

PRESS RELEASE

40 years of the Gütegemeinschaft – Quality for PVC windows

Bonn, 16 May 2019: On 16 November 1979, the then leading manufacturers of plastic profiles in the Qualitätsverband Kunststoffherzeugnisse (QKE) in Bonn founded what is now the Gütegemeinschaft Kunststoff-Fensterprofilsysteme e.V. (GKFP). A lot has happened over the last 40 years: from the first quality and test requirements for PVC window profiles through the independence of the Gütegemeinschaft to the paradigm shift from the profile to the PVC window system.

It was back in 1967 that the QKE first set up a “PVC window” interest group with the aim of developing requirements on the quality of PVC profiles. Ten years later, the first version of the RAL-RG 716/1 quality assurance guidelines was published in collaboration with the Gütegemeinschaft Kunststofffenster (the forerunner of Gütegemeinschaft Fenster, Fassaden und Haustüren e.V., Frankfurt).

“The establishment of our quality association in 1979 laid the foundation for the quality assurance of the ‘profile’ as an intermediate product”, explains Dr. Michael Stöger, who currently chairs the Board of Management of the Gütegemeinschaft. “At that time there was already a ‘PVC window’ RAL quality mark. In order not to confuse the market, the two quality associations entered into a cooperation agreement stipulating that only quality-assured PVC window profiles would be used for RAL quality-assured plastic windows”, Stöger continues.

The 1990s: Opening of Europe to the global market and revision of RAL-RG 716/1

Since the development of PVC window profiles was continuing all the time, the quality and test guidelines were revised and restructured in close consultation between raw materials producers, profile manufacturers and window makers. RAL-RG 716/1 now also covered five areas: “PVC window profiles”, “gasket profiles”, “system testing”, “window manufacture” and “assembly”. “PVC window profiles laminated with film” was added as a new quality group. The Gütegemeinschaft also took into consideration the processing of recycled material in order to enable the reuse of old PVC windows.

The 2000s: Turning points

RAL-GZ 716/1 was revised in summer 2008. “Growing markets, rising demands on the window profile system and the success of film-laminated profiles led to a large number of new developments that made it essential to adapt the quality guidelines to technical progress”, the GKFP’s chairman explains. For the first time, for instance, it contained guidelines for tested and certified bonded glass sash structures.

30 years after the Gütegemeinschaft was founded in the QKE came the time to leave: In 2009 it was carved out of the quality association, became an independent entity and awarded the new RAL quality mark for the first time.

The 2010s: Start of a new era

Since the “System technology” expert group was formed, it had become ever more apparent that quality assurance for the profile alone was no longer sufficient: the system with all its components had to be considered in the quality and test requirements. That meant including

the entire value chain. At its 2013 AGM, the GKFP finally approved the new structure of RAL-GZ 716, which replaced 716/1. The system now includes all installed components, such as gaskets, films, connectors and reinforcements.

And now to the future

To make the RAL-GZ 716 quality market fit for the future, it will be supplemented with new criteria. Alongside the suitability of the window system for continued use, the aspects of “healthy living” and “environmentally friendly construction product” will also play an important role in the future. “In doing so we want to make sure we anticipate future requirements on construction products. On this footing, the next step will be to register the quality mark as a European certification mark”, says Dr. Michael Stöger, looking ahead to the upcoming activities of the Gütegemeinschaft.

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About us

The **RAL Gütegemeinschaft Kunststoff-Fensterprofilsysteme e.V.** (Quality Association for PVC Window Profile Systems) (GKFP) awards the RAL Quality Mark to member companies that fulfil the rules of the RAL-GZ 716 quality and test specifications. The aim is to comply with the highest quality requirements in order to ensure that the products manufactured are suitable for long-term use. The members of the association consist of system houses, manufacturers of seals, raw materials, foils, adhesive systems, seals and machines as well as contract laminators.



Picture credits: On the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the GKFP, the chairman of the Gütegemeinschaft, Dr. Michael Stöger, gives a speech at this year’s general assembly meeting. @Gütegemeinschaft Kunststoff-Fensterprofilsysteme

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