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# VIVANESS2019

into natural beauty



## VIVANESS: Elfriede Dambacher column

### Can soap save the climate?

I was amazed when I recently read the German Environment Minister's five-point plan for reducing plastic waste in daily life. Soap or shampoo in solid form instead of in plastic bottles, toothbrushes with bamboo handles: These are all great suggestions for avoiding plastic in our everyday lives – or are they?

What was lacking was any mention of the millions of instances of deceptive packaging in the cosmetics industry that mislead consumers regarding their actual contents. Cosmetics is an emotive business and is constantly tricking consumers into making decisions about products on the shelf based on their first impression. Size and packaging play a major role in this. I would have preferred the five-point program to contain examples addressing a larger consumer group than just those who are willing to give up their usual shampoo. I would have liked to see a reference to the solid and liquid plastics contained in almost all the cosmetic products manufactured by the conventional cosmetics industry. These chemical additives are a significant source of pollution in rivers and oceans that ultimately wind up in our food chain. And incidentally, the issue of toothbrushes with bamboo handles as opposed to plastic handles already rules out users of electric toothbrushes. Okay, so bottles of liquid soap can be found on a lot of sinks and it wouldn't be a bad idea if everyone went back to good old bar soap. Nevertheless, I think it's much more important to raise awareness of the extensive use of deceptive packaging, and I wonder if this wouldn't have a much greater impact. It would also kill two birds with one stone by protecting consumers against fraud while reducing environmental impact.

Moreover, all these aspects are already addressed by natural and organic cosmetics. The Minister's plan is a great opportunity for demonstrating the value of natural cosmetics. We'll see how the natural and organic cosmetics sector takes advantage of it.

Elfriede Dambacher, owner of the consultancy firm naturkosmetik konzepte, is an international expert in the natural and organic cosmetics industry and publisher of the current Natural Cosmetics Yearbook and the Natural Cosmetics Trade Monitor, which appears quarterly:

[www.naturkosmetik-konzepte.de](http://www.naturkosmetik-konzepte.de)

#### Veranstalter

#### Organizer

NürnbergMesse GmbH  
Messezentrum  
90471 Nürnberg  
Germany  
T +49 9 11 86 06-0  
F +49 9 11 86 06-82 28  
info@vivaness.de  
www.vivaness.de  
www.vivaness.com

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