

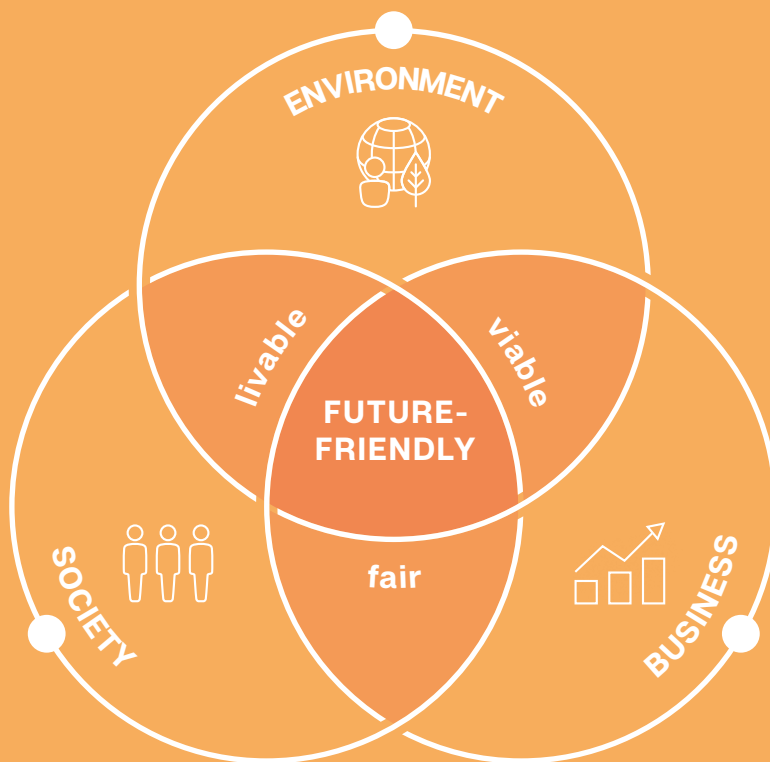
# FUTURE-FRIENDLY

Corporate Responsibility at VEKA 2022

# Being future-friendly

As a family business, we strive for **future-friendly business development** with a focus on secure jobs in a healthy environment. We want to create a world that is worth living in, and that is viable and fair for future generations.

Since **business, society and the environment** are interlinked, we always look at them together. In other words, for us, sustainability is always **three-dimensional**. Only by acting in a future-friendly way can we ensure **our long-term viability and success**.



# FOREWORD BY THE EXECUTIVE BOARD



## Dear readers,

The past few years have been marked by major challenges: the pandemic, extreme weather events, supply chain shortages and, finally, the Russian war against Ukraine. These challenges have affected us and our customers, too – and in more ways than we can imagine. Yet despite it all, we were able to conclude a positive 2022 business year. We'd like to take this moment to extend special thanks to our employees, whose commitment and solidarity have played a key role in shaping the success of the VEKA Group even in the midst of these many uncertainties.

The war in Ukraine, in particular, has kept us busy. Because we have a subsidiary located in that war-torn country, we find ourselves directly affected as a Group. Wherever possible, and with all the means at our disposal, we do what we can to support our colleagues in Ukraine. And within the VEKA Group, the willingness to help is huge: More than €51,000 were donated by employees alone to procure medicines as well as a fire truck, which were then handed over at the Polish-Ukrainian border.

The consequences of the war were noticeable outside Ukraine as well: supply chains were disrupted, material and gas prices rose, and energy supplies became more and more unreliable. In addition, the consequences of climate change are affecting us all, making it even more important to

address the issue of sustainability in its economic, ecological and social dimensions and to create transparency. As a family business, we consider it a matter of course to take responsibility for our actions and to keep future generations in mind in all that we do. This is why we have incorporated the topic of sustainability into our strategy. By 2045, VEKA aims to operate in a climate-neutral manner across our entire value chain at all locations and across all three scopes. This is the only way we can ensure future-friendly development and create a future worth living.

This booklet aims to make our sustainability activities visible by explaining how VEKA is living up to its corporate responsibility. It looks back over the years 2021 and 2022 and shows our goals and the progress we've made in reaching them. We wish you a rewarding and inspiring read!

The Board of VEKA Group

Andreas Hartleif (Chair)

Elke Hartleif (Human Resources)

Pascal Heitmar (Finance)

Josef L. Beckhoff (Sales and Marketing)

Dr Werner Schuler (Technology)

# FUTURE-FRIENDLY



## THE FOUNDING YEARS

In 1969, Heinrich Laumann founds VEKAPLAST with eight employees and a turnover of 1.7 million Deutsche Mark.

Turnover in € million\*

42.0

## EARLY INTERNATIONALISATION

Between 1983 and 1986, VEKA establishes its first international subsidiaries.



## CIRCULAR ECONOMY

In 1993, Europe's largest and most modern recycling plant for scrap windows is built in Behringen. Recycling sites in France and the UK follow.



## THE SECOND ROUND OF INTERNATIONALISATION

VEKA Polska is founded in 1994. An expansion into Asia and Latin America follows between 1994 and 2000.



517.8

256.5



\* Simplified representation: scaling not true to scale.



### FOUNDATION OF THE STRATEGY & CSR DEPARTMENT



The VEKA Group sets up its Strategy & CSR Department and appoints group-wide specialists for the various CSR areas.

### GREENHOUSE GAS BALANCE AND NET ZERO



The VEKA Group prepares its first certified greenhouse gas balance sheet (Scopes 1 and 2) for the 2021 financial year. On this basis, it defines its net-zero target for 2045.

### FUTURE-FRIENDLY #1

In 2018, VEKA initiates a group-wide CSR management system.



664.3

### FUTURE-FRIENDLY #2

VEKA publishes its second sustainability booklet.



1,142.4

### CONSOLIDATION AND ALLIANCES

Through selective acquisitions, the takeover of GEALAN and the diversification into digital business areas, the VEKA Group establishes itself as a global market leader.



### FUTURE-FRIENDLY #3

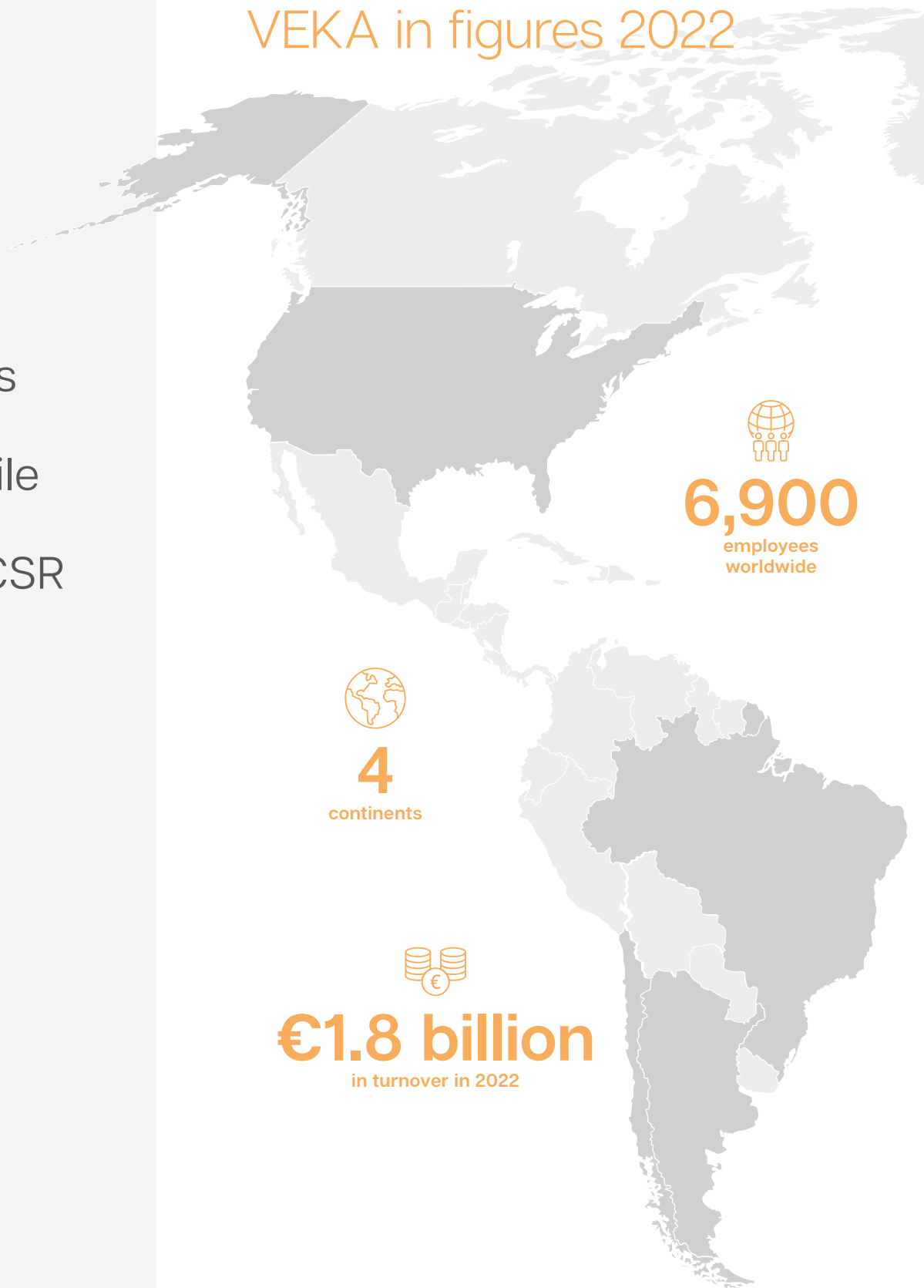
VEKA publishes its third sustainability booklet.

1,836.2



# VEKA in figures 2022

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**46**

locations  
worldwide



**485**

extrusion lines



**100,000**

tonnes of recycling capacity  
per year within the  
VEKA Recycling Group



**23**

production sites



**3**

recycling plants



**450,000**

tonnes of goods production



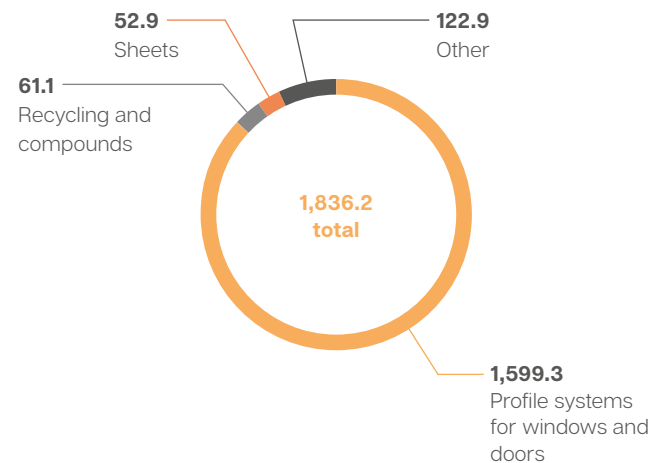
**29.6%**

proportion of recycled materials used in  
VEKA and GEALAN profiles in Europe in 2022\*

## The VEKA Group at a glance

What started in 1969 as a regional craftsman's activity in Westphalia has since grown into an international family business. With 6,900 employees at 46 locations on 4 continents, the VEKA Group is now a leader in the field of PVC profile systems for windows and doors.

2022 turnover in millions of euros by division



### Divisions and brands of the VEKA Group



Profile systems for windows and doors



Recycling and compounds



Sheets



Outdoor Living Products



Surfaces



Digitalisation



Automation







**VEKA Aktiengesellschaft** brings together the divisions and brands of the VEKA Group. In addition, various functions and focus areas – such as CSR – are organised on a group-wide basis.



With its two brands **VEKA** and **GEALAN**, the VEKA Group is the global market leader in profile systems for windows, doors, roller shutters, and sliding doors made of PVC.



In the recycling plants of **VEKA Umwelttechnik** and its subsidiaries in France and England, used windows and doors, as well as production returns, are processed into recycilate. The recycled PVC (compounds) is reprocessed in the new production of profiles and sheets.



The Sheets Division – **VEKAPLAN** – is responsible for the production and distribution of compact and foamed PVC sheets, which are used primarily in the advertising, construction, automotive and plastic moulding industries.



The North American brand **VEKA Outdoor Living Products** supplies the entire North and Central American continent with its PVC solutions for outdoor use: decking, railing and fencing.



The two surface technologies **SPECTRAL** and **GEALAN-acrylcolor** are designed to meet the requirements of PVC window systems. The decorative films with PVC content contain features such as high environmental resistance.



**DBS** offers digital solutions for all stages of the window construction value chain: from customer acquisition, technical planning, purchasing and production to installation and after-sales support.



Since 2022, the VEKA Group has been complemented by an Automation Division. The **TEXINO** brand offers smart home products for intelligent window, door and shading solutions.

# Embedding CSR in our corporate strategy

Our Corporate Strategy 2025 provides the VEKA Group with a common understanding of why we do what we do (we care), how we do things (we act) and what we want to achieve (we grow). Our goals and initiatives help us to act in a future-friendly manner.

## OUR MISSION

### we care

Our mission is to act in a future-friendly and value-based way. We trust our employees and support them in their professional and personal development. We focus on cultivating long-term partnerships.

## OUR VALUES

### we act

We take on the challenges ahead of us and assume responsibility with courage and entrepreneurship. Our collaboration is characterised by appreciation, commitment, trust and responsibility.

## OUR VISION

### we grow

Our goal is to provide the best solutions for our partners. We want our employees to be proud and happy to work for us. We aim for our company to have the smallest carbon footprint in the industry.

## Our goals



Industry-leading profitability



Above-average market growth



Sales and profit through innovative products and services



Employee engagement and performance

## Our initiatives



Synergies and process optimisation



Growing innovation adoption



Investment allocation



HR



CSR

“We’re leading VEKA into a sustainable future – and our net-zero goal is the next important step.”

David Beckers, CSR Manager | VEKA Group



## CSR management

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is one of our five strategic priorities. The CSR initiative defines and specifies our corporate responsibility towards the environment, society and our employees. Through our CSR management, we aim to continuously measure and improve our sustainability performance.

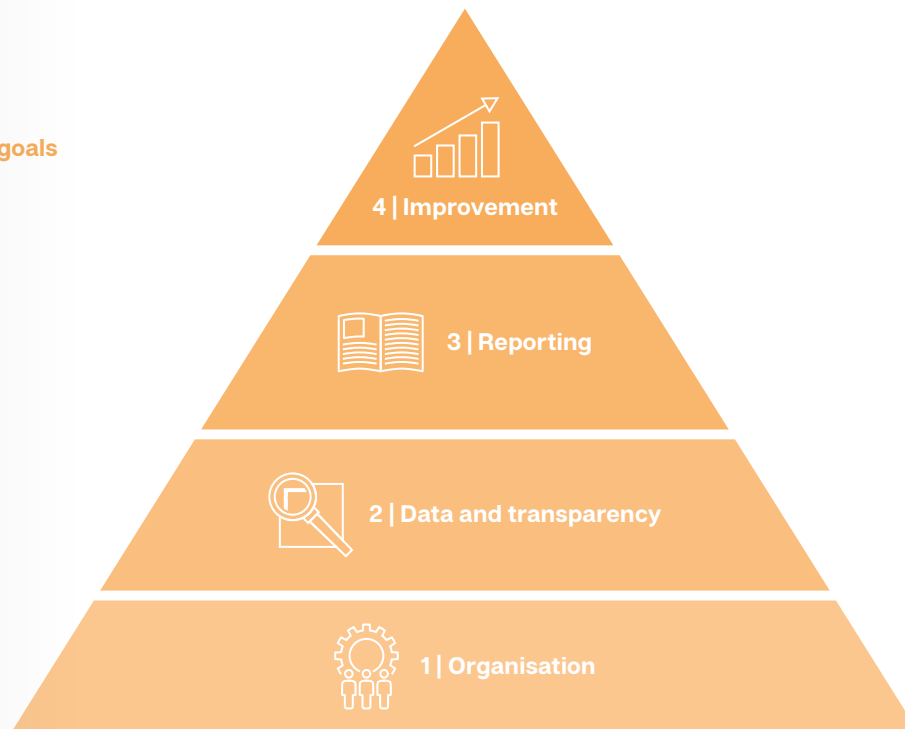
**1 | Organisation:** We have set up our own CSR organisation to meet both external CSR requirements and our internal commitment to sustainable management. A total of 10 people from various business areas are responsible for our CSR, structuring and promoting the relevant issues.

**2 | Data and transparency:** We collect all relevant key figures throughout the Group in accordance with the GRI and, in future, the ESRS standards. This data is used to define improvement targets. We are constantly working to improve data quality and further automate the process.

**3 | Reporting:** We report regularly on our CSR activities. This is to show our progress and to highlight the relevance of sustainability – in its social, environmental and economic dimensions. With the reporting requirement from 2025, we will integrate CSR issues into our annual report to a greater extent.

**4 | Improvement:** By improving data quality and CSR reporting, and by appointing CSR specialists, we are continuously working to better our sustainability performance. On the basis of improved data, we aim to develop group targets for each area, including achieving group-wide carbon neutrality (Scopes 1, 2 and 3) by 2045.

### CSR goals



# ENVIRONMENT

“Only when we start to see discarded PVC windows and doors as valuable resources rather than waste, can we start to think of the economy in a completely new way: as a cycle in which many resources are already available – we just need to use them. We began this journey in 1993 when we founded VEKA Umwelttechnik. Since 2006, we’ve also been recycling PVC throughout Europe at our other sites in England and France.”

François Auble, Managing Director | VEKA Recyclage (France)



100%

renewable energy at GEALAN's two German sites, Tanna and Oberkotzau

90%

energy and carbon emission savings by using recycled material compared to virgin material

250,000

kWh/year energy saved by installing free cooling at the Sendenhorst site

## Certifications: paving the way for long-term improvement

When it comes to corporate environmental protection, certification is more than just an instrument for controlling environmental impacts. Sophia Lingner and Holger Thoß from GEALAN explain how environmental and energy certifications have benefited the company so far and what challenges lie ahead.

### **Ms Lingner, why are EMAS and ISO certifications important for GEALAN?**

**Ms Lingner:** The certifications primarily serve to control and continuously improve the sustainability activities in the company. Our annual audit is a good cross-check for us – it's where we get the auditors' external perspectives. What's more, certifications give us the opportunity to demonstrate our sustainability commitment to the outside world. This provides customers with the chance to actively decide in favour of a sustainable company.

### **Mr Thoß, what's the added value of the certifications in terms of company energy management?**

**Mr Thoß:** Back in 2008, GEALAN was a black box when it came to energy: for a long time, there was only one measuring point. So we only knew how much energy came into the company. We had no overview of where the energy was going and which processes needed how much. As part of our ISO 50001 certification, we were able to set up our energy management system. Since

then, we've continued to develop our measurement methods: we now have more than 220 measurement points at our two German sites. The data we collect enables us to identify efficient energy-saving measures. Together with the savings from the load management system, this currently gives us a cost advantage of around €2.5 million per year [compared to 2007]. We're proud of these results. In the future, saving energy will become even more important – not only for climate protection, but also in view of fluctuating energy prices and supply uncertainties.



“Thanks to the many certifications and standards we have implemented in our company, we have created an excellent basis for moving issues forward.”

**Sophia Lingner**, Management Representative  
Integrated Management System at GEALAN

### **Ms Lingner, to what extent do certifications support CSR management at GEALAN?**

**Ms Lingner:** The standards are designed to help companies take a holistic approach to sustainability. In addition to ecological aspects, they also include social factors such as human resources and knowledge management. At the same time, they address economic efficiency, too, for example by streamlining processes. In addition, the standard requirements can be used to create structures in the company and to collect key figures.

“By working systematically with our management systems, we and our customers were able to weather the energy crisis well last year.”



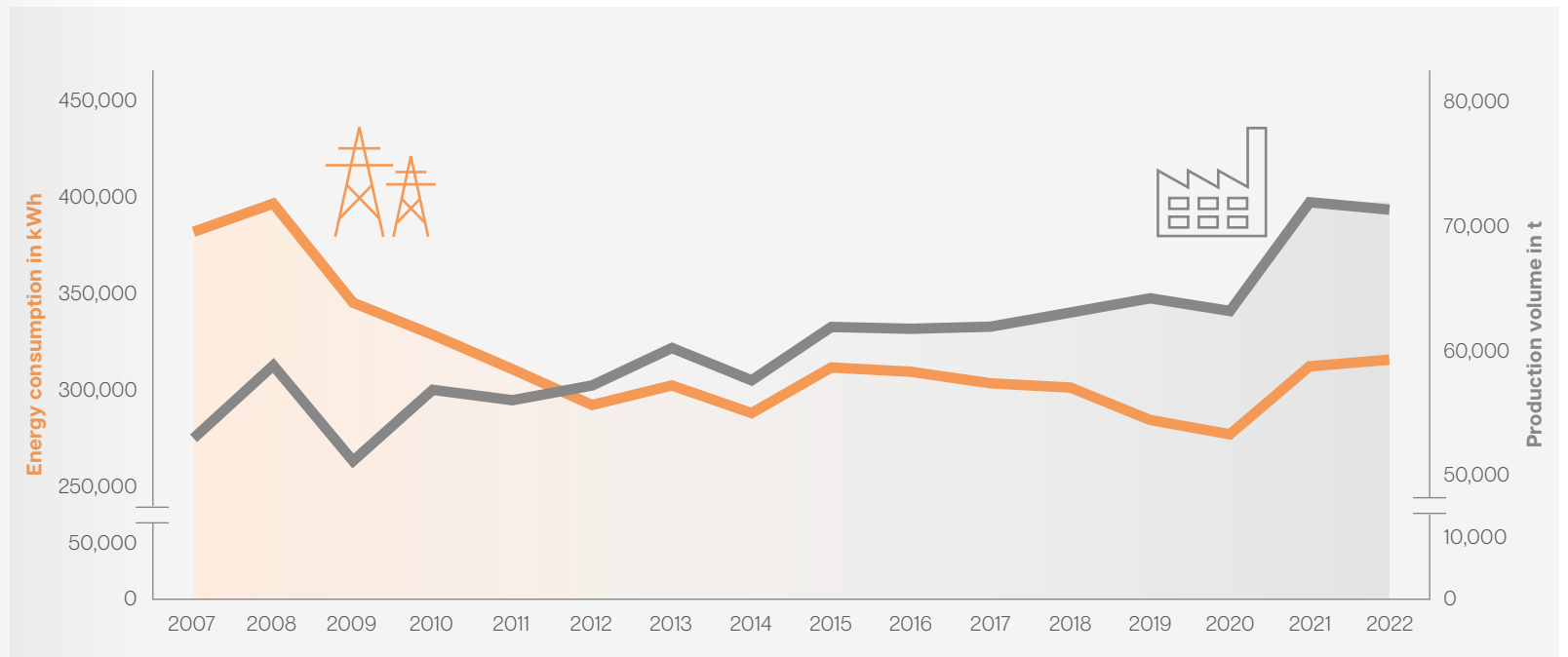
**Holger Thoß**, Head of Technical Services and Energy Officer at GEALAN

**Mr Thoß, what challenges do you see for future certifications?**

**Mr Thoß:** We're facing increasing external requirements. Which is why we're working on making our existing processes even more efficient and involving colleagues in the process at an early stage. Thankfully, being part of the VEKA Group and its sustainability strategy makes us well positioned for future certifications.

**Our production volume is increasing while our energy consumption is decreasing**

Thanks to better management systems and effective measures, we have been able to reduce our energy consumption in recent years, despite an increase in production volume.



# Old windows are valuable

The sustainable use of recyclable materials is a top priority for us. We see waste as a valuable resource that we want to keep in the cycle. The aim is that in future there will be no waste at the

end of a product's life, only recycled raw materials. Compared to virgin material, recycled material saves around 90 percent of energy and carbon emissions.

Our recycling network, VEKA Umwelttechnik, closes the loop by ensuring environmentally friendly and TÜV-certified recycling. In addition to windows, the VEKA Recycling Division also processes doors and shutters, as well as profiles from production, at three locations in Germany, the UK and France.

### Our PVC recycling process

The VEKA Recycling Network produces valuable recycle that is made from old windows in four steps:

#### 1 Delivery and shredding

Used PVC windows arrive at the recycling plant complete with their reinforcements, seals and glass remnants. With a capacity of 10 tonnes per hour, the old windows are crushed in an industrial shredder.

#### 2 Metal separation

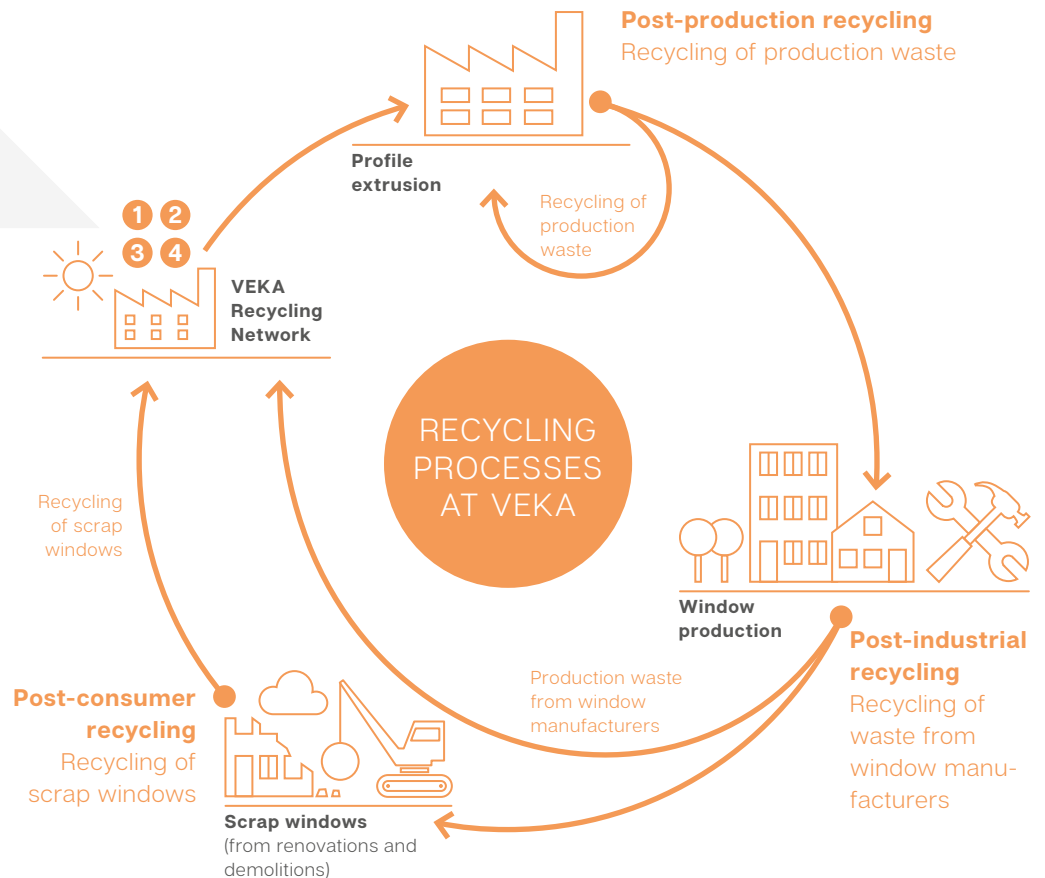
The shredded particles consist of PVC, metal, glass and rubber. Strong magnets are used to sort out all ferrous parts. A non-ferrous metal separator removes aluminium components.

#### 3 PVC extraction

The metal-free mixture is sorted by particle size and separated from glass and rubber parts. The remaining PVC particles are cleaned and sorted automatically by colour.

#### 4 Refining and quality control

Finally, the ground PVC is granulated. Any remaining foreign matter is safely separated. The now mono-material plastic can be returned to the material cycle in the same way as the other separated materials. The mono-material PVC regranulate is suitable for many applications, such as window and door profiles, roller shutters or building profiles.





# The path to net zero

## Greenhouse gas emissions balance sheet

We aim to be climate-neutral across the Group by 2045. In 2022, we took an important step towards achieving net-zero carbon emissions by preparing and certifying our first Scopes 1 and 2 greenhouse gas balance sheet for 2021. This enables us to identify and prioritise measures to reduce emissions. By the end of 2025, we plan

to also record our Scope 3 emissions and join the [Science Based Targets initiative \(SBTi\)](#) so as to have our climate targets scientifically verified.

## Meeting the challenges

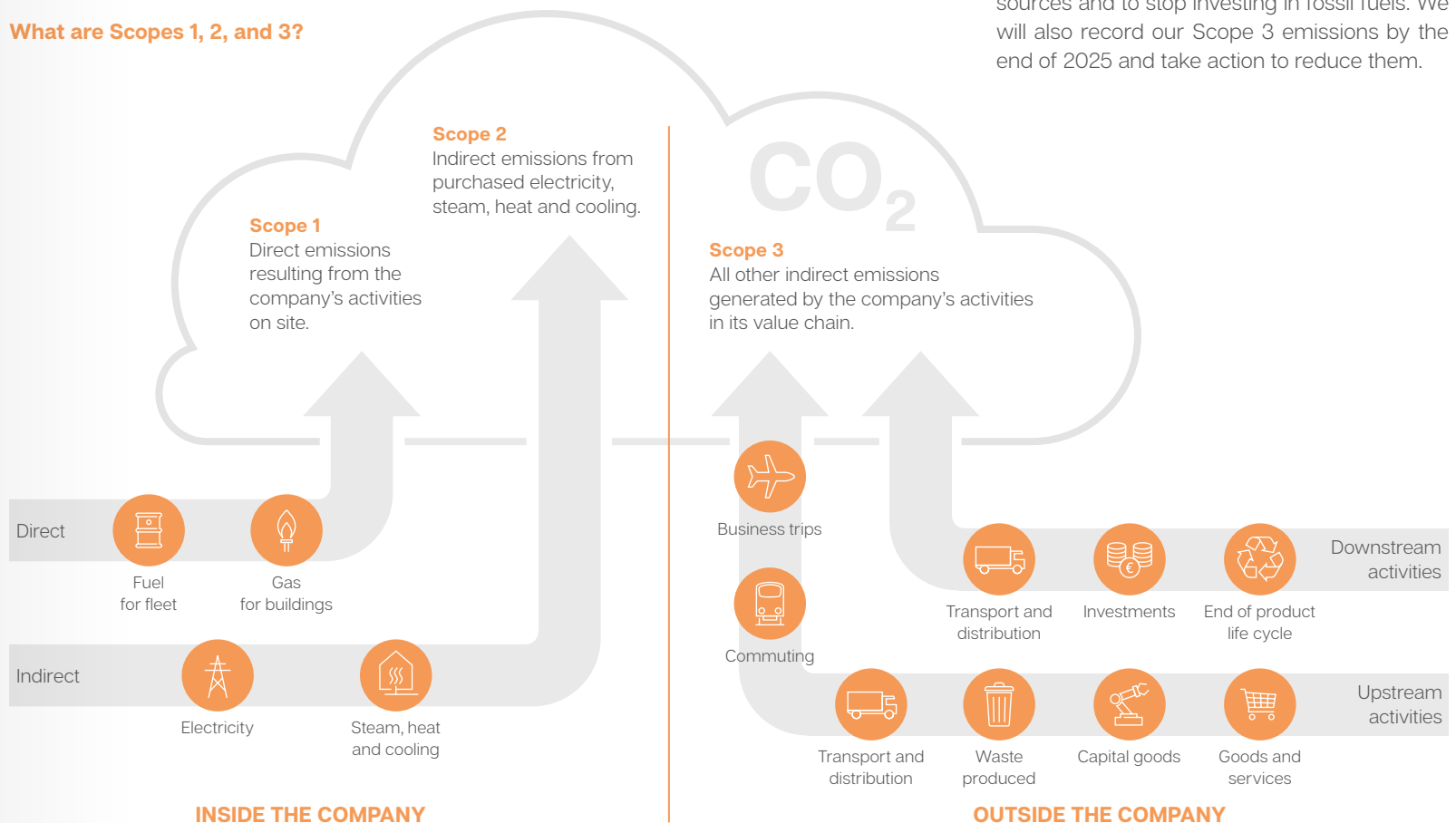
One of our biggest challenges is also one of our most important levers for reducing emissions: replacing the fossil plastic polyvinyl chloride (PVC)

in our products with more sustainable alternatives. Transforming our product portfolio is also the key to a carbon-neutral supply chain. Only with emission-optimised compound (see also page 18) will we achieve zero Scope 3 emissions and thus climate neutrality by 2045.

## Goals and next steps

We have a number of milestones to reach on our path to carbon neutrality: we aim to source 100 percent of our electricity from emissions-free sources and to stop investing in fossil fuels. We will also record our Scope 3 emissions by the end of 2025 and take action to reduce them.

## What are Scopes 1, 2, and 3?



# PRODUCTS

“Climate change is one of the greatest challenges of our time. It is our responsibility to minimise our impact on the environment and the climate. At the same time, we must adapt our products to the effects of climate change so that they can withstand the wind, rain and sun of the future.”

Tim Taylor, Commercial Director | VEKA plc (United Kingdom)



2 kg

CO<sub>2</sub> saved per kilogram  
of recycle (compared to  
the use of virgin material)

Over 25,100 t

carbon emissions saved, as compared  
to the use of new PVC at VEKA AG,  
thanks to the use of recycle

70-75%

energy saved by  
replacing old windows  
with new ones

## Keeping an eye on the life cycle of windows

VEKA has been thinking in terms of cycles for a long time. Life Cycle Assessments (LCAs) and Environmental Product Declarations (EPDs) are an important tool for the circular economy. Stephanie Nitzler explains why.



### **Why are life cycle assessments important for VEKA?**

**Ms Nitzler:** Life cycle assessments enable us to assess the potential environmental impact of our products and thus make decisions based on sustainability. This is why we include LCAs in our product development. Even with existing products, we regularly review the individual phases of the product life cycle and assess, for example, where the highest emissions occur and where the most water is used. These “hotspots” are then continuously improved.

### **What is the role of Environmental Product Declarations and how are they implemented in the context of life cycle assessments at VEKA?**

**Ms Nitzler:** Environmental product declarations are based on life cycle assessments. These declarations are assigned to the Type III Ecolabel – so they’re not a certificate, but they describe the environmental impact of building products such as windows and doors. Their EPD is like a piece of a jigsaw puzzle. When all the pieces of the puzzle – all the EPDs – are put together, the environmental impact of the whole building can be determined. Independent third parties then review and verify this data. The declarations are based on international standards and scientifically collected data. They therefore provide a reliable assessment of a building’s environmental performance. For this reason, EPDs are also used for various sustainability certifications for buildings. Together with other companies, VEKA has developed EPDs that are used by our customers, architects and designers for their projects.

### **Besides life cycle assessments, what other approaches to product development do you use at VEKA?**

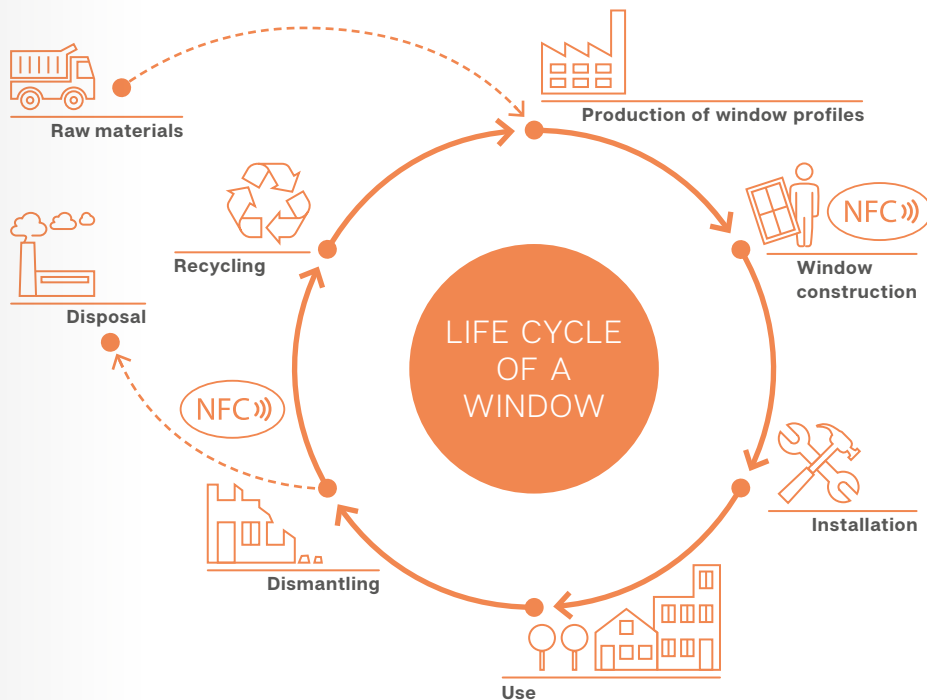
**Ms Nitzler:** We also use the “Design for Recycling” concept. The goal is to recycle as much plastic as possible and reuse this recycled material in new products. It’s based on three principles: our profiles must be able to contain recycled material; new profiles must be recyclable; and they must meet the quality expectations of our customers and end users. We take these three points into account during product development, which is an important building block for circularity and the circular economy.

“Sustainability plays a large role at VEKA – you quickly realise that it’s important to act in a future-friendly way and that everyone puts their heart and soul into it.”

**Stephanie Nitzler**, Civil Engineer in the Technology and Innovation Department | VEKA Group

### Life cycle of a window

These phases are taken into account in a life cycle assessment



### What are life cycle assessments (LCAs)?

A life cycle assessment is a systematic analysis of the environmental impacts of a product throughout its life cycle.

### What are EPDs?

EPDs are Environmental Product Declarations. They document the life cycle of a product in a comprehensive report by describing the environmental impacts of building materials, building products and building components. In Germany, EPDs are published by the Institut Bauen und Umwelt e.V. (IBU), among others.

### What is the Design for Recycling initiative?

Design for Recycling is a concept of sustainable product development in which products are designed from the outset so that their materials and components can be easily recycled after use. This keeps resources in circulation and protects the environment.

### What are NFC chips?

**NFC** stands for near-field communication and is a contactless data transfer technology. NFC chips can be integrated into new windows and act as a digital memory: all information about the materials used and their recyclability can be stored on the chip. This means that even after a long service life, the windows can be properly recycled and the materials kept in the cycle.

## How we promote the circular economy

Since 1993, when our first recycling plant for discarded windows went into operation, we have embraced the spirit of a truly circular economy: our aim is for a large proportion of each new window to be made from recycled materials. We are constantly adapting our product range accordingly. In future, we also want to increase the proportion of PVC made with carbon-reduced raw materials in the window construction. This will lower the emissions associated with the window and make us less dependent on fossil fuels. Ultimately, we want our products to be a combination of recycled material and carbon-optimised compound. This will save resources, prevent waste and reduce emissions.

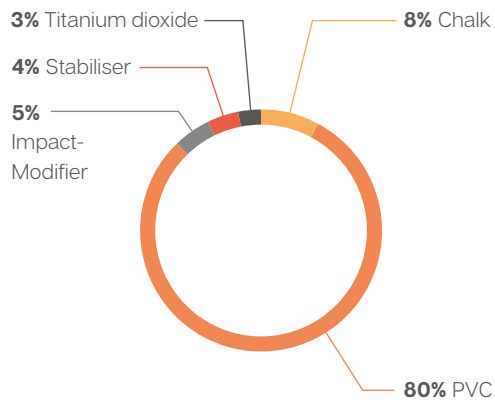
### Finding alternative ways

Until we can switch to low-emission compounds, we are looking at alternative ways to reduce the carbon footprint of our products. One component of PVC profiles is calcium carbonate chalk. GEALAN is currently working with the Estonian company Ragn-Sells to find a substitute for chalk: ash from oil shale. This binds carbon from the atmosphere and therefore has a negative carbon footprint – in a positive sense. The idea is to produce chalk from oil shale ash to the same high quality as the raw material currently used, while reducing emissions.



Drilled ash samples

### Composition of compounds



Ragn-Sells Project Manager Alar Saluste (left) with supporting research fellows in Estonia

# Adapting products to the effects of climate change

## Withstanding the sun, wind and rain

Climate change will affect all aspects of our lives. Heat waves, heavy rain, floods, storms and increased solar radiation are just some of the weather events that will become more intense in the coming decades. The VEKA Group is therefore investigating how it can adapt its products to these climate risks. It is part of our responsibility to make products that are as safe and durable as possible.

In addition to the environmental risks of climate change, there are also social aspects: for example, rising temperatures increase the workload of skilled workers in the manufacture and installation of windows and doors. These risks need to be addressed from an occupational health and safety perspective.





## Finding solutions

We have established a two-part process to reduce the workload on skilled workers: to reduce their working time in the heat, installation can be car-

ried out externally using cranes. The processes – installation and replacement – are constantly being optimised to minimise the stress on skilled workers.

We are also adapting our products to the effects of climate change – with new reinforcement concepts, adapted thermal insulation, increased demands on the profile surface and tightness of window and door systems. We need to continuously study the effects of air, water, temperature and wind and develop appropriate solutions.

## Risks and effects at a glance

				
Risk	Temperature	Solar radiation	Wind/storm	Heavy rain
Effects	Window systems need to be able to withstand rising and prolonged high temperatures	Profile surfaces must be able to withstand increased radiation	Window systems must be able to withstand increased wind loads	Increasing tightness requirements
Measures	Winter and summer thermal insulation/climate control Reduced heat absorption of the foils used Simulation of surface temperatures TEXINO: automation for windows, doors and blinds	New classification of decorative films	Wind load testing of window and door elements	Leakage testing, adapted sealing systems

# EMPLOYEES

“Mental health is an issue that our managers and employees have addressed. Both the contact persons in the HR department and the works council refer employees in difficult life situations to Krisenhilfe Münster e.V.. We’re very grateful for this collaboration and hope that it will provide real support for our employees.”

Elke Hartleif, Chief Human Resources Officer | VEKA Group





86%

men and

14%

women in 2021

153

employees  
on parental  
leave in 2021

30%

lower relative accident  
frequency (per 1,000 employees)  
at VEKA AG than the industry  
average of the BG RCI

## Parental leave time is precious time

As a family-oriented company, we are pleased that parental leave is very popular in the VEKA Group. In 2021, 78 percent of employees on parental leave were men – since men make up a high proportion of our workforce. We spoke to three fathers about their experiences, tips and how parental leave is organised.

### Mr Koch, what were your experiences – positive and negative – when you returned to work after your parental leave?

**Mr Koch:** My experience was entirely positive. The basis for this is a highly developed relationship of trust – with my line manager as well as with my own team. Apart from trust, the other main ingredients are understanding and appreciation of the family. VEKA is a family-oriented company and many people appreciate and live this out. When you say that as a father you want to spend time with your family – that’s always been a matter of course here. Taking parental leave gives you the opportunity to do just that.



“The level of trust at VEKA is unique – which makes it all the easier to pull the plug.”

**Matthias Koch**, Head of Strategy & CSR

### Mr Alkemeier, how did you organise your parental leave?

**Mr Alkemeier:** It’s important to have clear rules about communication during parental leave. We’re free to organise this in the way that suits us best. For example, I didn’t put an absence message in my email signature and was in regular contact with my colleagues. But if we’d have prepared ourselves accordingly, it wouldn’t have been a problem to do it differently and have very little contact with my colleagues.



“It’s no longer a novelty for men to take parental leave – not even for us as a medium-sized company.”

**Michael Alkemeier**, Management Assistant  
CFO & Head of Controlling VEKA AG

### Mr Lee, what message would you give to others who are considering taking parental leave?

**Mr Lee:** First of all, of course, it’s a financial sacrifice. There are people who don’t take parental leave because they can’t afford it. But you can’t make up for this time with money. It’s an exhausting and very intense time – I no longer had a fixed schedule, a lot of it was learning by doing. But in those two months of parental leave, I was able to offer my wife the best possible support in the early days after the birth. At the same time, we were able to enjoy our time together as a family and get to know our son.



“When I returned to the company, I was seamlessly integrated back in and had no negative experiences.”

**Byung-uk Lee**, Shipping

# Health and safety for our employees

Well-implemented health and safety (H&S) management is the basis for employee satisfaction. At VEKA, we want to create the perfect conditions for our employees so that everyone is safe and feels comfortable. Nuria Arroyo explains how the H&S system helps to fulfil legal requirements and minimise risks of accidents in the workplace.



“Health and safety management is important because it affects people – and behind every person, there is usually a family.”

**Nuria Arroyo**, Head of QHSE (Quality, Health, Safety, and Environment) at VEKA Ibérica

## How do you promote a preventive culture at VEKA Ibérica?

**Ms Arroyo:** The principle of VEKA Ibérica – and thus the whole VEKA Group – is to lead by setting a good example. A preventive culture only prevails if it is lived from the top – starting with the Managing Directors. In addition, we want to empower every single employee to become a safety leader in their workplace: everyone is responsible for the health and safety of their colleagues.

## What are the challenges of implementing health and safety?

**Ms Arroyo:** Unfortunately, documentation is one of the biggest time-eaters of a health and safety management system. That's why we're looking

to implement a new management software to help us simplify the processes and automatise the administrative tasks as much as possible so we can focus on preventative H&S.

## What initiatives are you taking to improve health and safety?

**Ms Arroyo:** As health and safety are core values to VEKA, they are included in our strategic plan, vision and mission. We have various initiatives that aim to increase our employees' health and safety and thus their job satisfaction in the offices and on the shop floor. For example, one initiative

focuses on the improvement of ergonomic practices in the workplace. Upskilling our existing and many new employees in this area will contribute to a healthier environment.

Another important topic is the physical and mental health of our employees. Recently, we sponsored a bike ride across Europe and North America to raise awareness of mental health and suicide prevention (see page 26). To address these health issues internally, we created the VEKA Vital Initiative: it offers check-ups, wellness, nutrition counselling, and physiotherapy programmes.

# SOCIETY

“In my 30 years with VEKA, I’ve never been a part of something as powerful and meaningful as Kelly’s Heroes. I am so proud of all the VEKA employees, customers and partners that contributed to the charity event in support of suicide prevention awareness both in North America and in Europe.”

Steve Dillon, Marketing Director | VEKA Inc. (USA)



116,508 km

cycled, hiked and walked  
as part of the Kelly's  
Heroes tours

1,311

compliance  
training sessions  
group-wide

Over €51,000

in employee donations to  
VEKA Ukraine and local aid  
organisations

## Cycling for mental health – and for Kelly

Mental health and suicide are sadly still under-represented issues in our society. To raise awareness of these issues, VEKA sponsored an extreme cycling tour, in which our long-serving employee Stefan Kordel cycled across Europe as one of Kelly's Heroes 2022.



### About Kelly's Heroes

Kelly's Heroes is a fundraising charity based in the UK that raises awareness of mental health and suicide prevention through major bike rides. It was founded by VEKA partner John Hewitt, whose daughter took her own life at the age of 24 due to depression. With the motto, "Check twice if the person you're talking to is well or not", VEKA exceeded its goal of cycling around the world twice with Kelly's Heroes. Employees and partners were also invited to take part in the campaign individually and collect miles via a tracking app.

### Mr Kordel, why did you take part in the cycling event and how many kilometres did you cycle?

**Mr Kordel:** Cycling has been a hobby of mine for many years. When it comes to endurance sports, I'm all for it. When I heard about John Hewitt and his daughter, I was quite shaken by it. I really wanted to support his project. The tour started at the VEKA site in Burgos, Spain, and continued

via VEKA France on Lake Geneva to our headquarters in Sendenhorst. That's 3,000 kilometres and 30,000 metres of altitude in ten days. So I rode a total of almost 1,200 km and 10,000 metres of altitude in the relay.

### Did the tour fulfil its purpose of raising awareness about mental health?

**Mr Kordel:** John Hewitt attracts a lot of attention through his extraordinary tours. From VEKA Sendenhorst, the campaign was passed on to subsidiaries around the world. They, in turn, spread the word to employees, suppliers and sponsors, which resulted in a lot of money being donated

"The most emotional part was when we arrived at VEKA healthy but exhausted. The way we were welcomed by our colleagues was simply great."

**Stefan Kordel,** Energy System Electronics Technician at VEKA AG

to the initiative. There was also media coverage. The impact cannot be measured in numbers alone, but we certainly achieved what we set out to do: get mental health talked about.

### What struck you most during the tour?

**Mr Kordel:** What impressed me most was the team's solidarity and willingness to help, as well as our stamina during the tougher stages. There were some emotional moments, especially at the start and at the finish in Sendenhorst, when we arrived healthy but exhausted. It felt good to have overcome all the challenges of the tour and to be welcomed so warmly by our colleagues.

# Diverse and collaborative support

Social engagement is important to us, whether around current challenges, health or the common good. The VEKA Group and its employees are committed to their communities and beyond. In 2022, the focus was on aid for Ukraine.



## A fire engine and medicines for Ukraine

Due to the war in Ukraine, there was a great need for fire engines and medicines last year. Thanks to a former colleague from Ukraine, a fire engine was organised. It was driven to the Polish-Ukrainian border and handed over, together with a donation of medicines initiated by our employees. Read more about our support for Ukraine on page 28.

## Clean water for Mucherla

In the Indian village of Mucherla, where the NCL VEKA plant is located, there has been no purified drinking water for the villagers for a long time. NCL VEKA has installed a water treatment plant in the village, which purifies the groundwater and makes it fit for human consumption.

## Support for local clubs and associations

Once a year, #GEALANTeamSupport sponsors three selected projects with €1,000 each. Clubs can apply directly with their project idea – it can be a renovation, new equipment or jerseys. GEALAN's initiative was created to bundle the many sponsorship requests and make a fairer selection.



## Saving playgrounds

We have been working with the PLATZ DA! (Make Space!) initiative since 2021. It refurbishes, renovates and builds playgrounds and football pitches all over Germany. PLATZ DA! is backed by GOFUS e.V., which has over 500 active and former athletes involved. By the end of 2022, we saved a total of 15 playgrounds: our HR Director Elke Hartleif, two other VEKA AG employees and Mathias Schipper (former FC Schalke 04 player) took over the sponsorship for one of the renovated playgrounds.



## Fighting violence against women

Since 2019, VEKA France has been financially supporting the global network SOROPTIMIST, which fights for women's rights. This support focuses on the international campaign organised by the United Nations every year from 25 November to 10 December to combat violence against women.

## Suicide prevention through Out of the Darkness Walks

Out of the Darkness Walks take place across the United States. Through community and night walks, VEKA Inc. has raised nearly \$60,000 to support suicide prevention. The message of the walks is that suicide is preventable – and that you are not alone. One of the walks kicked off our Kelly's Heroes awareness campaign (see page 26).

## Solidarity with our Ukrainian colleagues

The VEKA Group is represented in Ukraine with our VEKA plant and the export activities of GEALAN Baltics S.A. Alexander Will, Commercial Director of VEKA Ukraine, tells us how the VEKA Group is supporting its colleagues in Ukraine and how it is making the working environment as war-safe as possible.



“It’s no secret that inflation in Ukraine was 26.6 percent last year. This fact should be taken into account when paying employees fairly – and it is at VEKA.”

**Alexander Will**, Commercial Director of VEKA Ukraine

### **The VEKA Group, with its factories and subsidiaries, is not just an outsider in the Russia-Ukraine war. What is your position on this?**

**Mr Will:** Our solidarity goes to the Ukrainians who are defending their country with great determination. Colleagues and their families are directly affected – we’re very concerned for them. That’s why we’re supporting them with various activities today. We also wanted to show our solidarity financially: employees of VEKA AG, VEKA S.A.S. in France and our US subsidiary VEKA Inc. donated more than €51,000 to VEKA Ukraine and local aid organisations. The money was used to buy medicines, technical equipment and building materials for their damaged homes.

### **How are you dealing with your employees in Ukraine?**

**Mr Will:** From day one of this war, we froze our operations in Ukraine so that all employees could get to safety and look after their families. In addition,

the front line was initially only about half a mile from the factory site. VEKA Ukraine did not resume operations until April 2022, after the fighting in the Kiev region had stopped, and until May 2022 for production. We’ve also installed a personal protection room on the factory premises.

### **How can you support your Ukrainian colleagues beyond donations?**

**Mr Will:** Our responsibility, and at the same time our great challenge, is to secure local jobs and to pay employees fairly and on time during this dif-

ficult period. Of course, VEKA Ukraine continued to pay wages even when the factory was closed. We also helped colleagues and their families and friends who had fled to Germany to find accommodation in Sendenhorst. I must say that the willingness of the whole VEKA family worldwide to help was remarkable. So on behalf of VEKA Ukraine, I’d like to take this opportunity to thank everyone!

An overview of other activities can be found on page 27.



# IMPRINT

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