

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Has our FIMO classic modelling clay changed?**

#### **The Background**

For more than 40 years, FIMO modelling clay has been on the market and has captured a huge community of fans throughout the world. With competence and lots of knowledge, EBERHARD FABER has been continually optimising its recipes and production processes during this time. For about six months now, irritation has been emerging from the users of the FIMO classic product range. The complaints ranged from “too soft”, “too sticky” through to “doesn’t feel like it used to anymore”. Miniature artists from England also substantiated this and were of the opinion that FIMO classic would no longer produce such good results in a hardened state with the new recommended hardening temperature of 110° C as it did earlier at 130 ° C. Before we discuss all these points in detail, here is some fundamental information about the background:

#### **Why was the recipe changed?**

All the FIMO products have been converted to a new recipe: FIMO classic, FIMO soft and FIMO effect. You can see this from the hardening temperature of 110° C.

This step became necessary because, as of 17.01.2007, a new toy ordinance came into force in Europe, which has prohibited certain phthalates – these are softening agents. Eberhard Faber reacted to this in very good time and had already converted all recipes to “phthalate free” by January 2006 – a whole year before the EU-stipulated date.

#### **What does FIMO classic have to do with toys?**

All oven-hardening PVC-based modelling clays that contain softening agents (the common generic term for this is “polymer clay”), which are launched on the European market, automatically fall under the European Union Toy Directive. This is fixed in the CE-Directive EN 71, Part 5. In reverse then, this means that all polymer clays without a CE marker are sold illegally in Europe. A polymer clay is always classified as a toy in Europe, completely irrespective of the intended use and target group of the product.

Other regulations apply in the USA. There, polymer clay is classified as artistic and craft material and is subject to the guidelines of "LHAMA" (The Labeling of Hazardous Art Material Act). The "Art and Craft Material Institute" (ACMI) inspects the products for conformity to the LHAMA Norm ASTM4236 and issues the AP testing seal. The product receives authorisation for the US market.

As all known manufacturers of polymer clays have used phthalate as a softening agent in the past, which is no longer permitted in Europe after 17.01.2007, all manufacturers must convert their recipes if they want to sell their products in Europe. This means that if you look precisely into all known brands of polymer clays (so Sculpey, Premo, Katoclay, Cernit and Crealltherm among others included FIMO), all of them will have changed a bit.

### **How safe is FIMO?**

Is FIMO a toy? There is no doubt that the colourful modelling clay is a wonderful material for acting out childish creativity. However, we see FIMO primarily as a means of expression for creative and artistic design. However, the European legislator has specified the clear classification of polymer clay as a toy. This also concerns the American brands of Sculpey, Premo und Katoclay, which are classed as "Art Material" in the USA. They may only be sold in Europe if they correspond with EN71, Part 5, which stipulates phthalate-free recipes, among other things, from 17.1.2007. Ultimately, the strict regulations that apply for children's products also provide additional safety for all other target groups.

### **Safety only with CE Mark**

If you want to be sure that you are using a harmless product, then take note of the CE mark. This applies especially if you can determine no changes to the product yourself.

Because at EBERHARD FABER product safety and responsibility for our consumers always has the highest priority, this conversion was carried out more than two years ago and since then, FIMO has been sold on the market completely without phthalate.

### **What has changed?**

Of course, when we were developing the new phthalate-free FIMO quality, the utmost objective was to come as close as possible to the previous product properties in order to be able to continue offering users their accustomed material in the future. On one hand, we succeeded in doing this extensively and, on the other hand, we were also able to considerably improve the storage stability of FIMO.

In practice, this means that FIMO barely hardens on the way to our traders and on their shelves. This is also the reason why the previous FIMO quality seemed harder to the consumer in comparison with the new one, although the hardening settings are identical in both production processes.

### **How has EBERHARD FABER reacted?**

The opinions of our customers are very important to us. We are conscious of the global fan basis of FIMO and are wowed time and again by the filigree and artistic results. Therefore, last December, we met with FIMO artists from several countries in order to find out how much difference this change has to creativity when practising their art.

The result was that the new FIMO classic was certified with a thoroughly positive overall result. However, EBERHARD FABER wants to satisfy the highest of demands and, therefore, we have decided to make further optimisations to FIMO classic. This means that, firstly, in the future the modelling clay will be a little harder and, secondly, that the hardening level within the colour palette will be more clearly standardised. The implementation of these changes requires a period of about six months. Then, there will be an even better FIMO classic for professional users.

### **What needs to be considered during hardening?**

With regards this point, there are actually no changes. With FIMO classic you can express yourself creatively:

The optimum technical hardening temperature is 110 °C. A hardening temperature of 130° C must not be exceeded. If you prefer the end product to be a little flexible, then simply harden it with a slightly increased temperature. Find out what your personal hardening temperature is and let your creativity flow. With FIMO classic, the only thing you need to do is make sure you do not exceed the aforementioned temperature limit.

We, at Eberhard Faber, thought we would do something good in these times of climate change and CO<sup>2</sup> discussions if we could also contribute a little with our innovations. However, as this has aroused more irritation than enthusiasm with our professional users, we would like to make clear once more the following:

**The optimum technical hardening temperature is 110 °C. A hardening temperature of 130° C must not be exceeded.**

## **Effects on Puppen FIMO**

Doll artists will be overjoyed by the effects on Puppen FIMO. As the recipe of Puppen FIMO has a similar basis as FIMO classic, all the measures that have been described above to improve FIMO classic will also occur for Puppen FIMO.

At this point, we do not want to neglect to thank everyone for the numerous letters and the suggestions and constructive criticism contained within. A very special thank you also goes to the ladies who agreed to take part in the workshop to investigate the causes. We had a fun and creative time. And ultimately, that is the very point of FIMO:

**Be creative with joy.**

And this applies both to consumers and the manufacturer....

Yours,  
The Eberhard Faber Team

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