Lenzing
Innovative by nature

Press release

Lenzing welcomes clear positioning of the EU Commission in the fight against plastic waste

- Guidelines of the EU Commission to implement the Single-Use Plastics Directive have been published
- Uniform labelling obligation for wipes and feminine hygiene products containing plastics as of July 03, 2021
- Lenzing's wood-based, biodegradable VEOCEL™ branded fibers as a sustainable alternative to plastic

Lenzing – The Lenzing Group, the globally leading supplier of sustainably produced specialty fibers, welcomes the issuance of the guidelines for the implementation of the Single-Use Plastics Directive (EU) 2019/904[1], which took effect on June 05, 2019. In these guidelines, the EU Commission specifies which products fall within the scope of the directive, thus providing clarity in the joint fight of the EU member states against environmental pollution from plastic waste. Lenzing's wood-based, biodegradable cellulosic fibers such as those of the VEOCEL™ brand comprise a sustainable and innovative solution to this man-made problem.

"Pollution of the environment – especially marine pollution – is one of the biggest problems of our time. For this reason, we welcome the measures taken by the EU to reduce certain single-use plastic products and the transition to closed-loop models", says Robert van de Kerkhof, Member of the Managing Board of the Lenzing Group. "Lenzing has been investing in the development of sustainable and innovative solutions for the textile and nonwovens industry for many years and will also continue in the future to intensively work on achieving systemic change towards a circular economy", van de Kerkhof adds.

Lenzing's ambitious sustainability targets make it a trailblazer in manufacturing industry, especially the fiber segment. Lenzing's considerable investments in developing sustainable innovations and implementing climate objectives focusing on carbon neutrality not only strengthen the company's market position and increase shareholder value but also continuously create new jobs.

[1] Directive (EU) 2019/904 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 June 2019 on the reduction of the impact of certain plastic products on the environment

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Uniform labelling rules for some single-use plastic products

The Commission implementing regulation (EU) 2020/2151 applying to the Single-Use Plastics Directive stipulate uniform labelling requirements for some of the single-use plastic products on the packaging or the product itself starting on July 03, 2021. They encompass feminine hygiene products and wet wipes for personal and household care containing plastic.

“The issue of hygiene is becoming increasingly important and is especially the order of the day in the light of the prevailing epidemic conditions”, states Jürgen Eizinger, Vice President Global Nonwovens Business at Lenzing. “The Single-Use Plastics Directive enables consumers to make a more informed purchase decision. That is why we welcome these implementation guidelines which now provide enhanced clarity. Lenzing‘s VEOCEL™ fibers already offer a natural solution today for the problem of global plastic waste, and the company is continually expanding its capacities for wood-based specialty fibers as a means of promoting the development of sustainable wipes and hygiene products“, Jürgen Eizinger adds.

Consumers want sustainable hygiene products

Even before the implementation of the Single-Use Plastics Directive, Lenzing already gives consumers clear guidance in their purchasing decisions. Products bearing the VEOCEL™ brand logo on their packaging are produced in line with stringent certification criteria. As a consequence, consumers can be assured that the products contain biodegradable, cellulosic materials.

A Marketagent survey carried out in German-speaking Europe in October 2019[2] concluded that nine out of ten consumers would immediately change their purchasing behavior for wipes if they found out that their current product contains plastic. This would seem to imply that new market dynamics will emerge once the labelling rules for single-use plastic products takes effect. According to a Smithers Report[3], about 500,000 tons of petroleum-based fibers are used each year for the production of wipes.

#ItsInOurHands – the initiative for enhanced awareness and transparency

On the basis of its environmental initiative #ItsInOurHands, Lenzing has been supporting a movement since the end of 2019 in collaboration with its partners to create enhanced awareness and transparency for materials used in wipes. An online platform as well as a dedicated community strive to increase awareness on the part of

[2] Representative Marketagent Online survey, n = 1,005 (14 - 69 years old, from Austria and Germany). https://itsinourhands.com/

[3] Smithers Report “The Future of Global Nonwoven Wipes to 2023”, published in 2018, page 23, reference year 2018

producers and consumers and thus push ahead with the development of sustainable alternatives (more information at www.itsinourhands.com).

About the Lenzing Group

The Lenzing Group stands for ecologically responsible production of specialty fibers made from the renewable raw material wood. As an innovation leader, Lenzing is a partner of global textile and nonwoven manufacturers and drives many new technological developments.

The Lenzing Group's high-quality fibers form the basis for a variety of textile applications ranging from elegant ladies clothing to versatile denims and high-performance sports clothing. Due to their consistent high quality, their biodegradability and compostability Lenzing fibers are also highly suitable for hygiene products and agricultural applications.

The business model of the Lenzing Group goes far beyond that of a traditional fiber producer. Together with its customers and partners, Lenzing develops innovative products along the value chain, creating added value for consumers. The Lenzing Group strives for the efficient utilization and processing of all raw materials and offers solutions to help redirect the textile sector towards a closed-loop economy. In order to reduce the speed of global warming and to accomplish the targets of the Paris Climate Agreement and the "Green Deal" of the EU Commission, Lenzing has a clear vision: namely to make a zero-carbon future come true.

Key Facts &Figures Lenzing Group 2020
Revenue: EUR 1.63 bn
Nameplate capacity: 1,045,000 tons
Employees: 7,358

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