

Is the packaging turnaround coming in 2022?

PreZero discussed the future of the circular economy with top experts at IFAT 2022

Munich, June 2, 2022. During a discussion session titled “#PreThink: Kreislaufwirtschaft jetzt! Kommt die Verpackungswende 2022?” (EN: #PreThink: Circular economy now! Is the packaging turnaround coming in 2022?) held on Wednesday at IFAT 2022 in Munich, high-profile participants from science, politics and civil society explored the opportunities and challenges for a packaging turnaround. “We want politicians to provide incentive systems for recycling-friendly product design and increased use of recycled materials, so that we can work together with all stakeholders to launch the packaging turnaround,” urged Thomas Kyriakis, CEO of PreZero. The discussion is part of a series of events and already the second dialogue format that PreZero has hosted together with WWF.

The participants agreed that the CO₂ reduction targets and the wasteful use of the planet’s finite resources make the shift to a circular economy more pressing than ever. “We’ve reached a critical point: What happens in the next ten years will determine the future of our planet,” said Dr. Martin Bethke of WWF Germany, summing up the situation. But according to Kyriakis, the continuing trend towards to-go products, booming online sales, and increasing demand for smaller portion sizes present real challenges. “Germany still consumes an excessive amount of raw materials while simultaneously failing to keep them in the loop,” added Prof. Dr. Christina Dornack from the TU Dresden.

So, how can we successfully bring about this packaging turnaround? From the perspective of the WWF and PreZero, further development of minimum standards for recyclability and the restriction of composite materials are key. At the same time, minimum quotas for the use of PCR recyclates and common European standards and norms should be introduced. Thomas Kyriakis expressly applauded the stance of the new German government, which intends to set a decisive course for the circular economy. According to him, the coalition agreement is a good basis for realizing the transformation towards more recycling and closed material loops for packaging. This is where PreZero wants to contribute its know-how as a partner.

Last year, the environmental service provider supported and accompanied WWF Germany in their study: “Verpackungswende jetzt! So gelingt der Wandel zu einer Kreislaufwirtschaft für Kunststoffe in Deutschland” (EN: „Pathways to a circular plastic packaging system in Germany“). At the beginning of 2022, the two partners published a joint impulse paper to politicians aimed at improving the circular economy of packaging with a view to recycling. The long-standing collaboration with WWF to protect the oceans is just one example of how PreZero fulfills its responsibility as a driver of the circular economy. PreZero also wants to actively contribute to new sustainability standards in the Bundesliga and, among other things, is developing innovative solutions as the official waste disposal partner of the Allianz Arena. For Jürgen Muth, CEO of the Allianz Arena, this cooperation is a great lever: “Our events at the Allianz Arena bring together several million people every year. We want to use innovative approaches to engage them in environmental protection and resource conservation.”

The environmental service provider will be presenting the entire range of services offered by its eleven countries at the IFAT for the first time. For the company, IFAT is the ideal place to exchange ideas with a wide variety of representatives from the industry. With its on-site consultations, dialog-oriented event formats and sustainable booth concept, the PreZero booth has quickly become a magnet for visitors.

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The "#PreThink: Kreislaufwirtschaft jetzt! Kommt die Verpackungswende 2022?" discussion was attended by:

- **Dr. Martin Bethge**, Executive Officer Markets & Business WWF Germany
- **Jürgen Muth**, CEO Allianz Arena
- **Prof. Dr. Christina Dornack**, Director Institute for waste and circular economy TU Dresden
- **Thomas Kyriakis**, CEO PreZero
- **Dr. Christoph Epping**, Head of the Sub-Department WR II "Ressourcenschutz, Kreislaufwirtschaft" at the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (present at the subsequent press briefing)

Quotes from participants:

Thomas Kyriakis, CEO PreZero:

"We are rethinking the circular economy in a new and holistic approach. This means that as an international environmental service provider, we aren't just active along the entire value chain, but also act as consultants in the development of sustainable and recyclable packaging solutions. As one of the central platforms for our industry, IFAT allows us to exchange ideas with our customers and partners and to jointly design sustainable solutions. We want politicians to provide incentive systems for recycling-friendly product design and increased use of recycled materials, so we can work together with all stakeholders to launch the packaging turnaround."

Dr. Martin Bethke, Executive Officer Markets & Business WWF Germany:

"We've reached a critical point: What happens in the next ten years will determine the future of our planet. There is no economy without ecology. We need a circular economy more than ever."

Prof. Dr. Christina Dornack, Director Institute for waste and circular economy TU Dresden

"The major challenges of the circular economy policy of the 2020s in Germany and the EU are to align it consistently with the requirements of the 1.5-degree target. Germany still consumes an excessive amount of raw materials while simultaneously failing to keep them in the loop. To reduce environmental and climate impacts along the entire life cycle, material flows must be reduced, and existing raw materials must be kept in the loop over the long term. This calls for immediate, long overdue changes in production and consumption patterns."

Jürgen Muth, CEO Allianz Arena:

"Our events at the Allianz Arena bring together several million people every year. We want to use innovative approaches to engage them in environmental protection and resource conservation. With the help of PreZero, we will further improve waste management processes and jointly develop sustainable solutions, from waste separation systems to unconventional recycling approaches. Because recycling not only saves disposal costs but also preserves resources. With our fanshop bags, which are made from grass clippings from the Allianz Arena, we have already realized a fantastic and particularly sustainable project together with PreZero."

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Dr. Christoph Epping, Head of the Sub-Department WR II "Ressourcenschutz, Kreislaufwirtschaft" at the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety:

"We need to reduce raw material consumption and close loops. In order for this to be even more successful, regulation will create the necessary framework for this. PreZero and the Schwarz Group are setting a great example here."

More information about PreZero can be found at our [press portal](#). Information about the trade fair presentation can be found on the website <https://circularfuture.de/en/>.

Your **password for the press area**: PreZero_IFAT_22

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Image caption: Markus Resch (moderator), Jürgen Muth, Dr. Martin Bethke, Christoph Epping, Thomas Kyriakis and Prof. Dr. Christina Dornack discussed the future of the circular economy at PreZero's IFAT booth.

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