

## **Aluminum packaging is way ahead in product protection and sustainability**

Material properties as part of the solution for more resource efficiency

Düsseldorf, 10<sup>th</sup> November 2020 - In addition to the overarching COVID-19 discussions, the topics of resource efficiency, sustainability and recycling remain high on the agenda of packaging manufacturers, brand owners and consumers.

### **Efficient product protection ensures supply to the population**

In the course of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, it became clear, as if under a magnifying glass, how important packaging is for the smooth supply of the population with food, pharmaceutical products as well as hygiene and personal care items.

In order for the articles to reach the consumer in perfect condition, effective product protection through the packaging is essential. The material aluminum offers an absolute barrier against external influences such as light, oxygen or germs and thus provides a convincing solution for optimal product protection. At the same time, aluminum packaging efficiently helps to protect the resources contained in the packaged product. "This is all the more important as product damage or loss during transport and storage destroys far more resources than are necessary for the production of the packaging," says Johannes Schick, Chairman of the GDA Division of Tubes, Cans and Impact Extruded Parts.

### **Recyclability of packaging as a prerequisite for a functioning circular economy**

In the current report by the German Umweltbundesamt (Federal Environment Agency) on the generation and recycling of packaging waste in Germany, the importance of the recyclability of packaging was underlined. As a yardstick for measuring the recycling-friendly design of packaging, the minimum standard for determining the recyclability of packaging can be used which was recently updated by the German Zentrale Stelle Verpackungsregister (German Central Agency Packaging Register). The minimum standard requires that the environmental impact of the products over their entire life cycle and, in particular, their subsequent disposal be taken into account when designing and manufacturing products

The manufacturers of aluminum packaging have been pursuing a consistent strategy of reducing material input and the "design for recycling" for more resource efficiency for years. Thanks to the existing collection, sorting and recycling infrastructure, aluminum packaging remains in the value chain after use in Germany. In this context aluminum benefits from its intrinsic value and the fact that, as a so-called permanent material, it can be recycled again and again without any loss of quality.

"In this context, GDA welcomes the current "Mülltrennung wirkt" ("Waste separation works") campaign by the so-called dual systems in Germany, which aims at an even more efficient

collection and separation of packaging materials by consumers so that a comprehensive and high-quality recycling of materials is ensured," emphasizes GDA managing director Marius Baader.

### **90 percent of aluminum packaging is recycled in Germany**

Even if, according to a GVM/denkstatt study from 2019, packaging is only responsible for an average of 1.5-2.0 percent of the CO<sub>2</sub> footprint of a European consumer, the manufacturers of aluminum packaging face their responsibility for ample climate protection.

Thanks to the nationwide equipping of German sorting centers with eddy current separators, which enable easy sorting of the valuable aluminum fraction from the packaging material flow, a recycling rate of 90.1 percent for aluminum packaging was achieved in Germany in 2018 (latest available figure). Thus, the recycling quota for aluminum packaging of 90 percent required by the German Packaging Act for 2022 was already met in 2018.

"In the case of aluminum, we can rightly speak of an almost closed material loop. And at the same time, the recycling of valuable materials creates urgently needed jobs and investments in these difficult times," summarizes Johannes Schick.

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