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Chemical Recycling enters decisive phase

Project activity and EU legislation will cause the market for chemical recycling to enter a decisive phase in the coming years. At present, more than 40 plants for chemical recycling are in operation worldwide, while more than 100 further projects are being planned. This is one of the findings of ecoprolog's latest market report.

Within the next two or three years, the introduction of chemical recycling will enter its decisive phase. There are several reasons for this. Firstly, according to project engineers, nearly 50 new plants for chemical recycling are supposed to become operational over the coming years, more than half of which are located in Europe. This process will show if technical solutions can be implemented as planned – and at the expected cost.

The decision on legal bases is at least equally important, especially in the EU. If the calculation of the recycling performance in the sense of ‚Fuel Use Exempt‘, which is the calculation methodology claimed by the chemical industry, established itself, this would allow, for instance, to count used pyrolysis oil, with almost equal mass, as recycled plastic. At the same time, it would be possible to ‚dilute‘ the pyrolysis oil with naphtha produced from fossil resources within the scope of larger-scale production processes. This would also have technical consequences, such as higher tolerances regarding impurities. In the case of a ‚Rolling Average‘ approach, as claimed particularly by environmental associations and the material recycling industry, the quota of calculated amounts oftentimes would not even be half as high in practice. Subsequently, the economic importance of the calculation method is high, seeing that a debate on this subject is currently being carried out within the EU, above all, through the decision on implementation of the Single-Use Plastics Directive (SUPD).

Against the background of the still high dynamics in the chemical recycling market, ecoprolog has updated its market report on chemical recycling in its third edition. In doing so, for the first time, some projects have been deleted from the tracking due to the lack of visible progress.

In total, the market study covers more than 40 active plants and more than 100 projects for chemical recycling, almost 20 of which are under construction. Altogether, the number of active plants as well as plants under construction has again increased compared to last year's figures.

ecoprolog's Market Report Chemical Recycling 2024 analyses the technical bases, market factors, development status, plant asset, projects and competition in the field of chemical recycling worldwide. The study is available at www.ecoprolog.com.

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