

# Circular Economy Action Plan

European Green Deal



#WasteZeroWasteRecycleCircularEconomy



## 25 years of start-up, what progress has been made?

### The circular economy and what still needs to be done - an inventory

Germany has had a circular economy law since 1996, the Kreislaufwirtschaftsgesetz or KrWG (Closed Substance Cycle Waste Management Act), which at that time defined focal points such as waste avoidance and circular economy and which will celebrate its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2021.

In 2012 and 2017, the law was updated and specified. Circular economy should be even more focused on resource, climate and environmental protection. As a core element, the KrWG (based on EU Directive) for the first time anchored a **five-level waste hierarchy**, which established a basic order of priority among waste management measures. **Thus, the fundamental priority of material recovery (recycling) over energy recovery applies** - regardless of the calorific value of the waste.



### And today?

As part of the **EU Green Deal**, which aims to strengthen environmental and climate provisions in all future trade agreements, the EU Commission published a Circular Economy Action Plan in March 2020. Sustainable products, services and business models are to become the norm, with virtually no waste generated in the first place. Further measures are intended to reduce waste and promote the extraction of high-quality **secondary raw materials**. In this way, the EU wants to take a leading role in efforts at the global level, because a close circular orientation is a core element and prerequisite for climate neutrality.

However, even 25 years after the introduction of the German Closed Substance Cycle Waste Management Act and its updating at national and EU level, the principle of a linear economy or even a "throwaway economy" rather than a circular economy still prevails in many areas of industrial production. A large proportion of the raw materials used are still thermally recycled in incineration plants or landfilled at the end of a product's useful life. Material recovery (recycling) is only preferred to energy recovery if it pays off economically. An assessment of disposal in terms of **resource conservation**, minimization of the ecological footprint and the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions generated has hardly taken place to date.

However, in terms of climate protection and the goal of the EU and many other countries worldwide to **become climate-neutral by 2050**, the **circular economy plays a central role** with its contribution to conserving resources and closing material cycles. There are already many proven and efficient alternatives to recycling waste!

Have you already set the course for the future in the treatment of your industrial waste?

Contact [sales@econindustries.com](mailto:sales@econindustries.com) to find out more.

**Happy Birthday KrWG - there is still a long way to go...!**