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News Release

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Recyclability of polyamides extended in the 2024 minimum standard for packaging

On 29 August 2024, the Zentrale Stelle Verpackungsregister (Central Agency Packaging Register – ZSVR) published the new minimum standard for recycling-friendly packaging. It now also recognizes barrier films that include not only polyethylene (PE) and polyamide (PA) but also ethylene-vinyl alcohol copolymer (EVOH) for high oxygen barrier as recyclable. These film structures are commonly used for sausage, cheese and meat packaging. For the first time, adhesive-laminated PE/PA film structures are now also recognized as recyclable in the minimum standard.

The basis for the reclassification by the ZSVR was formed by the studies carried out jointly by BASF and the cyclos-HTP Institute on the recyclability of co-extruded PE/PA/EVOH high-barrier films and laminated PE/PA structures in the waste stream of flexible polyethylene packaging. The studies carried out in 2023 showed that both film structures are recyclable when adhesion and compatibility promoters are used.

“The studies submitted to the ZSVR formed the basis for the members of Expert Group III for the reclassification, which, among others, was carried out in the ‘PE-flex*’ fraction of the minimum standard”, explained Simone Schillo, Senior Manager Market Development Polyamides & Precursors Europe at BASF. “Thanks to the reclassification, a significant proportion of polyamide containing multilayer structures that are available on the market now fulfill the minimum requirements for recyclability.”

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Since 2022, polyamide 6 (PA6) and co-polyamide 6/6.6 (PA6/6.6) in coextruded PE/PA films have been recognized as recyclable in the minimum standard for packaging subject to system participation in accordance with Section 21 (3) VerpackG.

Due to their unique property profile, polyamides play an important role in the production of sustainable packaging solutions. Thanks to good barrier properties combined with excellent mechanics, thinner films can be used to reduce material consumption and thus help to reduce packaging waste.

Further information on the mechanical recycling of polyamides, details of the study design at the cyclos-HTP Institute and the associated certificates can be found under Mechanical recycling.

* The detailed changes and individual verifications for extending the recycling compatibility of polyamides are shown in the minimum standard in the “PE-flex” fraction in Annex 3 “Overview of packaging groups/sorts and material-specific recycling incompatibilities“.

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