

Industry comes together at EREMA Discovery Days 2018:

The future of the circular economy – innovative technologies, effective strategies

More than 1.000 guests invited by EREMA made their way to Ansfelden, Austria, for the Discovery Days 2018 from 27 to 29 June. Well-known companies from the plastics sector, such as Borealis, Engel, Greiner, Haidlmair and Henkel gave participants an insight into their view of working with plastics in a sustainable way.

Besides the technical and strategic answers presented by EREMA with regard to plastics recycling, there was an extensive array of perspectives on the topic of the plastics industry – the circular economy.

The conclusion of the conference: only more intensive collaboration within the industry can collectively develop the required technologies which will meet the recycling targets and thus see more recycled pellets used in end products.

Ansfelden, 3 July 2018 – with this year's Discovery Days EREMA staged a multi-company event to inspire its attendees together to address what is without doubt the most talked about topic in the plastics industry: how the amount of recycled material in and the recyclability of end products can be increased. At the beginning of the conference Manfred Hackl, EREMA Group CEO, summed up the challenges facing the industry as follows: "To reach the new European recycling goal of 55 per cent by 2030, more than 10 million tonnes of recyclate has to be used in the end markets. Compared to 2014, this corresponds to more than double the amount of recycled material. To achieve this, we as raw material manufacturers, producers, processors and recyclers together have to identify new markets, make use of previously untapped sources of plastic and foreground and implement even stronger design for recycling in the long term.

The impressive presentation of concrete lighthouse projects in the post-consumer and production waste recycling sectors showed how advanced the technical recycling solutions are already. For them to become a fixed part of the solutions of tomorrow, everyone involved in the entire plastics chain must have an intensive exchange of experience. "As a producer of brand articles we work systematically together with our partners on optimising our packaging. In doing so we rely on small amounts of material which, on the one hand, are made with recyclate and are at the same time recyclable. Resource efficiency and premium products are not a contradiction in terms in our view," says Thorsten Leopold, Head of International Packaging Development Home Care at Henkel. Attendees were shown how far-reaching the product range of such end products made of recyclate already is today at the accompanying product exhibition at the EREMA headquarters. From pipes for the construction industry and lifestyle products such as sunglasses to coffee machines – products containing recycled material have been part of our daily lives for quite some time. High-quality recyclate is essential here, made possible by modern recycling technology. Visitors were able to see this for themselves throughout the Discovery Days: a total of 10 recycling machines from EREMA and its sister company PURE LOOP were live in action around the clock.

Industry comes together at EREMA Discovery Days: the future of the circular economy – innovative technologies, effective strategies

Communication as the key to the circular economy

The presentation of selected pioneer projects made it absolutely clear that the plastics chain can only grow through communication. Engel with injection moulding and Haidlmair in the tool making sector, for example, showed that it is not automatically necessary to develop existing products even further in order to use recycled pellets, often all that is needed in the first step is knowledge transfer between producers and recycling specialists. New and further developments by mechanical and tool engineers aim more at increasing process consistency when using recycled pellets in order to use them in an even broader spectrum.

The idea of the LIT Factory, a public 4.0 pilot facility under the leadership of the Linz Institute of Technology (LIT) at the Johannes Kepler University, showed how production could be in the future. Local companies will be able to try out digitalised production technologies in this test lab and develop business models parallel to them.

Exchanging experience today leads to the solutions of tomorrow

The discussion between raw material producers confirmed once again that sustainability is playing an ever increasing role in company visions. The title of this particular discussion was "Circular economy and raw material producers – parallel worlds or a complementary concept?" which enabled participants to outline their own respective strategies for the future. The result: recycling is not a contradiction in terms, it is an asset in raw material production. Sustainable end products call for the know-how of raw material producers in combination with the experience of recycling specialists. The remarks of Plastics Recyclers Europe (PRE) focused on European initiatives such as EuCertPlast and RecyClass which aim to drive uniform quality standards in the use of plastic materials and design for recycling. The European recycling industry can already turn to a wealth of experience in the field of innovative circular economy and has a significant lead as a result, according to Manfred Hackl: "The circular economy is not only an ecological must, it also gives Europe the chance to position itself as a pioneer of the green economy."

Attendees received an insight into the activities of plastics companies among the value chain in parallel event and company visits to Engel and Greiner Packaging. Borealis also invited Discovery Day participants to their Innovation Headquarters in Linz on day two. In a Science Walk through the company's application hall the focus was on the processing of recyclable polyolefins and recycled pellets.

The third day was dedicated to trends in the reprocessing of production waste. Speakers from SML or Brückner confirmed that more and more packaging manufacturers already count on a combined production and recycling solution when investing in new equipment. "EREMA began manufacturing recycling systems for production waste 35 years ago. This division now accounts for over 50 per cent of our turnover and we are proud that more and more international packaging producers place their trust in our quality," says Manfred Hackl.

Comprehensive recycling concepts through innovative recycling technology

EREMA was already committed to quality and process transparency at an early stage. The ReFresher in combination with the INTAREMA®, for example, ensures the thermal-physical odour minimisation of recyclates. This considerably broadens the field of application for recyclates from post-consumer material. In the smart factory area, EREMA offers online quality monitoring of colour and MVR value already while processing. The Manufacturing Execution System re360 gives you a digital overview of production data. This is not only for EREMA machines, it can also be used for a company's entire range of machinery – ideally from plastic bales to recyclate.

Industry comes together at EREMA Discovery Days: the future of the circular economy – innovative technologies, effective strategies

To meet the demand for comprehensive recycling concepts with know-how from EREMA, the Austrian recycling specialists added the business unit KEYCYCLE to its portfolio only recently. This means that the EREMA Group can now also offer complete engineering and integration services for plastics recycling systems. Furthermore, customers are already supported in the early planning stage with specific consulting and, if required, feasibility studies to integrate the appropriate recycling solution for their use.

Photos:



Photo 1: From left to right: The Raw material producers Anton Wolfsberger, Head of Marketing Consumer Products and Pipe at Borealis, and Alexander van Veen, Managing Director / Commercial, Procurement & TS&D at Braskem Netherlands, gave insights into their view of a sustainable plastics industry in a discussion, moderated by Steven Chaid.



Photo 2: With over 1.000 participants from 54 countries EREMA had a record number of visitors at this year's Discovery Days from 27 to 29 June 2018. EREMA invited guests to join in the discussion of how the amount of recycled material and the recyclability of end-product made of plastic can be increased.

Photo credit: EREMA

EREMA Group

Besides EREMA itself, the EREMA Group comprises 3S, PURE LOOP (January 2015) and UMAC (beginning of 2016). With EREMA subsidiaries in the USA, China and Russia plus around 50 representatives in all five continents, the EREMA Group has a reliable network to realise customised recycling solutions for international customers. Around 500 people around the world now work for the Austrian company group which is headquartered in Ansfelden near Linz.

For further information please contact:

Anja Berndorfer

Corporate Communication

EREMA Group

Unterfeldstraße 3

4052 Ansfelden, AUSTRIA

Phone: +43 (0)732 3190-315

Email: public.relations@erema-group.com