

Packaging value chain sees serious shortcomings in review of EU packaging rules

Brussels, 30 November 2022 – EUROPEN, the European Organisation for Packaging and the Environment, considers the European Commission’s proposal on Packaging and Packaging Waste, adopted today, as an unfinished business. Despite its declared ambition, the proposal falls short of taking packaging sustainability to the next level because of the many serious concerns unanswered. Among them is a failure to recognise that packaging recyclability or reusability alone will not suffice unless backed up by a system capable of triggering investments in recycling infrastructure and reuse across Europe.

“The packaging industry fully supports the Green Deal, and has invested massively in material and design innovation, increased recyclability, collection and the use of more recycled content. However, achieving the 2030 recyclability goal requires concrete and collective efforts, including mandatory collection and significant investments in sorting and recycling infrastructure”, said EUROPEN Secretary General Francesca Stevens. *“The circular economy is not an end in itself but a tool to achieve climate neutrality and zero littering. Ignoring packaging functionalities to protect food and products and prevent waste, or imposing arbitrary restrictions and bans, cannot be the way forward”* added Francesca Stevens.

Refill and reuse should be required to deliver a better environmental outcome in real life conditions compared to single-use alternatives, and be evaluated according to specific criteria related to hygiene, food health and safety requirements. Instead of a single-minded focus on targets, the proposal should have provided for a clear framework to enable mandatory collection and recycling while scaling up refill and reuse where it makes environmental sense.

A strengthened harmonisation of the regulatory framework, through the choice of a Regulation as legal instrument and an internal market legal basis, is a welcome step forward to end the plethora of divergent national measures that are disrupting the Single Market and undermining the transition to a circular economy.

EUROPEN, representing more than 70 companies and national associations from the European packaging industry, is eager to engage with the European Parliament and the Council to address these critical issues so that the proposed Regulation is future-proof and delivers a regulatory environment that supports European industry on its journey towards a fully circular economy.

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About EUROPEN

EUROPEN - the European Organisation for Packaging and the Environment - is a cross-industry organization presenting the opinion of the packaging supply chain in Europe on topics related to packaging, packaging waste and the environment, independent of any specific packaging materials or systems. EUROPEN members are comprised of multinational corporate companies spanning the packaging value chain (raw material producers, converters and brand owners) plus national packaging organizations all committed to continuously improving the environmental performances of packaged products, in collaboration with their suppliers and customers.

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