



## Sto environmental report

### **Environmental protection – the benchmark to aim for**

The protection of the natural basis for life and the improvement of the quality of life are important aims in social policy. Sto AG also feels obliged to pursue these targets and to play its part in efforts to achieve them. We act in accordance with our guiding principle, "Building with conscience", which entails preserving buildings, respecting the interests of people and nature at all times.

In order to define and implement its ecological targets systematically, Sto has developed a system of environment management which conforms to international standards. This relates to the entire process chain - from the procurement of the raw product, to production, packaging and logistics.

### **Sto products for active environmental protection outside ...**

Sto's products also make a clear contribution towards improving the quality of the environment.

Naturally enough, this applies primarily to the Sto external wall insulation systems and to Verotec rain-screen cladding systems, which are used to cut heating energy consumption and to prevent the release of considerable emissions of CO<sup>2</sup>. These systems represent the contribution that we are making towards active environmental protection by reducing air pollution and improving the global climate.

### **... and in**

Sto's range not only includes products for exterior facades, it includes products which help to improve the quality of life inside buildings too. This is all the more urgent as, under certain circumstances, the air inside buildings can be more heavily polluted than the air outside! Harmful emissions from wall and

ceiling coatings, for example, could lead to allergies or to people feeling unwell, and also cause the fogging effect, which we are hearing more and more about; this is where a blackish-grey grimy layer forms in new or newly renovated homes, caused by the gaseous emission of certain substances.

Studies into these phenomena show that solvents and plasticizers play a central role in pollution inside buildings. These chemical substances are contained in coating materials to improve film formation, elasticity, adhesion and resistance. On account of these advantages, the substances are still found in most of the products available on the market, despite the problems which they pose to health.

### Healthy room conditions with E.L.F. products from Sto

The same cannot be said of Sto; we have been working for years on developing solvent and plasticizer-free coatings. We brought out a complete interior product range in so-called E.L.F. quality in 2001. We are the first company to supply this in Europe. E.L.F. stands for "Emissionsarm lösemittel- und weichmacherfrei" (low-emission solvent and plasticizer-free). All adhesives, fillers, paints, primers and decorative materials manufactured using this technology are completely free of solvents and plasticizers and meet the high requirements set down by the Federal Environmental Agency (UBA). Another feature of these is that Sto's E.L.F. products are regularly checked by the Technical Control Board (TÜV) to ensure their environmental compatibility and emission levels. Sto is the only company in Germany to have been awarded the TÜV's octagonal blue testing seal. This places much more stringent requirements than the "Blue Angel" seal of quality, which permits residual quantities of solvents.



This provides our customers with the assurance that if they use E.L.F. quality products, the climatic conditions in the rooms will be considerably better than with conventional interior coatings. Simple standard qualities currently contain up to 1.5% organic solvent, on average. This means that in a standard 15 l bucket, about 0.23 l of pollutants are released into the environment.

Taking the total sales of Sto E.L.F. products as a basis, this eliminates a considerable amount of pollution. As our high-grade interior coatings are being used increasingly, we will be doing even more to improve the quality of the environment in the future.

Since 1998, the factory control officers have defined standards in the areas of fire safety, health & safety, water pollution prevention, waste, hazardous substances and hazardous goods which have provided a basis for successfully implementing a number of improvements and cost saving measures.