



Ireland's plan on single-use and plastic packaging

Waste Prevention Plan

[A Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy - Ireland's National Waste Policy 2020-2025](#)

In September 2020, the Irish government adopted its national waste action plan for 2020-2025. The plan - which will have to be enacted through the adoption of a circular economy bill - has the ambition to tackle waste generation and move towards a circular economy through prevention measures. The plan contains several ambitious provisions on single-use plastic and packaging which go beyond the requirements of EU Single-Use Plastics Directive, such as extended bans on certain single-use plastic products or a levy on single-use coffee cups.

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

Level: National

Population: 5 million inhabitants

Key characteristic: 64 kilograms (kg) of plastic packaging generated per inhabitants per year

PLASTIC PACKAGING IN IRELAND

The Republic of Ireland is the first producer of plastic waste packaging in the EU with 64,67 kg generated per inhabitant in 2019. This is twice the EU average of 34 kg for the same period. Additionally, this number has been almost doubling throughout the past decade, reaching 64 kg in 2019 against 34 kg in 2011. Ireland also shows a low recycling rate for plastic packaging waste: 27% in 2019 against the EU average of 41% for the same year.

THE PLAN'S OBJECTIVES

The plan's primary objective on single-use plastic and packaging is to pave the way for prevention and reduction, moving beyond waste management. It strengthens the provisions of EU Single-Use Plastics Directive by going beyond its requirements, including a potential ban on items not included in the directive such as sugar sachets. It also contains financial incentives to promote the use of reusable coffee cups, and proposes to trial the elimination of single-use cups in cities and commercial centres.



MAIN MEASURES

Article	Measures
Provisions on plastic and packaging waste	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of a deposit return scheme (DRS) for plastic bottles and aluminium cans. • Consideration of the introduction of a virgin plastic levy to support the use of recycled materials in packaging. • Consideration of specific prevention targets to reduce packaging. • Consideration of restrictions on the use of some packaging materials. • Decreased complexity of packaging materials, such as the number of materials and polymers used. • Actions on the reduction of contamination rate in sorting bins. • Work with stakeholders to ensure that all packaging is either recyclable or reusable in an economically profitable way by 2030.
Provisions on single-use plastics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consideration of a ban on single-use plastics items going beyond the EU Single-Use Plastics Directive requirement - including non-medical wet wipes; single-use plastic hotel toiletries; and single-use plastic sugar and condiment items. • Potential full ban on disposable cups. • Introduction of a “latte levy” on single-use coffee cups by 2022 to encourage the use of reusable cups. • Option for an extension of the environmental levy to include food containers and cold drinks cups. • Pilot on the complete elimination of coffee cups in several towns, higher education institutions, and commercial/transport centres. • Introduction of measures to ban the unnecessary use of single-use coffee cups and food containers - sit-in coffee, for instance - and a mandatory price reduction for consumers bringing their own cup.

LINK TO THE EU LEGISLATION

- [Directive 2019/904/EU on single-use plastic \(Single-Use Plastics Directive\)](#)
- [Directive \(EU\) 2018/852 amending Directive 94/62/EC on packaging and packaging waste](#)
- [Directive 2008/98/EC on waste \(Waste Framework Directive\)](#)



“Latte levy” on single-use coffee cups



Introduction of a deposit return system (DRS)



Extended ban on single-use plastic products

For more good practices, check the [Zero Waste Europe website](#) or the [European Environmental Bureau brief on the economic incentives to reduce waste](#).

Zero Waste Europe, November 2021

Author: Pierre Condamine – Zero Waste Europe (pierre@zerowasteurope.eu)

Editors:

Mindy O'Brien – VOICE Ireland

Ana Oliveira – Zero Waste Europe



Zero Waste Europe is the European network of communities, local leaders, experts, and change agents working towards the elimination of waste in our society. We advocate for sustainable systems and the redesign of our relationship with resources, to accelerate a just transition towards zero waste for the benefit of people and the planet.



Zero Waste Europe gratefully acknowledges financial assistance from the European Union. The sole responsibility for the content of this event materials lies with Zero Waste Europe. It does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the funder mentioned above. The funder cannot be held responsible for any use that may be made of the information contained therein.