



Brussels, July 2022.

FPE CONTRIBUTION TO THE REVISION OF THE PACKAGING AND PACKAGING WASTE DIRECTIVE

Introduction

Fibre Packaging Europe (FPE) is an informal coalition of eight trade associations representing industries involved in forestry, pulp, paper, board and carton packaging production and recycling from across Europe. Our joint mission is to provide renewable, circular and sustainable fibre-based packaging solutions to European citizens to achieve the European Green Deal objectives. Together, we represent around 1500 companies and over 2200 manufacturing plants, we employ more than 365.000 people across Europe and our annual turnover is around EUR 120 billion.

The review of the Packaging and Packaging Waste Directive offers a significant opportunity to harness the power of Europe's Single Market and further support the development of Europe's circular economy with European industry for the benefit of European consumers.

With this in mind, we believe that the upcoming Packaging and Packaging Waste Directive should aim at ensuring that all packaging should be sustainably sourced, low carbon, reusable and/or recyclable by 2030. A holistic approach is needed to ensure that circularity and climate mitigation objectives are mutually supportive, while remaining technology and material neutral.

To reach these objectives, industry needs certain enabling conditions, infrastructure, logistic, and regulatory certainty. We are concerned about the hierarchical approach to reuse and recycling, which ignores the current reality, and life cycle thinking as provided by the Waste Framework Directive¹, potentially leading to unintended consequences, notably in terms of environmental impact. When applying the waste hierarchy, Member States shall take measures to encourage the options that deliver the best overall environmental outcome. This may require specific waste streams departing from the hierarchy where this is justified by life-cycle thinking on the overall impacts of the generation and management of such waste.

FPE would like to share our proposals regarding some key aspects of the review of the Packaging and Packaging Waste Directive (PPWD), including some wording proposals.

¹ Directive 2008/98/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on waste. Article 4 (2)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Fit for purpose

- The concept of “fit for purpose” packaging should be included in the essential requirements of the PPWD. This holistic approach closely follows the ISO 18602:2013 1 concept for “optimum pack design”.

Collection

- Without collection and sorting packaging designed to be recyclable will not have access to the appropriate recycling process and hence cannot be recycled.
- FPE calls for a 90% collection target for for fiber-based packaging formats that do not currently reach a 70% collection rate.

Definition of recyclability

- The definition of recyclability should primarily be based on design for recycling guidelines that are specific to different packaging formats and include specific requirements for these formats.
- The definition of recyclability shall be complemented by material specific definitions to be defined by secondary legislation. A material specific definition of recyclability for fibre-based packaging should read as provided page 5 here below.

Reuse

- Reusable packaging must be recyclable and only implemented where most beneficial for the environment and safe for the consumers.
- Where appropriate, reuse targets should always be assessed with the support of a comparative life cycle system-based approach and allow opting for recyclable solution that justify providing a better environmental outcome.
- Measures shall not compromise food hygiene and integrity as well as the health and the safety of consumers.
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Fit for purpose

The role of packaging is to protect and preserve goods throughout the logistics chain, subsequently preventing waste. Designing innovative packaging solutions that fit products well and prevent harm should therefore be a key focus of the PPWD revision. **The concept of “fit for purpose” packaging should be included in the essential requirements of the PPWD.** This holistic approach closely follows the ISO 18602:2013(E) 2 concept for “optimum pack design”.

It aims to ensure that all packaging is designed with the goal to optimally fit the product minimising void space, thus preventing both over-packaging and under-packaging. Applying this concept would also avoid arbitrary weight and volume limits or a negative list of packaging, instead, the packaging’s functionality should serve as the main criteria.

Wording proposal

Definition of “fit for purpose” following a listing of “fit for purpose” as one of the Essential Requirements for packaging.

Fit for purpose packaging is circular packaging which is designed, produced and use in an optimised way without compromising its functionality or product safety, while using a minimum amount of resources and having minimum impact on the environment during the production, use and end-of-life phase (reuse and recycling).

Collection

Efficient collection separate from the residual waste and sorting are the precondition to recycling. **Without collection and sorting packaging designed to be recyclable will not have access to the appropriate recycling process and hence cannot be recycled.**

The majority of paper & board packaging is collected and already recycled at very high recycling rate (82% on average, Eurostat 2019). However, there are certain fibre-based packaging products that are not collected at a sufficiently high rate. The separate collection requirement provided in the 2008 WFD³ and the 2018 PPWD does not provide any performance targets, which would support the collection of such products. Separate collection for packaging materials should be implemented to ensure large volumes of high quality of secondary raw material.

The fibre based packaging sector supports increased collection and recycling but need the predictability of the collected volumes to ensure recycling investments. For example,

² [ISO - ISO 18602:2013 - Packaging and the environment — Optimization of the packaging system](#)

³ [Directive 2008/98/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on waste. Article 4 \(2\)](#)



a collection target for packaging currently not collected at a sufficiently high rate would bring secured and foreseeable flows in support of increased recycling.

FPE calls for a 90% collection target for fiber-based packaging currently not reaching a 70% collection rate.

One such example is beverage cartons. A study by Roland Berger⁴ for the beverage carton industry shows that such a collection target would present many benefits including:

- Significant savings in GHG emissions contributing to the EU's climate ambitions.
- Contribution to the paper recycling rate and to MS targets contributing to the EU circularity ambitions.
- Level playing field for all packaging (some packaging benefits from a collection target which is discriminatory towards alternative packaging).
- Harmonised approach across the EU – some MS support a target for fiber-based packaging but would prefer an EU approach.
- Incentive to investments in sorting and recycling.

Wording proposal

Member States shall take the necessary measures to implement mandatory collection targets for recycling of specific fiber-based packaging in the following categories:

- (a) by 2025, packaging not collected at a rate of 70% by existing collection systems as specified in the annex to this directive shall be collected to a level equal to 75 % of such packaging placed on the market in a given year by weight;*
- (b) by 2030, packaging not collected at a rate of 75% by existing collection systems as specified in the annex of this directive shall be collected to a level equal to 90 % of such packaging placed on the market in a given year by weight.*
- (c) By 2030, all recyclable fiber-based packaging used in HORECA shall be collected at the consumption point to a level equal to 90%.*

Member States should look to a range of measures to fulfil the target, including economic measures and investment in collection, sorting and recycling, designing fit for purpose, reducing overpackaging and consideration of other measures such as DRS and mandatory take back.

⁴ Roland Berger study, 2022, <https://www.squareandcircular.eu/>



Definition of recyclability

The aim of the upcoming Packaging and Packaging Waste Directive is to ensure that all packaging is reusable and/or recyclable by 2030. To reach this objective, we need an actionable and forward-looking definition of recyclability that fosters the improvement of the existing recycling schemes, considers existing protocols and is **technology and material neutral**, based on transparent and reliable facts.

The first step to recycling is collection. Increased collection will incentivise investments as predictability and security of supply will be ensured. It is therefore critical to link recyclability with collection.

The recyclability of packaging must be defined for each packaging material via design for recycling guidelines. For example, packaging that protects perishable food has different design requirements than other packaging, e.g. a milk carton requires another design/composition than a water bottle.

Design for recycling Guidelines can provide the technical guidance to ensure recyclability by taking into account the packaging composition, functionality and suitability for recycling in existing streams and with existing technologies. Paper & Board recyclability guidelines already exist and are used by the industry and the supply chain. ⁵

A 95% threshold would de facto ban some packaging from the market.

The setup of a threshold would disregard elements such as composition and functionality, established recyclability, impact on the market and associated increased environmental impact. Is not coherent with the objective to ensure packaging recyclability while lowering the environmental impact of the packaging and could lead to heavy weighting of packaging to achieve the required threshold.

Similarly, a negative list would disregard the functionality of the packaging that would be listed and whether their substitute would a) provide the same functionality and b) have a higher environmental impact. It would also disregard the fact that recyclability assessment and the DfR Guidelines *de facto* represent negative lists for packaging recyclability. It would be liable to hinder sustainable innovation, create an uneven playing field and further distort market competition.

The definition of recyclability should primarily be based on design for recycling guidelines that are specific to different packaging formats and include specific requirements for these formats. The definition of recyclability⁶ shall be complemented by material specific definitions to be defined by secondary legislation act. A material specific definition of recyclability for fibre-based packaging should read as follows:

⁵ Cepi, ACE, FEFCO, Citpa Paper based packaging recyclability guidelines, 4evergreen Design for Circularity Guidelines –) – FEFCO Guidelines

⁶ For example, the definition proposed by European supported by many industry stakeholders.

Wording proposal

“The individual suitability of a fiber-based packaging for its factual reprocessing in the post-use phase into new paper and board; factual means that separate collection (where relevant and followed by sorting) into EN 643 grades and final recycling takes place on an industrial scale.”

Reuse

Setting reuse targets for packaging is not necessarily the most environmental sound option, as demonstrated through different studies⁷. It presents technical, hygiene and logistical challenges for the economy and additional costs due to the extra logistic and sanitisation processes needed. Recyclable single-use solutions such as fibre-based packaging sourced from renewable materials are often more environmentally friendly than reusable alternatives. The European Commission should consider solutions that have the most positive impact on the environment considering the whole supply chain and life cycle.

Reusable packaging should be recyclable and reuse targets should only be implemented where most beneficial for the environment and safe for the consumers.

Should the EU consider introducing reuse targets, these should always be tailor-made, proportionate and based on a sound scientific and comparative life cycle assessment of the impact of packaging, and its system, accompanied by the evaluation of the economic and technological implications associated with such solutions. Measures should be clearly defined and focus on achievable goals for packaging that can be reused in practice.

In other words, reusable packaging shall only be considered within a system that clearly delivers the best environmental outcome in real life conditions. Fibre-based packaging solutions are a scientifically proven sustainable alternative to reusable and single-use fossil-based products⁸. It is essential that their place in the circular economy –

⁷ Ramboll Comparative LCA on Single-Use and Multiple Use dishes systems for in-store consumption in QSR
<https://zerowasteurope.eu/library/reusable-vs-single-use-packaging-a-review-of-environmental-impact/>

Supporting evidence – Environmental performance of beverage cartons, Circular Analytics,
<https://www.beveragecarton.eu/news-and-resource-centre/publications/>

⁸ 25% of plastic packaging equals to 4.5 million tonnes of plastics consumption reduction; baseline of 2019. According to Material Economics study this can be done without significant compromises on functionality and with significant benefit for climate change mitigation.

<https://materialeconomics.com/publications/sustainable-packaging>

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as low-carbon recyclable solutions that deliver a better environmental outcome – is recognised and that EU legislation encourages their development.

Indeed, as the revision of the PPWD aims to ensure that "*all packaging on the EU market is reusable or recyclable in an economically viable way by 2030*", we wish to stress that fibre-based packaging has a high recycling rate (82%) and produces high quality recycled products; therefore, **it would not be sustainable or productive to impose restrictive and unrealistic reuse targets on fibre-based packaging.**

Moreover, to ensure that the waste hierarchy is implemented, we would like to highlight that the Waste Framework Directive dictates that when applying the waste hierarchy, measures that deliver the best overall environmental outcome shall be taken⁹. This "*may require specific waste stream departing from the waste hierarchy, where this is justified by life cycle thinking*"¹⁰. "**... technical feasibility and economic viability, protection of resources, as well as human health, economic and social impacts should also been taken into account**"¹¹ says WD 2008/98/EC art. 4§2.

Wording proposal

Where appropriate, reuse targets must be related to their environmental outcome and comply with Directive 2008/98/EC stating that waste treatment is not limited to mere waste volume reduction but needs also achieving « *the best overall environmental outcome* » (Article 4,§2).

When implementing the waste hierarchy and setting reuse targets, Member States shall provide the ability to opt for an alternative recyclable solution that demonstrates a better environmental outcome and allow to "*depart from the waste hierarchy where this is justified by life-cycle thinking*" (WD 2008/98/EC Article 4, §2).

All reusable packaging that is placed on the market must be recyclable and effectively recycled at the end of its life.

Measures shall not compromise food system resilience, hygiene and integrity as well as the health and the safety of consumers.

⁹ Directive 2008/98/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on waste. Article 4 (2).

¹⁰ Directive 2008/98/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on waste. Article 8 (2)

¹¹ Directive 2008/98/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on waste. Article 4 (2).

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About Fibre Packaging Europe

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- ACE – The Alliance for Beverage Cartons and the Environment
- CEPI – Confederation of European Paper Industries
- CEPI Eurokraft – European Producers of Sack Kraft Paper and Kraft Paper
- EPPA – European Paper Packaging Alliance
- FEFCO – European Federation of Corrugated Board Manufacturers
- Pro Carton - European Association of Carton and Cartonboard manufacturers
- ECMA - European Carton Makers Association
- SFIF - Swedish Forest Industries Federation