



"Aktion Grün" meets the Recyclate Initiative

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On World Environment Day the Environment Minister for Rhineland-Palatinate Ulrike Höfken visited the family-run company Werner & Mertz of Mainz. During a tour that lasted several hours, the minister learned about the successful Recyclate Initiative, which was brought to life by Reinhard Schneider, the owner of Werner & Mertz. This year's motto for World Environment Day – "We have only one Earth – so protect our resources!" – gives Werner & Mertz a reason to present the Recyclate Initiative's comprehensive solutions for an effective circular economy.



Factory visit on World Environment Day: The Environment Minister for Rhineland-Palatinate Ulrike Höfken and Reinhard Schneider, the owner of Werner & Mertz. Photo: Werner & Mertz / Marcus Steinbrücker

The minister got a first-hand impression of the integrally sustainable way of working at Werner & Mertz, ranging from the company's own Water Center and bottle manufacturing by the Initiative partner ALPLA on factory premises to the bottling of ecological cleaning products.



"Three hundred twenty-two million tons of plastic products were produced around the world in 2015. For the protection of nature and the environment, we must urgently reduce the amount of plastic waste by manufacturing fewer disposable products of plastic and fewer products of non-recyclable plastic. In this case Werner & Mertz is setting a good example. For its sustainable cleaning products the manufacturer uses packaging made of up to 100 percent used plastic. Recognized as a pioneer in waste prevention, the company makes an important contribution to environmental protection," said the Environment Minister during the tour. The visit to Werner & Mertz was an agenda item for the "Aktion Grün" week. "The goal of our regional program is to preserve natural habitats for animal and plant species by actively protecting nature and the environment in Rhineland-Palatinate," she added and thanked Managing Director Schneider for his engagement.



Environment Minister Ulrike Höfken with Reinhard Schneider, owner Werner & Mertz and Volker Angres, environmental expert at the ZDF television. Photo: Werner & Mertz / Marcus Steinbrücker

"One of the main environmental damages of our time is the pollution of the oceans and related destruction of those sensitive eco systems. Right now the fight against ocean plastic is focused on treating the symptoms, not working on the causes," said Schneider. "With the Recyclate Initiative, we show a functioning solution that starts with the causes. We prove that plastic can be kept in a completely closed cycle." Consumers can contribute to a genuine circular economy with their conscious decision to purchase packaging made of used plastic (recyclates) and thereby encourage manufacturers to rethink plastics and recycling.



The tour led from the company's own Water Center and bottle manufacturing to the bottling of ecological cleaning products. Photo: Werner & Mertz / Marcus Steinbrücker

The transparent PET packaging for the Frosch brand is made of up to 100 percent used plastic, 20 percent of which is recycled from the Yellow Bag collection system. The Initiative has brought more than 168 million bottles to retail markets (ticker at www.we-for-recycles.de). The HDPE packaging for the Emsal and green care Professional brands contains 100 percent recycled from the Yellow Bag. By the end of 2018, 7.5 million product packages will be in use.

The environment is effectively protected through the high-quality recycling of plastic. The plastic neither ends up as litter in the ocean nor as incinerators' CO₂ emissions in the air.

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