

## **THE GREEN DEAL AND ITS IMPACT ON THE ADHESIVE INDUSTRY**

Rising CO<sub>2</sub> emissions caused by a constant increase in the consumption of raw materials are evidently impacting our planet's climate and are therefore one of the reasons why the European Commission has defined a set of policy initiatives. The European Green Deal comprises a framework of regulative and legislative measures with the overarching objective of making Europe the first climate neutral continent by 2050. A crucial instrument is the New Circular Economy Action Plan. This action plan includes initiatives along the entire life cycle of products, targeting their ecodesign, promoting circular economy processes, fostering sustainable consumption and aiming to ensure that the resources used are kept in the circle for as long as possible. The adhesive industry is affected by the Green Deal and the Circular Economy Action Plan in many ways. In my presentation, I will focus on two key topics: Product ecodesign and the restriction of intentionally added microplastics.

The Ecodesign Directive aims at reducing the energy consumption of products. At the same time, it aims at preserving the value of products, materials and resources for as long as possible by minimising the generated waste. On the one hand, adhesives enable lightweight constructions and the further development of renewable energies and, thus, have a tremendous positive impact on sustainability. But on the other hand, adhesives are often suspected to prevent repair and recycling and, thus, impact the product life cycle in a negative way. A thoughtful product ecodesign considering all benefits of the adhesive bonding technology *and* removability is key.

Within the frame of the European Strategy for Plastics in the Circular Economy, the European Chemicals Association (ECHA) intends to restrict intentionally added microplastics under the REACH regulation. These microplastic particles and fibres can be found in various adhesives like dispersion adhesives and fibre-reinforced cement-based products. Furthermore, the microplastics definition covers small hot melt pellets and polymer spacers in adhesives for electronics. The good news is, adhesives are always derogated from the restriction but the adhesives industry will be confronted with labelling and reporting obligations.