

# Press release

Thursday, October 8, 2020

## Fraunhofer study presented

### Scientifically proven: recycling is the key to climate protection / ALBA Group demands minimum quotas for the use of recyclates

- +++ ALBA Group realises one per cent of German greenhouse gas savings compared to 1990
- +++ In total approx. 9 per cent savings of 2019's German greenhouse gas emissions since 2007
- +++ Use of the German Presidency of the EU to boost recycling
- +++ Effective climate protection requires cooperation along the whole of the value chain

Berlin. The use of recycled raw materials makes a direct contribution to climate protection. This is the outcome of the “resources SAVED by recycling” study presented today, which the Fraunhofer Institute UMSICHT prepared on behalf of the ALBA Group. According to the study, the ALBA Group saved more than 4.2 million tonnes of climate-damaging greenhouse gases in 2019 through the closed-loop circulation of 6 million tonnes of recyclables. This corresponds to approx. one per cent of the overall German CO<sub>2</sub> savings in direct comparison to the annual emissions of the year 1990 to 2019 or the positive annual impact on the climate of about 59 million trees. At the same time, recycling saved 32.3 million tonnes of resources, such as crude oil, bauxite and iron ore compared to primary production.

“Recycling leads to far fewer greenhouse gas emissions than the use of primary raw materials,” explains **Dr Axel Schweitzer, CEO of the ALBA Group**. “The use of our quality-tested recycled plastics, for example, reduces emissions of greenhouse gases by more than 50 percent in comparison with the production of plastics from crude oil. There is no better argument for the increased use of recyclates.” From the perspective of the environmental services provider, it is therefore all the more incomprehensible that in the amendment to the Circular Economy Act, the German Bundestag once again failed to specify minimum quotas for the use of recyclates. This means that another opportunity has been missed to push ahead with the transition from a resource-intensive to low-CO<sub>2</sub> economy in which raw materials aren't lost but are recycled.” The German government should now use its Presidency of the EU Council to legally anchor mandatory quotas for the use of recyclates – especially in view of the stricter climate goal announced by the EU Commission. “In this respect, the wording of the proposed resolution by the German Bundestag is far too timid. Nevertheless, the Federal Government must still take the opportunity to encourage Brussels to create markets for recyclates. Whatever happens, we shall continue to work unwaveringly on improving the quality of recycling, thereby paving the way for a climate-friendly world without waste,” explains Schweitzer.

“Our life-cycle analysis demonstrates the currently excellent potential of recycling for climate protection right down to the kilogram,” explains **Dr Ing Markus Hiebel, Director of the Sustainability and Participation Department at the Fraunhofer Institute UMSICHT**. “The better the individual stakeholders in the value chain of products and packaging collaborate, the greater the potential for possible savings.” The scientist perceives there to be an increasing

willingness on the part of all those involved to take responsibility and to work closer together. Many manufacturers are now committed to using recycled raw materials in their products. "All in all, further incentives should be created to increase the use of recyclates. If the share of recyclates becomes a purchasing criterion in the procurement, this will significantly increase demand," explains Hiebel.

The Fraunhofer Institute for Environmental, Safety and Energy Technology UMSICHT has been researching how the recycling activities of the ALBA Group have been affecting the climate and natural resources for 13 years. Its results are published annually in the "resources SAVED by recycling" brochure. The material flows for plastics, metals, waste electrical and electronic equipment, wood, paper/board/cardboard and glass were included in the study in 2019. In total the ALBA Group divisions saved about 70 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalents worldwide since the beginning of the Fraunhofer scientific investigations in 2007. In comparison, this corresponds with about 9 per cent of 2019's German greenhouse gas emissions of 805 million tonnes.

The full results of the study are available at the information portal [www.resources-saved.com](http://www.resources-saved.com).

#### **About Fraunhofer UMSICHT**

Fraunhofer UMSICHT acts as a pioneer in a sustainable world by providing and transferring scientific findings to businesses, society and the world of politics. Together with its partners, the committed UMSICHT team researches and develops sustainable products, processes and services which are very impressive. In this respect, it focuses on the balance between economically successful, socially just and environmentally friendly developments. The institute has locations in Oberhausen, Willich and Sulzbach-Rosenberg. With its staff team of 529 employees, Fraunhofer UMSICHT generated a turnover of 49.4 million euros in 2019. As one of 74 institutes and research facilities in the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft, Europe's leading applied research organisation, Fraunhofer UMSICHT is part of a global network and promotes international collaboration.

Further information on Fraunhofer UMSICHT is available at [www.umsicht.fraunhofer.de](http://www.umsicht.fraunhofer.de).

#### **About ALBA Group:**

The ALBA Group, one of the leading recycling and environmental services companies as well as raw material providers worldwide, operates with its two brands – ALBA and Interseroh – within Germany, Europa and Asia. In 2018 its divisions generated an annual turnover of 2.0 billion Euros and employed a staff of approx. 8,800 employees. In 2018 alone ALBA Group saved 4.4 million tonnes of greenhouse gases compared to primary production and at the same time 31.9 million tonnes of primary raw materials through its recycling activities.

Further information on ALBA Group can be found at [www.albagroup.com](http://www.albagroup.com).

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