

HARMFUL CHEMICALS IN FOOD PACKAGING ARE PUTTING OUR HEALTH AT RISK



We need safe food contact materials in a toxic-free circular economy.



The chemicals used in the production, processing, preparation and packaging of food may contribute to cancer, harm reproduction and cause hormone disruption.

MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT FOOD CONTACT MATERIALS:



× MYTH

EU regulations guarantee that materials and articles coming in contact with our food are free of harmful chemicals.

✓ TRUTH

Not all materials used for food contact are regulated at EU level and many harmful substances can be used. Additionally, many chemicals are still not comprehensively assessed for safety by public authorities. This includes so-called non-intentionally added substances (NIAS), that are present as impurities or by-products of manufacturing processes.



× MYTH

Single-use cardboard or paper packaging are always good alternatives to battle plastic pollution.

✓ TRUTH

Food packaging made of paper or cardboard are not regulated at the EU level. They can still cause concern for health and the environment, because of their single-use nature. Other materials marketed as plastic-free alternatives, such as bamboo, have not necessarily been approved for food contact use either.

#TOXICFREEPACKAGING



× MYTH

Recycling is THE answer to achieving a greener economy.

✓ TRUTH

By recycling food contact materials that contain harmful chemicals, we risk that such substances re-enter the production and food cycle.

This is also a concern when recycling leads to harmful chemicals from other sources finding their way into (the production of) food contact materials.

WE NEED MORE PROTECTIVE EU REGULATIONS FOR CHEMICALS IN FOOD CONTACT MATERIALS.

TO ADEQUATELY PROTECT OUR HEALTH, POLICYMAKERS SHOULD:



Guarantee adequate safety data and assessments, and prohibit known substances of concern in all food contact materials.



Thoroughly assess, measure and control chemicals in food packaging.



Develop EU harmonised rules for all types of food contact materials, and effectively enforce these rules.



Commit to a clean circular economy based on non-toxic material cycles. Primary and recycled food contact materials should have the same level of safety.



Improve transparency and traceability of chemicals throughout the supply chain and towards consumers.



We gratefully accept the support of the European Union (EU) and Kristian Gerhard Jebsen Foundation (KGJF) for the production of this publication. The responsibility for the content lies with the authors and the views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the EU institutions and funders. The European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency (CINEA) and funders are not responsible for any use that may be made of the information contained in this publication.

Transparency register numbers: HEAL - 007723343929-96, ZWE - 47806848200-34