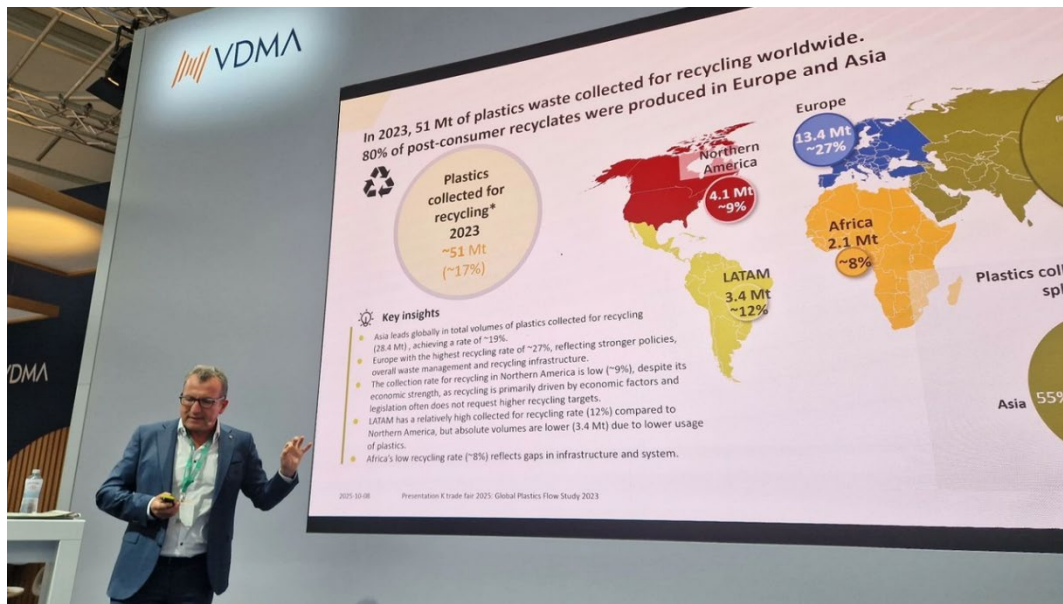
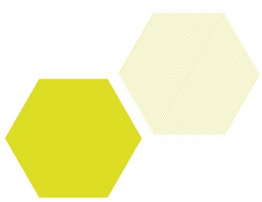




Bildquelle: © K-ZEITUNG/Bechlarz

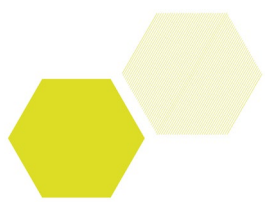
## ***The market alone will not save recycling***

### **Plastics production is growing worldwide**

**The "Global Plastics Flow" study, conducted by Conversio Market & Strategy GmbH, shows an unembellished picture: despite progress in recycling, the absolute amount of improperly disposed plastic waste is increasing worldwide.**

#### **Key facts**

- The amount of plastic produced worldwide rose to 414 million tonnes in 2023, an increase of around 45 million tonnes compared to 2018
- 71% of global plastic waste was disposed of in an environmentally sound manner (2018: 68%)
- More than 87 million tonnes were disposed of improperly in the environment (2018: 79 million tonnes)
- The global recycling rate averages 12%
- Around two thirds of the global plastics production market and around 50% of the global plastic waste are concentrated in Asia.



"The good news is that our industry is strong and growing worldwide," said Thorsten Kühmann, Managing Director of the VDMA, at the start of the presentation at K 2025 trade fair. But Thorsten Kühmann and Christoph Lindner, Managing Partner of Conversio, also revealed some sobering figures in the presence of the trade audience.

### **Asia's dominance and global inequality**

Another key finding of the study is the tectonic shift in global plastic flows. Asia, above all China, has become the centre of the plastics world. Around two thirds of global production and half of the waste generated is concentrated there.

While highly organised waste management systems dominate in Europe, the informal sector plays a decisive role in many parts of Asia, Africa and South America. "For many people, collecting PET bottles is an important source of income to feed their families," explained Christoph Lindner, emphasising the need to formalise and integrate this sector.

### **The economic "challenge" of the circular economy**

Why is progress stalling even in Europe, where collection rates are high? Oliver Möllenstädt, Managing Director of the GKV, identified the economic "crux" that is slowing down the entire industry: "Recycled materials are often more expensive than virgin material. Without regulation, recyclates have very little chance economically." Plastics processors therefore often lack the "motivation" to utilise secondary raw materials.

The free market alone will not be enough. The study uses best-practice countries such as China, Japan, EU 27+3, South Africa and Colombia to show that the decisive lever lies in a clear and sustainable political framework. This means that governments must define the circular economy as a strategic goal and underpin it with binding rules, such as recycle utilisation quotas.

The "Global Plastics Flow 2023" study is more than just a collection of data. It is a strategic instrument and an urgent call to action for global policymakers to create the necessary framework conditions.

### **The message at K 2025 is clear**

The industry is largely ready, but a reliable political course must now be set so that the "nightmare of waste" finally becomes a functioning cycle.

#VDMA #GKV #MesseDuesseldorf #IK #BKV #WeArePlastics  
#ConversioMarket&Strategy