

Stainless steel drains can be recycled again and again

Sustainability is a term that everyone has become familiar with over time. However, many unanswered questions remain, for example in relation to harmful substances in construction materials

Many issues must be considered when public authorities draw up new regulations concerning construction materials. The situation is much the same for manufacturers too. A major aim is to prevent environmentally harmful substances, for example, from continuing in the product cycle when a material reaches the end of its lifecycle and it is to be either reused or recycled.

A new register, the SCIP database, has therefore been created which, since the start of 2021, manufacturers have had to notify if any of their products contain harmful substances. The database must disclose information about hazardous substances which are present if they are on the EU's REACH list of environmentally harmful substances. This enables developers to avoid using dubious products.

This leads to choice

This database enables developers to avoid using products which are harmful to the environment and choose more environmentally friendly products instead. At the same time, requirements can be imposed on suppliers, with consequences if the requirements are not met.

“At present, the building regulations do not actually contain any rules concerning the use of particular types of drains and pipe systems in buildings. Although plastic and PVC are widely recycled internationally and regulations concerning additives to plastics are currently undergoing rapid change, it may in the long term hinder the recycling of collected PVC waste. This is also how the situation stands at the moment in Denmark, justified solely on the basis of the difficulties associated with identifying PVC which contains lead. This means that the PVC that is currently being recovered is sent for landfill disposal and transported to other EU Member States, where it is used as internal frames in three-layer sewer pipes or in window profiles,” says Business Development Manager at BLÜCHER, Palle Madsbjerg.

Free from harmful substances

BLÜCHER, which manufactures and markets stainless steel drains, has been very aware of the issue, precisely in order to be ahead of the curve in the event of documentation requirements being introduced. The manufacturer has reviewed its products in relation to the voluntary sustainability class:

“As regards sustainability, we are in fact able to document that we have not had any problems in this regard for the past 50 years. We use between 70 and 85 percent recycled steel in our drainage systems and they contain no harmful substances. On the other hand, we would score very highly on a sustainability scale, precisely because we recycle a non-harmful product,” says Palle Madsbjerg.

If you check out the EU's REACH list of prohibited harmful substances and the SCIP database of products containing harmful substances, you will not find any products from BLÜCHER.

Database ready for go

“It is not possible to guarantee or document that you are buying a house which contains no harmful substances. It has always been difficult to verify the use of harmful chemicals in buildings, and developers will often remain unaware that chemicals have been used in their buildings until the buildings have been completed, and the list of safety datasheets presented to them,” says Palle Madsbjerg.

He adds: “But this time may be over, because the new SCIP database, in which manufacturers have to register any products they may have which contain harmful substances in the EU’s REACH list of critical substances, is ready for use. Way back at the start of 2021, there was a deadline for registering products, so that all manufacturers were aware of which substances they have registered in the SCIP database, particularly substances used in construction materials.”

Sustainable since 1965

Since 1965, BLÜCHER has been manufacturing drainage systems using stainless steel, a material where 90-95% is already being recycled in an economically sustainable way in Denmark. Similarly, BLÜCHER has over the years considerably reduced its CO₂ impact by using raw materials which contain recycled materials of between 65 and 80%.

For recycling too

“With products without any reservations in the REACH and SCIP databases, and a generally unproblematic product with regard to harmful substances, BLÜCHER’s products are ideal for use in the circular economy, and we are already working on recycling solutions, as for decades the products have been labelled to enable them to be identified,” explains Palle Madsbjerg. BLÜCHER’s products have historically been used as circular products when they have been part of a demolition project, and the sustainable development within the construction sector fits well with BLÜCHER’s products, which also have an extremely long life.

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