

Resolution of the

SPD and Bündnis 90/die Grünen parties

on the Green Paper from the European Commission on the environmental issues of PVC (COM(2000) 469 final)

The German Bundestag is hereby requested to adopt the following resolution:

1. The Bundestag welcomes the Commission's intention that this Green Paper should provide a scientific basis applying the standards of the "sustainable development" model for the controversial debate on assessment of the plastic PVC. To this end, there is an urgent need to formulate a Community strategy for PVC.
2. The Bundestag appreciates the Green Paper as a predominantly critical, non-discriminatory discussion of PVC drawing no firm conclusions. Known environmental and health risks posed by use of PVC starting materials and the additives employed (stabilisers and plasticisers) on both the production and disposal sides are appropriately addressed.
3. The Commission is now called on to look into the as yet under-discussed area of an integrated, whole life cycle analysis of PVC products as thoroughly as it has analysed the subject of disposal. This includes:
 - a detailed account of use of PVC products in all major fields of application together with a detailed appraisal of the health and environmental aspects, from production of the starting products and manufacture of the PVC to use of the PVC products and their fire behaviour and, finally, to disposal and elimination thereof;
 - an action plan to reduce use of problem substances for which safe potential substitutes already exist plus an assessment of use and promotion of sustainable alternative materials and products and of their social and economic impact;
 - taking account of the risk-assessment programmes already underway on PVC additives plus analysis of specific subsectors in the light of the overall objectives set by the Commission, such as use of chlorinated paraffins and bisphenol A.
4. The Bundestag refers to:
 - its 1999 resolution 14/1471 on the European Parliament resolution on endocrine-disrupting chemicals, with particular reference to the use of endocrine-disrupting plasticisers, in which the Bundestag calls for further restrictions and bans on plasticisers in the phthalate group;
 - its 1999 resolution 14/3710 on the proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Directive 76/769/EEC relating to restrictions on the marketing and use of certain dangerous substances and preparations (phthalates) and amending Council Directive 88/378/EEC concerning the safety of toys (COM(1999) 577 final), in which the Bundestag calls for an extension of the ban on the use of plasticisers in the phthalate group in children's toys made of PVC.

5. The Bundestag attaches particular importance to a comprehensive assessment of PVC products from the sustainability point of view. In this connection equal treatment should be given to the environmental, social and economic aspects, including the impact of PVC exports to Third World countries. It particularly draws the Commission's attention to:
- the 1994 report to the 12th Bundestag by the Commission of Inquiry ("Enquête Kommission") on "Protection of public health and the environment - Assessment criteria and perspectives on sustainable management of material streams in industrial society", in which the Commission of Inquiry makes proposals for implementing the sustainability model and for basic rules on use of materials, taking PVC as a specific example;
 - 1999 report from the Umweltbundesamt entitled "Handlungsfelder und Kriterien für eine vorsorgende nachhaltige Stoffpolitik am Beispiel PVC", which builds on the report by the Commission of Inquiry and, within a comprehensive uniform assessment framework, draws conclusions on fields of action and criteria for a sustainable materials policy and applies this policy to PVC as an example. In the process it demonstrates risks associated with materials, not only with PVC itself but also with additives to it;
 - 1997 report by the Working Party on PVC set up by the Federal/Land Task Force on Chemical Safety (BLAC).
6. The Bundestag recommends the European Commission, for the purposes of assessments of PVC, to pay particular attention to the principles of materials policy set out below, which should be taken as guiding principles for PVC as well:
- reduction of consumption of materials in products and services;
 - reduction of consumption of natural materials and energy resources;
 - increase in the service life of products;
 - improved, environmentally sustainable recycling;
 - minimisation of emissions to the level technically unavoidable;
 - reduction of the complexity of material streams;
 - risk reduction to avoid overloading the environment with ecotoxic and toxic substances; and
 - development of materials which are sustainable from both the environmental and health points of view.