

Press Information

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ALBA Group & Fraunhofer UMSICHT reveal new figures on resource efficiency

New study: When comparing 'primary' with 'secondary', recycling wins every time

Berlin. Through its recycling activities, the international raw materials supplier and environmental services provider ALBA Group is making a significant contribution to safeguarding resources and protecting the climate. This was the conclusion arrived at by experts at the Fraunhofer Institute UMSICHT in their recent study 'resources SAVED by recycling'. According to the study, ALBA Group saved more than 48.3 million tonnes of primary resources in 2014 alone by recycling around 6 million tonnes of material. Over the same period the recycling specialist also saved around 6.6 million tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions. To achieve a similarly positive effect on the climate, the number of cars on German roads needs to be reduced by around 3.7 million.

Through its recycling activities the ALBA Group is helping in the effort to achieve the targets set by the federal government as part of the resource efficiency programme ProgRes. The aim of the programme is to double resource productivity in Germany by 2020 compared to 1994. However, if the negative trend seen over the last five years continues, the target could be missed by as much as 40 per cent, according to a preliminary progress report by the Federal Environment Ministry. The Fraunhofer scientists have shown in their current study that an integrated recycling economy can turn this trend around.

Dr Axel Schweitzer, Chairman of the ALBA Group plc & Co. KG: 'With international demand for raw materials rising and with primary resources becoming increasingly scarce, it is vital that we recognize the raw material that is already in circulation as our most important source, and that we make full use of it. In the long term we need to break the link between global growth and resource consumption. The results of the Fraunhofer study show that we are already holding the key to securing a sustainable supply of raw materials and can set the course for improved resource efficiency.'

Dr Hartmut Pflaum EngD, Head of Resource and Innovation Management at Fraunhofer Institute UMSICHT: 'With the aid of the method we developed in-house, we can make exact models of the recycling processes of the ALBA Group in all the material flows under examination and compare that with the raw material costs of primary production. The remarkable result of our 'primary' against 'secondary' comparison was that recycling always wins. From a scientific perspective that is not only a step forward for the environment but also a milestone for the recycling economy and, ultimately, for society as a whole.'

To ascertain the savings in resources, the scientists at the Fraunhofer Institute UMSICHT looked at the material flows of metal, old electronic devices, paper/cardboard, glass, lightweight packaging, plastics and wood. You can read the results of the 'resources SAVED by recycling' study in the ALBA Group information portal www.resources-saved.com.

About ALBA Group:

With its two brands – ALBA and Interseroh – ALBA Group operates within Germany, Europe, the U.S. and Asia. With an annual turnover of 2.45 billion Euros (2014) and about 8,000 employees ALBA Group is one of the leading recycling and environmental services companies as well as raw material providers worldwide. In 2013 alone ALBA Group saved more than 7 million tonnes of greenhouse gases compared to primary production and at the same time about 51 million tonnes of primary raw materials through its recycling activities.

Further information on ALBA Group can be found at www.albagroup.de. All press releases of the ALBA Group may be subscribed to via RSS feed at www.albagroup.de/presse.

About Fraunhofer UMSICHT:

Fraunhofer UMSICHT is a pioneer in the sustainable energy and raw materials economy. The institute supplies scientific results and transfers them to the fields of business, society and politics. Together with its clients, UMSICHT researches and develops sustainable products, processes and services. With a staff of 559, the institute generated a turnover of 38.1 million Euros in 2014. As one of the 66 institutes and research facilities of the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft, Fraunhofer UMSICHT is part of a world-wide network and promotes international cooperation. Fraunhofer is the leading organisation for applied research in Europe.

More information on Fraunhofer UMSICHT is available at www.umsicht.fraunhofer.de.

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