



## World Oceans Day: Werner & Mertz fights for global environmental protection

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At the invitation of NABU (German Society for the Preservation of Nature), Reinhard Schneider, CEO of Werner & Mertz and founder of the "Frosch Initiative", presented reasonable solutions for a global problem during a panel discussion "Trash in the Oceans – A Societal Challenge" held in the gardens of Bellevue Palace in Berlin.

June 8 has been celebrated internationally as "World Oceans Day" since 2009. On the United Nations commemorative day during Environment Week in Berlin, NABU Germany organized a discussion about plastic pollution in the world's oceans. The participants were Dirk Lindenau of Lindenau Maritime Engineering & Projecting, Dr. Helge Wendenburg from the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature, Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety (BMUB), Olaf Tschimpke, President of NABU Deutschland, and Schneider, Chairman of the Board at Werner & Mertz.

With the Recyclate Initiative, the CEO from Mainz has been promoting recycling of household packaging waste from the Yellow Bag collection system since 2012. In cooperation with partners from retailing, waste management, industry and environmental protection, including NABU Germany, Werner & Mertz has succeeded in putting PET packaging waste into a closed loop system as prescribed by the internationally recognized Cradle to Cradle principle. PE recyclates also have been developed during this time. The Recyclate Initiative is an "open innovation" project that uses partners' know-how to develop sustainable solutions for consumer-oriented environmental protection.



A panel discussion on the subject of "Trash in the Oceans – A Societal Challenge" was held at the invitation of NABU Germany in Bellevue Garden during Environment Week. Participants were (from left): Dr. Helge Wendenburg from the Ministry for the Environment, Olaf Tschimpke of NABU, Reinhard Schneider, Werner & Mertz CEO, and Dirk Lindenau of Lindenau Maritime Engineering & Projecting. Moderator Christian Hoffmann is in the background, center.

Schneider is pushing for financial incentives for the use of recyclates and demanding that they be incorporated in recycling legislation. "Incentives that increase the economic attractiveness of PET recycling could bring about in the medium term what long ago happened with aluminum," Schneider told the guests in Bellevue Garden. "Today there is hardly a landfill with an aluminum problem because word got out that recycling of aluminum cans, for example, pays off and people began looking after this reusable material."

On the day before Environment Week began, Federal Environment Minister Barbara Hendricks presented the B.A.U.M. Environmental Award to Schneider at a ceremony in Berlin. B.A.U.M. (German Association of Environmental Management) recognizes the work of managers who are responsible for developing and promoting their companies' environmental and sustainability philosophy. Award winners are chosen by a jury of 25 members from politics, business and academia.

Schneider sees sustainability not only as a firmly entrenched company tradition but also as the potential for continuous improvement at a regional, national and global level. "A manager of a family-owned company with a longer planning period than a publicly listed corporation,



for example, can certainly make different decisions, which, in best case, link ecological with economic concerns." With the Frosch brand, Werner & Mertz is the market leader in Germany in the segment ecological detergents, cleaning and care products. Since 1986 the company has steadfastly pursued sustainability goals and has done pioneering work beyond the area of packaging development. Other examples include the use of surfactants made from native-grown plants, construction of the energy-efficient headquarters building, operation of the company's own Water Center and participation in selected environmental protection projects that match the corporate philosophy. More information is available at [www.ganzheitlich-nachhaltig.de](http://www.ganzheitlich-nachhaltig.de) and [www.initiative-frosch.de](http://www.initiative-frosch.de)

#### Facts about "Plastic in the Ocean"

- Approximately 80% of the plastic in the oceans now comes from unsecured landfills around the world. Strong winds and rainfalls push the plastic into the seas.
- Plastic packaging is generally incinerated in Germany and other European countries. Not only does this process generate three grams of CO<sub>2</sub> from every gram of PET, but it also wastes a material that can be recycled again and again.
- A current study by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation says that the amount of plastic waste in the world's oceans is expected to quadruple by the year 2050 – at which time more plastic than fish will be swimming in the sea.

Photo: Petra Schneider-Schmelzer/Werner & Mertz

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