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## 45 year old PVC windows start their 2nd life in Brussels

Brussels (prs). – In 1968, 11 PVC windows were installed in a private residence in Sint-Pieters-Woluwe, a Brussels suburb. These were the first PVC windows to be installed in the Brussels region. After 45 years, they are still in good condition. They operate without any issues, they seal off rain and wind; and they still look perfect. But today, the heat loss through the single pane glass justifies their replacement by new PVC windows with double pane glass.



45 year old single pane PVC windows are dismantled.  
Oldest PVC window reference in Brussels region.

The entire process of recycling end-of-life PVC-u windows in a closed loop was demonstrated live to press and special guests, who could witness how the old windows were dismantled and recycled and how the recycled material was used to produce new window frames. In this way the PVC window profile manufacturers clearly showed evidence that “closing the loop” is indeed a reality.



PVC skip driving through Brussels to pick up postconsumer PVC windows for recycling

**Federplast.be**, the association of the Belgian plastic and rubber producers and converters, and **EPPA**, the European PVC Window Profile and Related Building Products Association in Brussels jointly organised the event with the support of **VinylPlus**, the Voluntary Commitment of the European PVC industry ([www.vinylplus.eu](http://www.vinylplus.eu)) „Many experts are not yet sufficiently aware of

the fact that PVC windows can be and are being recycled at all” said Petri Ven, responsible for the building sector within Federplast.be.

„Campaigns like this demonstrate that also in the Benelux there is a well-functioning closed loop recycling of PVC windows.“

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One of the main targets of the VinylPlus programme is the commitment to recycle an ever increasing volume of PVC products, of which long life building products such as windows play a major role. *„Our last annual progress report showed a total recycling rate of more than 362,000 tonnes for the year 2012 in Europe. Postconsumer PVC windows contributed substantially to the total volume. More than 2.5 million PVC windows have been recycled in 2012. Until 2020 VinylPlus is targeting total 800,000 tonnes annually“*, explained Stefan Eingärtner, General Manager VinylPlus.

Throughout Europe window profile manufacturers are working on increasing the postconsumer window recycling volumes. *„In Germany, too, Rewindo has been a well-working post-consumer window recycling system for more than 10 years and it is significantly contributing to an increase in postconsumer PVC window recycling quantities. Similar initiatives were started successfully in most of the West-European countries within the EU27. We appreciate all the more the campaign now started here in Belgium“*, emphasized EPPA president Andreas Hartleif.



Shredder reduces PVC window frames to 5cm pieces

In Diksmuide the organizers presented the second step in closed loop recycling of PVC windows. This brand new recycling plant, with a capacity of 20,000 tonnes, started operating in October 2012. Windows and other rigid PVC building products are shredded and the various materials are separated from one another by means of various sorting techniques. *„The old windows are shredded to pieces of about 5cm. Then, wood, metal and glass are separated from the PVC, which is then ground to smaller grains or 'granulate' of about 0.5cm. These grains are dedusted and residual rubber is separated by means of ionisation. A colour separator separates white grains from coloured grains with a flow of 20 million pieces per hour. The resulting PVC granulate is of such a high quality that it can be reused for the extrusion of new PVC window profiles without quality loss“*, explained Koen Deneire, Production manager raw materials at Deceuninck.



New PVC window frame with recycled core

Subsequently at its profile extrusion site in Hooglede-Gits, the Belgian window profile manufacturer Deceuninck NV demonstrated how the recycled granulates from the recycling plant in Diksmuide is reused in the production process. The 2nd generation window profiles contain recycling material in the core with a skin of virgin 1<sup>st</sup> use PVC. Next to a PVC skin, also a decorative film or a coating can be applied to obtain a perfect surface.



The new profiles with recycled content have the same properties as the profiles made from virgin material. PVC will retain its properties after 7 different lives. In this way PVC gives evidence of being environment friendly.



Postconsumer PVC waiting for recycling at Deceuninck in Diksmuide

*„PVC is the smartest choice for window applications. The material lasts for 50 years, and over this long life-time, PVC remains maintenance free and saves energy with every season. Today, recycling of PVC windows and reusing the new raw material into new window profiles further reduces the carbon footprint. Fifty years ago, our industry started the production of recyclable, long life rigid PVC building products. Single glazed PVC windows installed in the late 60s are now gradually replaced by highly insulating double or triple glazed windows. The old dismantled windows return to several recycling plants throughout Europe. The recycled material is being reused in new window and building profiles.*

*Today, our industry is closing the loop and helps “build a sustainable home” in Europe. “said Tom Debusschere, CEO Deceuninck NV and Vice-President of EPPA.*

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