



Since the beginning of 2023, Spain has been applying a tax that charges 0.45 Euros for each kilogram of non-recycled plastic used in the production of single-use packaging, which will also have a relevant impact on ceramic packaging, such as shrink film. Aliplast, a European leader in plastic recycling, can turn the problem into an opportunity with its Reload products. In the scenario of a fully operational Plastic Tax, using an Aliplast film leads to savings of up to 450 Euros per ton compared to the costs incurred when using a 100 percent virgin product.

The importance of choosing recycled materials

The Spanish ceramic district - like the Italian ceramic district - is accustomed to working according to just-in-time principles and makes extensive use of shrink film for packaging tile stocks. This is temporary packaging that is undone and redone during the various stages of product processing, and thus lends itself well to recovery and recycling processes. This is the speciality of Aliplast, an Italian company, part of the multi-utility group HERA, which has more than forty years of know-how in the field of plastic collection and regeneration, as well as an in-depth knowledge of the Iberian market, having been present in Spain with its own plant for more than two decades. The company also has specific expertise on "closed loop" projects: those that involve recovering waste material from the customer, remanufacturing it, and re-marketing it.

Reload

So, if the best option is recycling, another choice immediately becomes important: that of using a material that can be effectively recovered and processed and that also boasts high mechanical flexibility and strength. In the specific case of tiles, these are often stored outdoors, exposed to all kinds of weather conditions, and therefore need to be properly protected. For this specific need, Aliplast can offer "Reload" type films, a brand that identifies product lines with an extremely high percentage of recycled material. The value of the Reload brand is tangible: in the case of films, the recycled percentage is more than 80%, while in the case of PET sheets, another product in which Aliplast excels, this value rises to more than 90%. In practice, these materials have already been employed in the field of ceramics for some time in the Italian industrial district, where Aliplast is a leader and serves most of the companies in this industry.

Real savings for customers and the environment

The savings only apply to the recycled plastic portion of the product. In practical terms, the use of Aliplast film, in the case of, for example, a product made from 80% recycled plastic, results in savings of 360 Euros per ton compared to the costs of film made

entirely from virgin material. In addition to economic savings, it's important to consider the concrete reduction in environmental impact, which Aliplast assesses by applying the LCA (Life Cycle Assessment) methodology, aimed at analyzing the impact of a product on the environment throughout its use (from material production to end of life). If we consider PE film specifically, the impact of using a product made by Aliplast is just over 1 kg of Co2 equivalent for every kg processed and produced, compared to 3 kg for a virgin plastic film. This means that the Aliplast film is three times less impactful in terms of carbon footprint.

Aliplast

Established in 1982 and headquartered in Ospedaletto di Istrana (Treviso), in little more than three decades Aliplast has carved out for itself a role as leader in the production of flexible PE films, PET sheets and regenerated polymers. From a plastic waste collection company, it has been able to progressively widen its offer thanks to careful and forward-looking

Aliplast's recycled Reload to avoid the impact of the plastic tax

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management, paired with constant investments in research and development and in the use of state-of-the-art technology. The collection activity has been integrated first with the regeneration and then with the production of goods and packaging with recycled plastics; this was followed by the approval by the PARI system (Plan for the autonomous management of packaging waste), which allows it to treat its PE packaging and the waste generated by its associates on its own, instead of having to rely on the national system, since it is able to guarantee an effective collection and recycling. Since 2017, Aliplast is part of Herambiente, the first national waste treatment company.

La giusta certificazione per il giusto materiale

Dal 1° gennaio 2024 sarà possibile beneficiare dell'esenzione della plastic tax spagnola solo in presenza di materiale riciclato certificato attraverso standard europei conformi. Nello specifico sarà necessario rispettare la EN15343 per la tracciabilità e la EN17065 per l'accreditamento del sistema stesso. Per questo motivo Aliplast, già certificata in passato con la certificazione EuCertPlast (che soddisfa la EN15343) ha investito per ottenere due delle certificazioni RecyClass, che invece soddisfano entrambi i requisiti. Nello specifico le due certificazioni si riferiscono la prima all'attività di riciclo di Aliplast - dal rifiuto plastico alla materia prima seconda prodotta - e la seconda al contenuto di riciclato dei film in LDPE e delle lastre in PET realizzati da Aliplast. Oltre a gestire questi due schemi di certificazione, RecyClass è una piattaforma partecipata da tutta l'industria delle materie plastiche Europea che, attraverso protocolli scientifici di prova, si occupa della valutazione della riciclabilità degli imballaggi in plastica. Il tool gratuito di autovalutazione consente alle aziende produttrici o utilizzatrici di imballaggi di valutare il proprio imballaggio sulla falsariga delle classi energetiche degli elettrodomestici, attribuendo ad un imballaggio una classe che va dalla A alla F a seconda del grado di riciclabilità. Il report rilasciato a fine analisi suggerisce anche le aree di intervento per consentire all'utente di migliorare il livello raggiunto.

The right certification for the right material

From January 1, 2024, it will only be possible to benefit from the Spanish plastic tax exemption if the recycled material is certified through compliant European standards. Specifically, it will be necessary to comply with EN15343 for traceability and EN17065 for the accreditation of the system itself. This is why Aliplast, which already holds a EuCertPlast certification (which meets the EN15343 standard) has invested in obtaining two of the RecyClass certifications, which instead meet both requirements. Specifically, of the two certifications, the first refers to Aliplast's recycling activity - from plastic waste to the secondary raw material produced - and the second to the recycled content of LDPE films and PET sheets made by Aliplast. In addition to managing these two certification schemes, RecyClass is a platform in which the entire European plastics industry takes part and that, through scientific testing protocols, addresses the assessment of the recyclability of plastic packaging. The free self-assessment tool allows packaging manufacturers or users to evaluate their packaging along the lines of the energy classes of household appliances, assigning a class ranging from A to F to a packaging depending on the degree of recyclability. The report released at the end of the analysis also suggests areas for action to enable the user to improve the level achieved.