

Packaging and packaging waste

2022/0396(COD) - 22/01/2025 - Final act

PURPOSE: to improve the environmental sustainability of packaging and to ensure the free movement of packaging in the internal market.

LEGISLATIVE ACT: Regulation (EU) 2025/40 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.

CONTENT: this Regulation establishes requirements for the entire life-cycle of packaging as regards environmental sustainability and labelling, to allow its placing on the market. It also establishes requirements for extended producer responsibility, packaging waste prevention, such as the reduction of unnecessary packaging and the re-use or refill of packaging, as well as the collection and treatment, including recycling, of packaging waste.

The new rules will significantly reduce the generation of packaging waste by setting binding re-use targets, restricting certain types of single-use packaging and requiring economic operators to minimise the packaging used. The regulation covers the full life cycle of packaging.

Safe, sustainable and recyclable packaging

Under the new rules, all packaging (except packaging for infant formula, packaging used for the transport of dangerous goods and packaging made from lightweight wood, cork, textiles, rubber, ceramics, porcelain or wax) must be recyclable and meet strict criteria.

The regulation sets **targets for 2030 and 2040** for a minimum percentage of recycled content (**30%** for single-use plastic beverage bottles by 2030 and up to **65%** by 2040). By 1 January 2030 at the latest, the manufacturer or importer must ensure that packaging placed on the market is designed in such a way that its weight and volume are reduced to the minimum necessary to ensure its functionality.

Packaging placed on the market must be manufactured in such a way as to minimise the presence and concentration of substances of concern in the composition of the packaging materials, as well as the adverse environmental effects associated with microplastics. From 12 August 2026, packaging intended to come into contact with food must not be placed on the market if it contains a concentration of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) equal to or higher than certain limit values.

By 12 August 2028, packaging placed on the market must bear a **harmonised label** containing information on its material composition in order to facilitate sorting by consumers.

By 1 January 2030, economic operators who fill group packaging, transport packaging or e-commerce packaging must ensure that the maximum empty space ratio, expressed as a percentage, does not exceed 50%.

Plastic carrier bags

Member States must take measures to **sustainably reduce** the consumption of lightweight plastic carrier bags on their territory. This target will be considered to have been achieved when annual consumption does not exceed 40 lightweight plastic carrier bags per capita, or the equivalent in weight, by 31 December 2025 and, subsequently, by 31 December of each year.

Single-use plastic packaging

The new rules introduce **restrictions** on single-use plastic packaging for: (i) pre-packed fruit and vegetables of less than 1.5 kg; (ii) food and beverages filled and consumed within hotels, bars and restaurants; (iii) individual portions of condiments, sauces, milk creamer and sugar in hotels, bars and restaurants; (iv) small, single-use cosmetic and toiletry products; (v) very lightweight plastic bags with the exception of very lightweight plastic bags necessary for hygiene reasons or provided as packaging for loose moist foodstuffs such as raw meat, fish or dairy products.

The new rules set specific reuse targets for **alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverage packaging** by 2030 (except, in particular, milk, wine, aromatised wine and spirits).

Consumers should always be able to purchase takeaway food and beverages in **reusable or own containers**, on terms no less favourable than those applying to food and beverages offered in single-use packaging. Take-away businesses will have to offer customers the possibility of bringing their own containers to be filled with cold or hot beverages or ready-prepared food, at **no additional charge**.

Final distributors of drinks and takeaway meals will also have to strive to offer, by 2030, **10%** of their products in reusable packaging.

Reuse targets

The Regulation sets new binding reuse targets for 2030 and indicative targets for 2040. The targets vary depending on the type of packaging used by operators (e.g. binding targets of **40%** for transport and sales packaging and 10% for grouped packaging).

Prevention of packaging waste

Each Member State will have to reduce the amount of packaging waste produced per capita, compared to the amount in 2018, by at least: (a) by **5%** by 2030; (b) by **10%** by 2035; (c) **15%** by 2040.

By 1 January 2029 at the latest, Member States shall take the necessary measures to ensure the separate collection of at least 90%, per year, by weight of single-use metal and plastic beverage packaging (up to three litres).

Recycling targets

Member States will take the necessary measures to achieve the following recycling targets throughout their territory: by 31 December 2025 at the latest, at least **65%** by weight of all packaging waste produced and by 31 December 2030 at the latest, at least **70%** by weight of all packaging waste generated.

ENTRY INTO FORCE: 11.2.2025.

APPLICATION: from 12.8.2026.