in 2025 showed a mixed picture. There were reductions in exports to nearly all geographical regions, with the exception of Asia/Oceania, where exports were 8.7% higher, driven primarily by China and India.

In the face of the headwinds affecting the global plastics market, Promaplast is nonetheless hopeful about Plast 2026. Alessio Fineo, Plast Exhibition Manager, said 800 exhibitors had registered by 31 January, a figure which is expected to exceed 1,000 when all companies represented by these exhibitors are added into the total. This is a similar number as at Plast 2023, he said, adding that although the 2026 show has lost a few exhibitors, there are approximately 160 companies that are new Plast exhibitors. Exhibitors from China have increased by about 10%.

Visitor expectations

Promaplast is expecting Plast 2026 to receive visitors from 120 countries. It has been promoting the event around the world and has the Italian Trade Agency as its partner seeking buyer delegations. Fineo said that this is expected to lead to attendance by "high quality visitors", meaning those who have plans to buy. Mario Maggiani made the observation that the K2025 show did not experience an increase in total visitors but there was a belief in the high quality of visitors that did attend.

Packaging is a plastics market that is doing quite well in Italy, said Maggiani. Suppliers that are showing resilience include mould manufacturers (although not those serving the pressurised automotive sector) and ancillary equipment companies, he said.

The press tour that followed the event in February covered a couple of key Italian machinery manufacturers, including ancillaries group **Moretto**. A highlight of the visit to Morretto's headquarters in Massanzago, Padua was an expanded production area which recently finished construction. The expanded hall has a total area of 13,000 m², functionally integrated with the other existing facilities, optimising industrial planning and



IMAGE: AMI / ELDRIDGE

improving the ability to respond to customer requests, says the company.

Stationed in the hall was a specially-adapted truck being used in the Moretto in Motion 2026 tour, a roadshow that brings the company's advanced technologies for the plastics processing industry directly to customers' premises. This tour began with a series of events in Italy, plus several cities in other European countries also on the itinerary.

At the Massanzago facility, customers can see Moretto's large portfolio of equipment, from dryers, to blenders to granulators, at the company's Multifunctional Showroom. Journalists were shown round the showroom by Renato Moretto, Chairman and Founder, and Mirco Panizzon, Head of Sales.

Ancillary interest

Among the products Moretto will exhibit at Plast 2026 is the X Comb series of mini dryers which has been expanded with the new XC19 model, suitable for production rates up to 60 kg/h. Panizzon described it as "compact but packed with technology". The XC19 - which has a footprint of 0.56 m² - features Honeycomb technology in 100% Zeolite with superior absorbent capacity, the OTX hopper and the Hyper Flow turbo compressors with variable flow, which lead to a consistent process and high energy efficiency.

Panizzon also highlighted Moretto's Hyper Cut high productivity grinder, with capacity up to 1,200 kg/h. This is a versatile granulator that can be used in injection moulding, extrusion, blow moulding and thermoforming. The flexible rotor design allows the cutting elements to be set to process any type of waste pieces, which Moretto says ensures high performance in all conditions, with benefits in terms of productivity, regrind quality, reduced noise impact and absence of dust.

At Plast 2026, Moretto will demonstrate ancillary

Above: Mirco Panizzon, Head of Sales at Moretto presenting the Hyper Cut granulator. Behind him is Renato Moretto, Chairman

equipment with injection moulding machines, for live working with customers, said Panizzon. Included in this will be One Wire X Plus, an "intelligent" conveying system which implements the exclusive Krono technology. One Wire X Plus is equipped with artificial intelligence and doesn't need to be programmed as it is adaptive. KruiseKontrol is integrated as standard, completing the conveying system with a dynamic granule speed control tool.

DGM Gravix Maxi is the Moretto gravimetric batch blender for rPET bottle flakes. The company says recycling plays a fundamental role in the future of the plastics industry.

Answering questions after the factory tour, Renato Moretto highlighted the company's expansive strategy. In 2025, it opened a Mexico branch in Querétaro, adding to its presence in over 70 countries around the world. The importance of the Mexican market is such that the company is "not excluding" the possibility of establishing production there, he said. Another important plastics market is China, and he said the company is keeping an eye on market developments there too.

At Plast 2026, extrusion machinery group **Bandera** will exhibit its technology for film produc-

tion and recycling. Demonstrations will include its High Vented Twin Screw Extruder technology, said Massimo Santini, Sales Director, during the press visit to the group's headquarters in Busto Arsizio. A new Coating and Laminating business unit will be presented at the expo. The company said a major focus at Plast will be its developments in service and spare parts.

Digital advances

Bandera will present its Digital Evolution 2026 program, which includes an enhanced spares parts element in which customers will find it easier to identify parts more accurately for ordering, said Santini. The Any MA modular system has benefits including: designing the interface to give the operator all the functions he needs with an extremely fast learning time; speed in commissioning new lines and remote assistance service; release of updates on lines with standard functionality; the possibility of revamping extrusion lines from any manufacturer (after assessing existing hardware).

Riccardo Bandera, CEO of the Any MA subsidiary, said the group has a roadmap for its AI technology roll-out, which it has developed to help customers with the challenges of modern manufacturing, for example, by moving away from reliance on random sampling. The AI roadmap has three stages: Phase 1 is called Infallible Inspector, which aims to eliminate human error; Phase 2 is called Intelligent Assistant; and Phase 3, called Autonomous Perfection, is scheduled to appear in 2027.

➤ <https://plastonline.org>

➤ www.moretto.com

➤ www.luigibandera.com

Plast 2026 key facts

Tuesday 9 June to Friday 12 June 2026

Opening hours: 9:30 am to 6:00 pm

Fiera Milano, Rho, Milan, Italy

Entrances: East Gate, South TIM Gate and West TIM Gate

Online registration:

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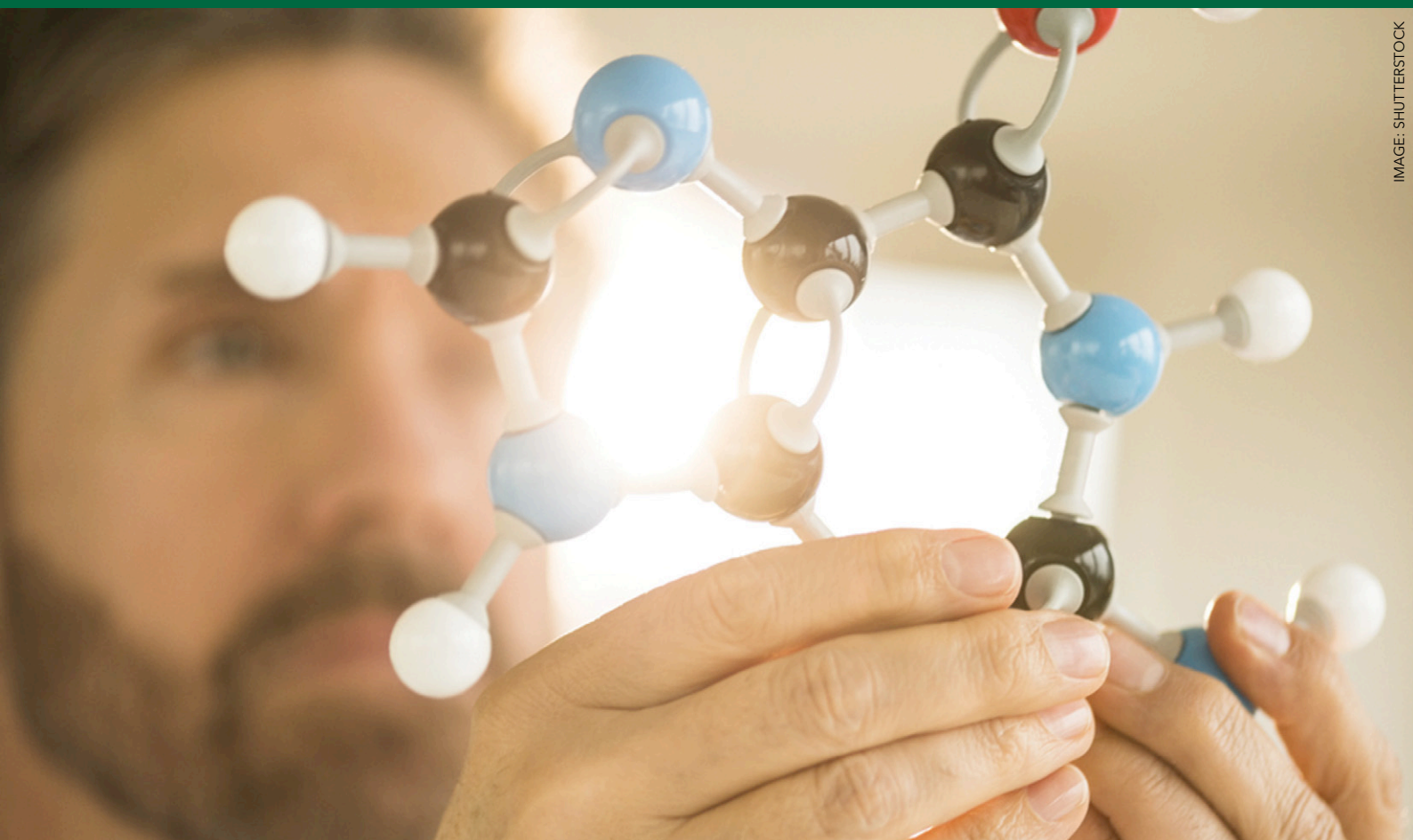
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Making polymer materials work together

Adding compatibilisers brings harmony to blends of dissimilar materials. Jennifer Markarian reports on new products for blends containing fillers, multiple materials, and PCR

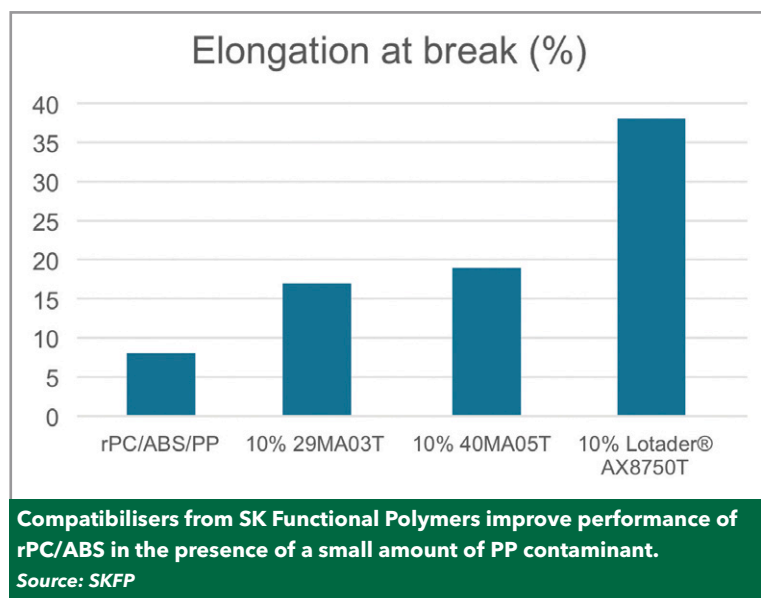
Plastic compounds are often complex mixtures that may include multiple polymers, minerals, fillers, fibres, pigments, and other additives. To make a strong final part, compatibilisers and coupling agents can be used to bond together dissimilar materials – such as different polymers, polymers and fibres, or polymers and inorganic fillers – by acting at the interface. The growing use of post-consumer recycle (PCR) can add to the number of different materials in a mixture, making compatibilisers particularly helpful in applications using PCR.

Maleic anhydride (MAH) grafted polymers produced with a reactive extrusion process are used as compatibilisers for various applications. Turkey-based **Tisan Engineering Plastics'** Olebond MAH-grafted polymers reduce interfacial

surface tension to promote dispersion of fillers in polymers and to compatibilise different kinds of polymers, such as polycarbonate (PC) and acrylonitrile butadiene styrene (ABS) in PC/ABS blends. Other grades use MAH-grafted polypropylene (PP) to improve bonding between PP and glass fibre or mineral fillers, which increases tensile strength and Izod impact, the company reported. An MAH-grafted polyethylene (PE) improves the interface between PE and other polymers as well as flame retardant additives, such as in compounds used in cables, for example.

The latest from Tisan is a series of MAH-modified polymers to improve adhesion between biodegradable polymers and organic or inorganic fillers. Biobond PBAT 3 is a highly functionalised polybu-

Main image:
Compounders can improve blends of dissimilar materials with new compatibilising products



tylene adipate terephthalate (PBAT), and Biobond PLA 4 is a highly functionalised polylactic acid (PLA). The company also uses the additive in its own BioStar bio-based compounds and in Bio-blend masterbatches.

At K2025, **Wacker** highlighted its poly(vinyl-acetate)-based additives from the Vinnex range for use in improving compatibility of biopolyesters, such as PLA, with other polymers or with fillers. The company said that Vinnex 2526 improves puncture resistance of PLA/PBAT blends, for example.

Demand is growing for use of compatibilisers to improve recycled materials, particularly for recycled high impact polystyrene (rHIPS) and rABS, which are increasing with collection from the EU's directives for waste electrical and electronic equipment (EEE), including household appliances such as refrigerators, and end-of-life vehicles, said Nico Esselin, Mechanical Recycling Market Development manager at **SK Functional Polymers**. It is challenging to find good quality rPC/ABS feedstock to replace virgin PC/ABS, said Esselin, and additives from SK are incorporated to enhance performance and compensate for the variability typically associated with recycled materials. Compatibilisers can also help improve properties of rPC/ABS blends that are contaminated with a small amount of rPP.

The latest from SKFP is Lotader AX8900T, a reactive ethylene terpolymer with the same specifications as Lotader AX8900 but a higher melting point, for use in virgin or recycled engineering plastics compounds. The additive can be used as a compatibiliser as well as an impact modifier, viscosity enhancer, or for hydrolysis protection, the company said. In rPC/ABS, the terpolymer Lotader AX8900 acts to improve impact

resistance and can help maintain strong mechanical performance even at low temperatures, down to -30°C. SKFP additives are increasingly used to adjust the viscosity of rPC/ABS.

"Lotader AX8900 or AX8750T, for higher viscosity, and Lotryl 28BA700T, for lower viscosity, enable accurate adjustments of the material flow properties, facilitating processing and optimising final part performance," Esselin said.

The additives perform well in rPC/ABS even in the presence of 2% PP contamination, Esselin noted. As demonstrated by the graph of elongation at break, Lotader AX8750T increased the compatibility between the different polymers most significantly, and the Lotryl 29MA03T and 40MA05T additives also showed a benefit.

RecyClass guidelines

The EU-based non-profit **RecyClass** published **Design for Recycling Guidelines** for the automotive and EEE sectors in March this year. Separate guidelines for different application areas describe what "full compatibility" with recycling processes looks like for plastics in vehicles, plastics in refrigerators and temperature exchange equipment, and plastics in small appliances and information and communication technologies. Plastics with full compatibility can include compatibilisers approved by the RecyClass A and EEE Technical Committee, which grants technology approvals after tests in accordance with the group's Recyclability Evaluation Protocols are passed. Protocols for automotive and EEE were introduced in 2025 for various polymers, and most recently a protocol was introduced in March 2026 for multi-plastic components.

The first RecyClass automotive and EEE technology approval was granted last year to **Dow's** Elvaloy AC 1330 additive, which is a copolymer of ethylene and methyl acrylate that acts as a compatibiliser and has broad compatibility with polar and non-polar polymers, and in this case was designed to improve the impact performance of ABS compounds for automotive and in control panels and casings in household appliances. In the evaluation, the material was compounded at 10 wt% with a natural ABS resin, RecyClass reported. Testing was conducted at **Aimplas**.

Dow supplies a range of additives that act as compatibilisers and coupling agents, including Fusabond Functional Polymers, Elvaloy copolymers, and Elvaloy AC acrylate copolymers. Last year, the company announced the introduction of versions of these polymers made with recycled materials or with bio-circular content and noted a growing focus on sustainability of automotive plastics. ➤

In mechanical recycling of PCR, systems are designed to separate different polymers, but separation is not perfect. Typically, some “contamination” remains, such as a small amount of PE in a PP stream, that can degrade mechanical properties of parts made from the PCR. Adding compatibilisers, however, can boost the mechanical properties.

PPWR driver

The EU’s Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation (PPWR), which mandates use of recycled content in packaging in the EU market, is expected to drive increased use of PCR. Compatibiliser additives are already in use, and new compatibiliser solutions are also being developed.

“Cesa Unify A4R is **Avient’s** latest additive solution developed to compatibilise mixed polymer streams by generating a homogeneous polymer phase and restoring mechanical properties to a level comparable to virgin materials,” said Jan Sültemeyer, Global Sustainability and Innovation Manager at Avient.

The compatibiliser, part of the company’s Additives for Recycling portfolio, works with the two nonpolar polymers, PP and PE. Avient is also developing other compatibiliser systems, including formulations for polar-nonpolar polymer combinations.

“These innovations are being advanced at Avient’s Innovation Center for Plastic Recycling, CycleWorks, reinforcing Avient’s commitment to enabling higher value applications for post-consumer recyclates,” said Sültemeyer.

Compatibilisers offer a solution for PCR in other end-use markets in addition to packaging. For example, the use of PCR is being evaluated in wire and cable. Mirco Groeseling, Market Development Manager for Packaging & Sustainability at Avient, explained that in the EU, cables fall under the scope of the Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation (ESPR), which currently does not include mandatory recycled content percentage thresholds for polymers, although these may be introduced at a later stage through product specific delegated acts. Use of PCR in cables today is driven by cable manufacturer’s sustainability targets, he suggested.

“Major cable manufacturers increasingly view PCR content as an opportunity to reduce the carbon footprint of their products and, conse-

quently, to support the achievement of ambitious sustainability targets,” added Sültemeyer. “Given the high quality and performance requirements in the cable industry, manufacturers will need to develop strategies to compensate for the reduced and more variable mechanical properties associated with using PCR materials.” The Cesa Unify A4R compatibiliser can be used to improve mechanical properties in cables with PCR content.

In addition, Avient recently launched a new product designed to improve environmental stress crack resistance (ESCR) in HDPE compounds used in outer jacketing for medium-voltage cables. Avient collaborated with the Italian cable manufacturer Tratos to develop Cesa Tough A4R, which improves ESCR and mechanical properties to enable the use of PCR content while maintaining the high-performance requirements of medium voltage cable applications.

New from **Mitsui Chemicals America** is Admer RA105A Recycling Agent, which is a

compatibiliser designed to improve miscibility between polyolefins and polar barrier materials, such as EVOH and polyamides (PA), used in multilayer flexible packaging films, so that regrind can be effectively used. The additive shows improved haze and film impact properties, the company reported. The company said

that the additive has been formally recognised by the US-based **Association of Plastics Recyclers** (APR) for meeting the highest criteria for recyclability according to the APR Design Guide for Plastics Recyclability.

Kraton’s CirKular+ Compatibilization Series, which is a family of block copolymers based on PS and polyethylene/butylene rubber, “facilitates mechanical recycling of mixed and contaminated plastic waste by increasing processability and improving formulation stability for a broad spectrum of resins with different polarities, such as polyolefins, PET, and polyamides. Our customers typically add them at a 1 to 5% loading level,” the company reported.

Upcycling PP

In a presentation at AMI’s Compounding World Expo 2025 in Cleveland, US, in November, experts from **Thermo Fisher Scientific** described how Fourier Transform infrared (FTIR) microscopy can be used to give insights into improving the



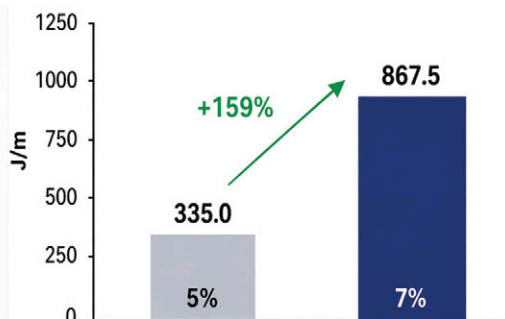
Left: The mechanical performance of products using PCR from mixed polyolefins streams can be improved with compatibilisers

CAI Performance Additives says that using **ST-AN3220** at 5-7% in PA/ABS blends provides strong improvements in impact resistance and toughness

Source: CAI

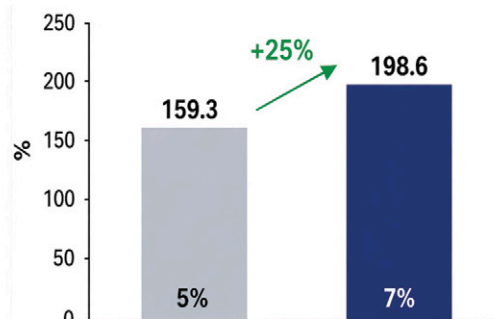
Material: PA6 / Impact-Modified ABS Blends

Notch Impact Strength
23°C, 1/4" (J/m)



5% ST-AN3220 7% ST-AN3220

Elongation at Break
(%)



performance of rPP through compatibilisation and optimised reactive extrusion.

Blends of rPP with PA12 aimed to combine the thermomechanical properties of PA with the processability of PP, using a MAH-grafted compatibiliser additive to create a diblock copolymer of the PPgMAH and PA in-situ (in the extruder) that then acts at the interface of rPP and PA in the blend to compatibilise these otherwise incompatible polymers.

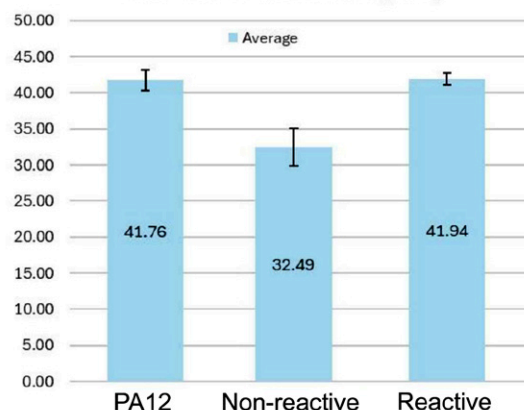
The non-compatibilised blend (50/50 rPP/PA) demonstrated a lower ultimate tensile stress than neat PA12, indicating weak points in the blend, but the compatibilised blends (40 rPP/10 PPgMAH/50 PA) were similar to the neat PA12, indicating an improved interface with fewer weak points and the ability to use recycled material but maintain strength, noted Lucivan Barros, Senior Applications Scientist in Extrusion at Thermo Fisher Scientific, in the presentation.

The scientists also evaluated the capability of FTIR mapping, using a Thermo Fisher Scientific FTIR spectrometer combined with FTIR microscope, to evaluate mixing and compare the non-compatibilised blend and the compatibilised blend.

The mapping method characterises the surface of a sample using multiple scans to determine the spatial distribution of chemical species, and it was able to show that the compatibilised formula showed better blending, said Ron Rubinovitz, Senior Applications Scientist in Spectroscopy, at Thermo Fisher Scientific, in the presentation. One way to visualise this difference is to look at the range of the ratio of PA to PP peak-area from the scans. In the reactive blend, the range is much smaller, indicating better blending.

Compounders are facing increasing pressure to

Ultimate Tensile Stress (MPa)



The range of the ratio of PA to PP peak-area is smaller in the reactive blend, indicating better blending

Source: Thermo Fisher Scientific.

meet more stringent specifications for odour and volatile organic compound (VOC) emissions, leading to the need for reformulation to reduce odour associated with compatibiliser chemistries, said Torey McCleskey, COO at **CAI Performance Additives**.

Reducing odour

"[This trend is] driven by electric vehicle interior standards (particularly from Asian OEMs), tightening Reach requirements in Europe, and consumer electronics brands specifying low-emission compounds for device enclosures," McCleskey reported. "Compatibiliser chemistry has historically been tolerated for its smell, but that tolerance is going away. CAI's position is to offer performance-equivalent options that solve the odour/VOC issue without a dosage or processing penalty."

The company's MAH-grafted PP compatibiliser,

ST-G-PP30LO, for glass-fibre reinforced polyolefin compounds is a "super-clean" formulation that has significantly lower residual monomer and odour compared to standard PP-g-MAH products, according to the company. This advantage is beneficial for parts for food-contact adjacent applications or other applications where odour specifications are enforced, said McCleskey. The additive performs at the same dosage as standard PP-MAH grades.

Low VOCs

ST-4210, a low-emission compatibiliser for glass-filled ABS, PC/ABS blends, and multi-component ABS alloys, is an alternative that solves the problem of odour issues associated with conventional reactive compatibilisers. CAI reports strong adoption from compounders supplying the electric-vehicle interior and consumer electronics sectors.

Also from CAI, the ST-AN3220 low-emission compatibiliser for PA/ABS blends has low VOCs and is effective at low loadings, which keeps cost-in-use competitive for applications such as under-hood automotive and structural compo-

nents, the company said. "Polyamide and ABS are inherently tough to compatibilise for optimal mechanicals, and then you layer on the stringent low-VOC and interior air quality standards, especially for automotive applications. It's a dual challenge where conventional solutions often fall short on one front or the other. ST-AN3220 tackles both simultaneously, allowing compounders to meet performance specs without compromising on emissions," said McCleskey.

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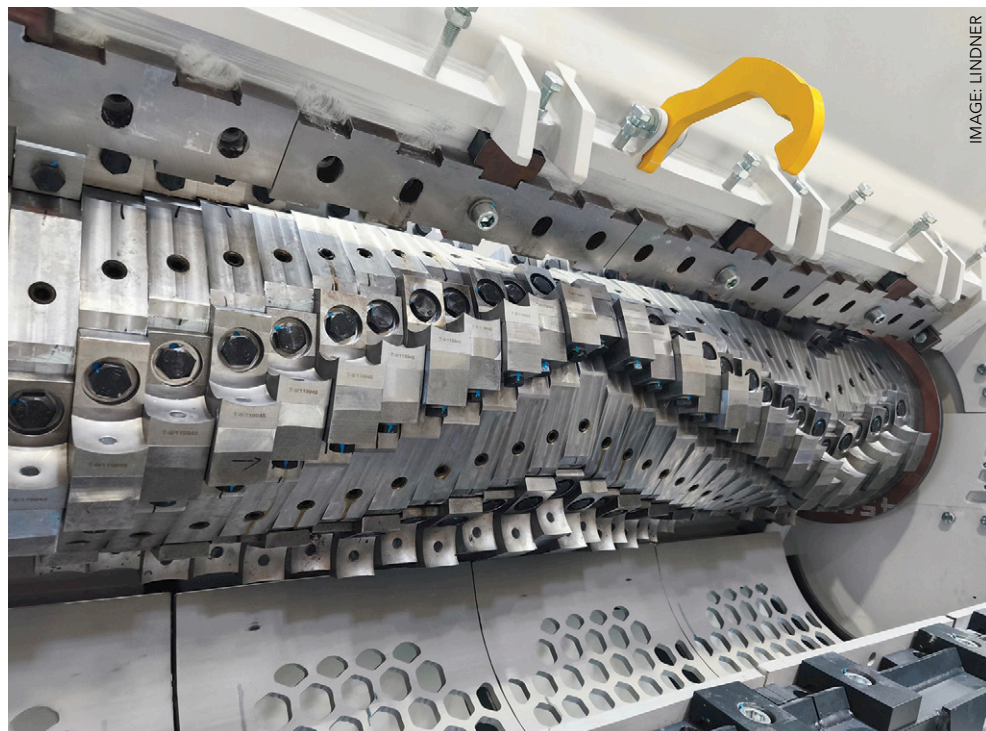
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Evolving shredders take on greater role



Plastics shredding technology is increasingly being asked to meet process control needs. Chris Saunders reports on recent developments

Shredding, once treated as a purely mechanical pre-processing step, is undergoing a quiet but consequential technological transformation in plastics recycling. Historically, shredding focused on throughput and size reduction. Today, it is increasingly viewed as a process-critical control point with a key shift being towards uniform particle generation. Development work in the sector now targets tightly controlled flake sizes with accuracy rates often exceeding 95%.

Modern shredders are evolving into advanced systems combining mechanical robustness with real-time control. The focus of R&D work is broad: variable torque drive systems dynamically adjust to heterogeneous inputs, preventing stalls and optimising energy use; adjustable shear gaps and screening systems allow operators to tune particle size distribution in-line; and multi-edge blade geometries extend tool life and maintain cutting precision across mixed material streams. This indicates an emerging demand for shredding systems to be configurable units within digitally managed production lines.

A major recent development has been the convergence of shredding with upstream and downstream intelligence. Many recycling facilities

now deploy AI-driven sorting and material characterisation, using deep learning to classify plastics by polymer type, contamination level, and use-case history. The result is closed-loop process optimisation, where shredding is dynamically aligned with material variability. In mechanical recycling, uniform flakes improve washing, drying, and pelletising efficiency, leading to higher-quality recyclate, while in chemical recycling, precise size control enhances conversion efficiency and product consistency.

At IFAT 2026 in Germany in May, recycling specialist **Lindner** showcased its latest innovations in shredding technology and – after its official launch last year – the new Urraco Evo mobile series for plastics and other materials was presented to a broader audience. The mobile twin-shaft shredder has been specifically developed for demanding heavy-duty applications and combines impressive power, a quick-change function, and Lindner's proven shaft versatility. Lindner has been producing mobile shredders at its Austrian sites since 2012, but the company considers the launch of the new Urraco Evo series as breaking new ground.

"We have responded to the changing market requirements – away from a primary segment of

Main image:
Cutting unit
of the Lindner
Micromat
series shredder

Right: The W5.22 from Weima shreds hard plastics, films and fibres, plus other materials

light materials and towards more robust and difficult applications," said Gerhard Gamper, Segment Director Mobile Shredding. "The new product line meets customer requirements in every respect, combining our proven robust construction with new functions and features in one Urraco series."

The latest incarnation of the Urraco Evo series improves upon proven Lindner technology with a multitude of new features. Modular design, robust construction, improved quality, and precision manufacture, are key aspects, according to the company.

"We have also further automated the manufacture of our cutting unit and shafts," said Andreas Klappf, Head of Engineering at Lindner. "Through the targeted use of this technology we are able to increase our competitive edge in terms of robustness, stability and reliability, and even successfully use the Urraco Evo for applications such as mixed scrap metal and aluminium."

New generation

At IFAT, Lindner focused on future-oriented solutions that specifically align with current challenges in the sector, and also presented the fourth generation of its Micromat series at the heart of which is a synchronous reluctance motor that achieves an energy efficiency class of IE6, offering more than 97% efficiency while using no rare earth metals. Regarding its shredding capabilities, the new multi-cut rotor enables flexible operation for a wide range of materials from plastic, wood, commercial and domestic waste, to textiles, and reduces maintenance effort and downtime thanks to its rapid-change knife system.

"The recycling sector is under enormous cost pressure: rising energy prices, volatile raw material markets and higher recycling quotas increase the requirements on efficiency and cost-effectiveness,"

Below: Lindner has developed the fourth generation of its Micromat series shredder technology. Photo shows the drive unit

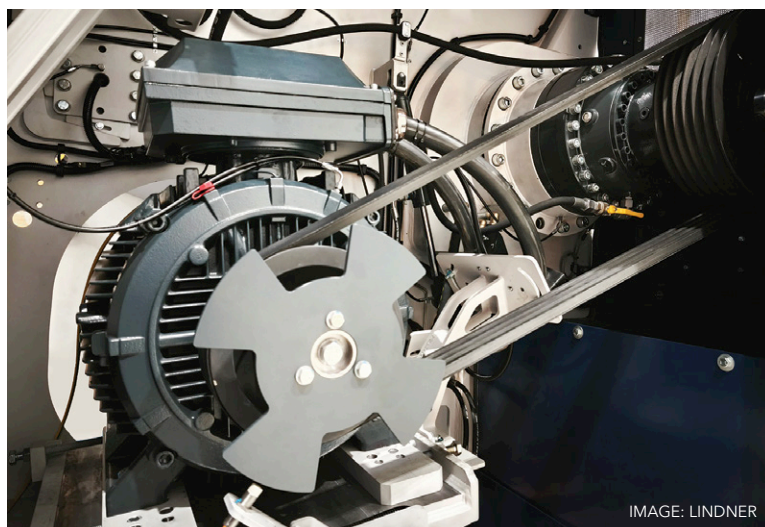


IMAGE: LINDNER



IMAGE: WEIMA

said Matthias Egarter, CEO at Lindner. "At the same time material flows are becoming more complex and there is a growing risk of fire from lithium ion batteries, which further tighten the requirements on process reliability and plant technology."

The company said it is combating these challenges with smart plant engineering and innovative shredder technology whereby robust process parameters, consistent quality, and reliable throughput, are as much of a focus as high adaptability to materials and applications.

"Our goal is to take heterogeneous waste and produce clearly defined, quality-assured material streams, as clean fractions are a pre-requisite for high-quality recycling," said Marco Egger, Managing Director of Lindner's Systems Engineering Division. "Using tailored sorting and plant concepts we create the conditions for consistently high-quality products, whether these are used for plastics recycling or for other demanding recycling paths."

Weima presented the latest version of its W5 single-shaft shredder series at K2025. One highlight of the W5.22 is a wider inspection flap, offering more space for maintenance work. In addition, access from the rear is now automatic and the swing arm can be locked more conveniently, which speeds up maintenance. The new diagonally mounted signal tower, which can also display the hopper fill level if required, ensures greater transparency during operation.

Customer choice

The W5.22 processes hard plastics, films and fibres, plus a variety of other materials. A rotor with a length of 2,200 mm and a diameter of 500 mm ensures effective shredding. The redesigned swing arm pusher ensures better material guidance during shredding, while the redesigned table surface ensures more aggressive material feed and

raises power transmission by up to 20%, according to the company.

Customers can choose from several drive concepts to adapt the machine to their own processes. A hydraulic drive is particularly suited to applications with frequently changing loads. The robust drive ensures high torques with a low kW output. The classic electromechanical direct drive ensures high energy efficiency and easy maintenance.

Wursi, based in Spain, shreds around 1,500 tonnes of PE and PP into regranulate every month, using two Weima W5.14 single-shaft shredders on its recycling line. It first processes sorted plastic waste manually and feeds it into the two shredders – which shreds the material to 30-100 mm pieces.

The shredder is designed for demanding plastic applications. A V-rotor with a diameter of 500 mm and a length of 1,400 mm ensures uniform shredding even with tough materials. A Siemens PLC control system with touch panel allows precise adjustment of operating parameters. A hydraulically opening screen basket and inspection flap help to reduce downtime during maintenance or screen changes. Wursi uses interchangeable screen segments that can react flexibly to material differences – an advantage with changing polyolefin streams, says the company.

The original **Untha** XR3000C mobil-e, launched in 2016, was a breakthrough in mobile waste shredding, being the first of its kind to offer an electromechanical drive on a mobile chassis. Untha says the 2026 version is part of an evolution of the XR platform, and introduces significantly upgraded drive technology as well as increased flexibility for heavy-duty waste shredding. The XR class can be used for pre-shredding bulky waste, waste wood, metal, pulper ropes or plastic bales.

Drive technology

Specifically, in addition to the standard Eco Power Drive (synchronous), the Untha XR3000C now offers an asynchronous drive engineered for extremely heavy-duty applications while maintaining high energy efficiency. It also features a new, self-sufficient power generator system that regulates the shredder's operation, even in locations without a direct grid connection, while integration with the MyUNTHA customer platform provides real-time condition monitoring, predictive maintenance, and access to the Genius digital assistance system. A new communication interface allows the shredder and material handlers to react to each other in real-time, optimising the feeding process to prevent overloads and maximise throughput.

Recycling company **RDG** was recently looking

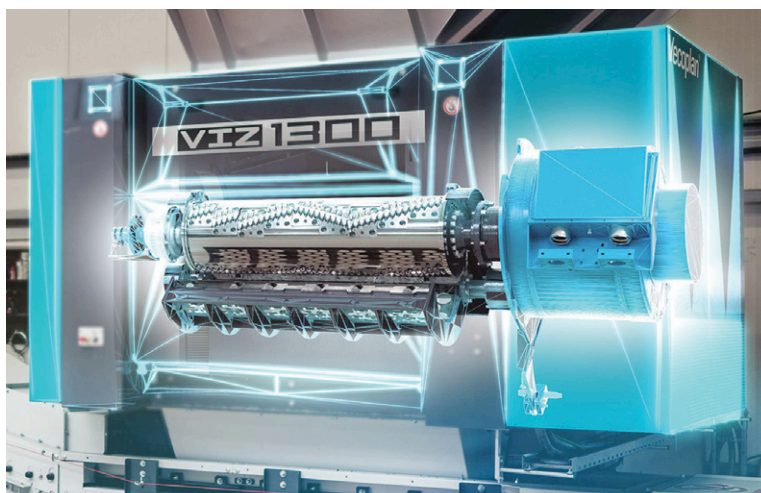


IMAGE: VECOPLAN

for a shredding solution suitable for various plastics (composites) and applications, enabling flexible responses to different material flows, when it discovered the Untha offering. "We needed a shredder that could handle plastic-metal composites and came across the Untha XR3000C mobil-e," said Franz Kobleder, Managing Director of the RDG Recycling Group. "This shredder completely won us over. We can efficiently pre-shred our materials and thus prepare them for the subsequent processing steps."

In May, **Vecoplan** presented its VIZ 1300 high-performance shredder at Plastpol, the trade fair for the plastics and rubber processing industry in Kielce, Poland. The material diversity that plastics recyclers must deal with can be mastered with the VIZ 1300, according to the company. This is because the shredder is available with variable rotor and blade configurations as well as a range of screen sizes, which means it "adapts flexibly to virtually any plastic material and any application requirement", said Vecoplan.

A particular highlight of the VIZ 1300 is the option to equip the machine with automatically adjustable counter-knives. Normally, operators need to manually readjust the cutting gap regularly to maintain consistent shredding quality. The automatic counter-blade adjustment performs this task fully automatically and without manual intervention. Vecoplan says this significantly reduces the time required and guarantees a consistently high output quality, regardless of the operator's level of experience.

Users have two options for the type of drive that can be fitted. The gearless HiTorc drive generates torque directly and comes without any wear parts such as couplings, belt drives, and flywheels. Alternatively, the ESC belt direct drive is available. Vecoplan says both options are designed for maximum efficiency and minimal maintenance. ➤

Above:
Vecoplan's VIZ 1300 shredder is available with variable rotor and blade configurations as well as a range of screen sizes

Right: SSI's Quad Q85 four-shaft shredder is being used by Ocean Plastics Recovery

Machine control is handled by Vecoplan's VSC. Control system, which allows users to adjust numerous machine parameters and monitor operating data in real time from any standard mobile device.

Special projects

As part of a project focused on the recovery of plastic waste in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), a turnkey shredding and recovery plant for rigid plastics has been designed and engineered as part of a collaboration between **CAMEC** and **GCB Polymers**. The project focuses on creating a 'local loop' in the UAE capable of reducing dependence on external supply chains and generating industrial value locally, while at the same time meeting the needs of a rapidly evolving market where sustainability, industrial autonomy, and technological innovation are increasingly strategic elements. CAMEC said the system ensures an efficient, highly automated, and constantly monitored process where every stage of treatment is optimised to ensure the production of a clean, homogeneous, and ready-to-use recycled granule, while reducing waste and energy consumption to keep operating costs low.

The treatment process is designed to transform rigid plastic waste, including mixed or contaminated fractions, into clean, ready-to-use recycled granules through an automated and constantly controlled flow. The material undergoes primary shredding and, once ground, moves to the removal of metallic contaminants via magnetic separation and metal detectors. Subsequent stages of secondary shredding, air separation, and cleaning, allow for the elimination of residual impurities and prepare the material for granulation. These granules are then dedusted, transported, and stored in silos, ready for packaging or direct use in industrial applications. An advanced dust extraction and filtration system completes the plant, ensuring the quality of the final product as well as a safe and controlled working environment.

Ocean Plastics Recovery (OPR) was founded in 2018 to tackle marine plastic. To expand its efforts, OPR needed to handle its own plastic.

Sorting is a critical step in recycling, but handling ocean plastics adds layers of complexity. These plastics come in a wide range of resin types and grades, and once collected, they vary in degradation levels given their exposure to the elements. These factors determine which recycling methods will be most effective. Additionally, ocean-recovered plastics can be contaminated heavily with sand, algae, and other debris, further complicating the recycling process.

It became apparent that OPR needed an



industrial shredder capable of processing fishing gear and other plastics efficiently. The organisation turned to **SSI Shredding Systems** for a solution, and found that the US manufacturer's Quad Q85 four-shaft shredder with a ram hopper was the ideal fit. The Quad shredder reduces incoming plastics to a universal particle size, making sorting, cleaning and recycling, more efficient. Furthermore, its low-speed, high-torque design means bulky fishing lines are well within its scope while it is still versatile enough to handle a wide range of plastics.

The shredder's upper and lower cutters work to clean each other during operation, preventing fishing lines and nets from wrapping around the shafts, a common problem with conventional shredders. The machine also features SSI's patented SmartDrive technology, which automatically adjusts shaft speed and torque. When processing heavy fishing lines, the system slows down to increase shredding force. For lighter plastics, it speeds up to improve throughput. Additionally, a built-in ram feeder ensures that lightweight yet bulky items like plastic drums are efficiently fed into the cutting zone.

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- > www.lindner.com
- > <https://weima.com>
- > www.wursi.es
- > www.untha.com
- > <https://rdg-recyclinggroup.com>
- > <https://vecoplan.com>
- > www.camec.net
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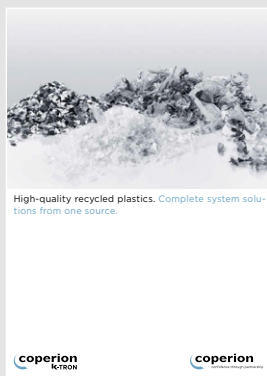
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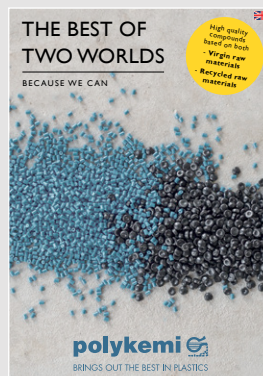
NORDSON BKG: MELT DELIVERY



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Plastics Recycling World April 2026

Plastics Recycling World April edition: end-of-use options for bio-based plastics can include recycling, as discussed in the main feature. Plus the latest in melt filtration technology and the rPET sector.

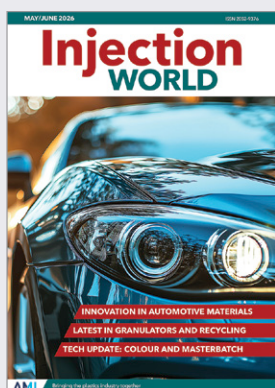
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Plastics Recycling World January/February 2026

In the Plastics Recycling World January-February edition, innovative technologies for film recyclers are the focus of the cover feature, while other articles include a look at recycling projects in healthcare.

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Injection World May/June 2026

The cover story in the May-June issue of Injection World focuses on materials developed for the demanding automotive sector, while granulation technology and new masterbatch offerings are covered in other articles.

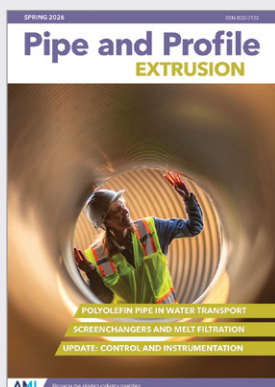
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Compounding World May 2026

The cover story in the May edition of Compounding World reveals the essentials of the testing regime for biodegradable plastics, while other features look at improved wire and cable compounds and the latest in 3D printing materials.

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Pipe and Profile Spring 2026

The cover story in Pipe and Profile Extrusion Spring edition checks on progress in the polyolefin water pipe sector, while other articles explore melt filtration technology and what's new in controls and instrumentation.

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Film and Sheet May/June 2026

Film & Sheet Extrusion's May-June edition has a cover feature that looks at the response to industry pressures in stretch and shrink film, plus other features on developments in sheet, waterproof membranes and blown film dies.

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	2-5 June	FIP, Lyon, France	www.f-i-p.com
	9-11 June	Kuteno, Bad Salzuflen, Germany	www.kuteno.de
	24-25 June	Textiles Recycling Expo, Brussels, Belgium	www.textilesrecyclingexpo.com
	15-19 September	TaipeiPlas, Taipei, Taiwan	www.taipeiplas.com.tw
	16-17 September	Kunststoffenbeurs, 'S-Hertogenbosch, Netherlands	https://kunststoffenbeurs.nl
	12-16 October	Fakuma, Friedrichshafen, Germany	www.fakuma-messe.de
	3-5 November	PU China, Shanghai, China	www.puchina.eu
	3-6 November	Ecomondo, Rimini, Italy	www.ecomondo.com
	10-13 November	Plastimagen, Mexico	www.plastimagen.com.mx
	11-12 November	Plastics Recycling World Expo, Cleveland, US	www.na.plasticsrecyclingworldexpo.com
	1-5 December	IPF Japan, Chiba	www.ipfjapan.jp
	2-5 December	Plasteurasia, Istanbul, Turkey	https://plasteurasia.com
	14-16 December	RACE, Mumbai, India	www.raceexpos.com

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24-25 November 2026	Flexible Pack Recycling, Vienna, Austria
1-2 December 2026	Polymer Engineering for Energy, London, UK
8-10 December 2026	Wind Turbine Blades, Düsseldorf, Germany
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