

Packaging and packaging waste

2022/0396(COD) - 06/11/2023 - Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading

The Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety adopted the report by Frédérique RIES (Renew, BE) on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on packaging and packaging waste, amending Regulation (EU) 2019/1020 and Directive (EU) 2019/904, and repealing Directive 94/62/EC.

The committee responsible recommended that the European Parliament's position adopted at first reading under the ordinary legislative procedure should amend the proposal as follows:

Minimum recycled content in plastic packaging

The amended text stipulated that from 1 January 2030, the plastic part in packaging placed on the market should contain the following minimum percentage of recycled content recovered from post-consumer plastic waste, per packaging format, calculated as an average per manufacturing plant, per year:

- 30 % for contact sensitive packaging, except single use beverage bottles, made from polyethylene terephthalate (PET) as the major component;
- 7.5 % (compared to 10% proposed by the Commission) for contact sensitive packaging made from plastic materials other than PET, except single use plastic beverage bottles.

Economic operators should be exempted from the obligation to meet the targets if, during a calendar year, they fall within the definition of microenterprise.

Labelling of packaging

Members suggested that 24 months after the adoption of the implementing acts, packaging placed on the market should be marked with a label containing information on its material composition in order to facilitate consumer sorting. The label should be exclusively based on pictograms and be easily understandable, including for persons with disabilities. This obligation does not apply to transport packaging. However, it applies to e-commerce packaging.

The label may be accompanied by a QR code or other type of digital data carrier placed on the packaging that contains information on the destination of each separate component of the packaging in order to facilitate consumer sorting.

Packaging forum

As regards the establishment of the packaging forum, Members called on the Commission to ensure that there is a balanced participation of Member States' representatives and all interested parties involved with the packaging industry, including waste treatment industry representatives, manufacturers and packaging suppliers, distributors, retailers, importers, SMEs, environmental protection groups and consumer organisations.

Obligations related to refill

From 1 January 2030, final distributors with an area, excluding all storage and dispatch areas, of more than 400m² shall endeavour to dedicate 10% of their sales area to refill stations for both food and non-food products.

Re-use and refill targets

Economic operators, including online platforms, making large household appliances available on the market for the first time within the territory of a Member State should ensure that from:

- 1 January 2030, 50% of those products are made available in reusable transport packaging within a system for reuse;
- 1 January 2040, 90% of those products are made available in reusable transport packaging within a system for reuse.

Requirements for substances in packaging

Members suggested that food contact packaging containing intentionally added per- and polyfluorinated alkyl substances (PFASs) or Bisphenol A (BPA, CAS 80-05-7) should not be placed on the market from 18 months from the date of entry into force of this Regulation.

Plastic carrier bags

Very lightweight plastic carrier bags, below 15 microns, have a high potential to become waste and contribute to marine pollution, therefore Members considered that measures should be taken to restrict their placing on the market except for strictly necessary uses. Those plastic bags should not be placed on the market as packaging for bulk foodstuffs, except for hygienic reasons or for packaging wet bulk foodstuffs such as raw meat, fish or dairy products.

By 31 December 2027, the Commission should prepare a report on the need and feasibility of reducing the use of paper carrier bags and, where appropriate, submit a legislative proposal setting out targets for a paper carrier bags reduction and measures to achieve these targets.

Mandatory separate collection for packaging

The report proposed a separate collection target of 90% for 2029 regarding all types of packaging covered by the legislative proposal and no longer only for plastic beverage bottles under the single use plastics directive, in a bid to increase recycling rates and content in line with the wishes of the sectors concerned.