#### **Press release**

**Plastic is useful**

**A world without plastics? Wrong question!**

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| **Images of mountains of plastic waste polarize the discussion about how to solve the problem. It is often demanded that plastics be completely banned. Upon closer inspection, however, it becomes clear: especially when it comes to sustainability, this demand is not sensible.**  This text would not have been written in a world without plastics. Written with a plastic PC keyboard, in front of a monitor whose casing is also made of plastic. Admittedly, in a plastic-free world, alternatives might have been found to get this text out: perhaps with a completely metal typewriter from a flea market and a mimeograph machine, also made of metal, bought second-hand. Then the printed pages would have been put into envelopes, addressed, taken to the post office, and sent out. But at this point, personal control over the use of plastics would end. At the post office, the letters would land in a stacking tray made of plastic.  The idea of freeing the world from plastics is a notion often circulated. But it's more than questionable whether the world could simply do without them. Plastics seem indispensable not only in the electronics industry. Also in modern construction, in means of transport, and especially in medicine. Hygiene and infection protection without disposable syringes, single-use gloves, surgical masks, or sterile packaging for bandaging materials are hard to imagine.  There are reasons why plastics are so deeply embedded in so many areas of life. The material can take on many forms: from ultra-thin films to high-strength components for aircraft fuselages. It is lighter than alternative materials with comparable strength, can be molded with relatively low energy input, and is suitable for hygienically enclosing food and making it last longer.  It is worth rethinking the question in the title. Before looking for ways to rid the world of plastic, one should ask whether this is even a meaningful demand. It is not, as the examples mentioned already show. The idea that plastics are a problem is shaped by images of uncontrolled waste from consumer society. It is true that plastic that ends up in the environment remains there for a long time and breaks down into smaller and smaller particles. But it's not the material itself that's the problem—it's the way we deal with it.  Sustainability experts also advise critically questioning alternatives to plastic. Glass instead of PET bottles has specific disadvantages. Glass becomes moldable only at temperatures of at least 1300 degrees Celsius, thus consuming significantly more energy in production than PET, which can be processed at around 260 degrees. The empty weight of a 1.5-liter PET bottle from ALPLA is 33 grams. To transport the same amount of water, you would need two 0.75-liter glass bottles weighing a total of 1,000 grams—about 30 times more. The energy required for transportation is accordingly much higher. For reusable glass bottles, return transport and cleaning also consume energy and water. A PET beverage bottle that is turned into a new beverage container through so-called "bottle-to-bottle" recycling is the more sustainable solution. Even better is a reusable PET bottle.  The seemingly plausible argument that paper bags are more environmentally friendly than plastic bags also does not hold up under scrutiny. From raw material extraction—in the case of paper, that’s wood—through manufacturing, transportation, and disposal, paper as a packaging material is not more sustainable. On the contrary: a paper bag would have to be reused three to four times to match the environmental footprint of a plastic bag. A cotton tote bag would even need to be used at least 130 times to be a truly viable alternative.  Packaging accounts for about one-third of all plastics produced worldwide. Much of it is single-use and disposed of directly after use. Experts recommend reducing the number and variety of materials used and making recycling systems mandatory. For PET, a functioning value chain is already established in many countries.  When PET bottles have reached the end of their use as packaging, they can still be employed in many industrial areas, such as textile manufacturing, as secondary raw material. If plastics are incinerated for energy at the end of their life cycle, the problem of uncontrolled waste in the environment does not arise in the first place. When used sustainably, plastics are the best solution for many of the challenges of the modern world. A world without plastic will, for good reasons, remain a utopia. | **Contact**  Claudia Wörner  yes or no Media GmbH  Vor dem Lauch 4  70567 Stuttgart  Germany  [www.yes-or-no.de](http://www.yes-or-no.de)  Tel + 49 711 7585 8900  presse@yes-or-no.de  Characters: 4.579 |

**Image material**

**Image 1**



*Plastic makes everyday life easier: Plastic packaging is lightweight, hygienic, and keeps food fresh. (ALPLA, own image)*

**Image 2**



*Plastic helps us through life - from shopping to taking a pill: everything is safe, clean, and well-packaged. (ALPLA, own image)*

**About "Plastic is fantastic"**

“Plastic is fantastic" is about the relationship between humans and one of the most elementary building blocks of civilization: plastic. The initiative aims to achieve the appreciation that this versatile material deserves through factual contributions.

Alpla, the Austrian specialist for plastic packaging, has launched the campaign "Plastic is fantastic*",* duetoitsfirmbeliefinthe potential of recyclablematerial. Alpla is now in its third generation of commitment to sustainable recycling solutions and is also a pioneer in the development of new bioplastics.

The new website ["Plastic is fantastic"](file:///\\192.168.178.113\yon\Projekte%20in%20Arbeit\Alpla\2861_1%20ALPLA%20pif%20Landingpage%20Umsetzung\Inhalte%20Landingpage\Beiträge\Ein%20Material%20in%20neuem%20Licht\3141_1%20Alpla%20pif%20Eierkarton%20Text%20final%20250303.docx) also shows what makes plastic so fantastic.