

Packaging at the core

At the core of the pollution



It is warming our planet at alarming rates

The CO₂ emissions from materials used for single-use packaging are **MORE** than those caused by **global aviation**. In addition, packaging often ends up in landfills, or incinerators, which further emits staggering CO₂ emissions.



Most packaging is still single-use

This means packaging is designed and produced to be used only once and thrown-away. And because of that, the environmental impact related to such a product - including resource extraction, use of raw materials, land energy and water use and CO₂ emissions - is **enormous**.



It creates more food waste

Recent research has shown that wrapping fresh products in plastic packaging **does not** make them last longer, but rather, adds to pollution and food waste.



It puts our health at risk

Over **8,000 chemicals** can potentially be used in food packaging, tableware and other food contact materials, most of which can cause harmful impacts to our health and to the environment.



Most is non recyclable and not recycled

Most statistics available on the recyclability of packaging are inaccurate: the overwhelming **majority of packaging placed in the market doesn't get recycled**. This is mostly due to its complex materials and composition (format, polymers, multilayers, etc.) and the **absence of proper waste management infrastructures**.



Its waste is exported to developing countries

Packaging waste is often exported "for recycling" to third countries, in their majority to developing countries with poor waste management infrastructure. In 2019, the EU exported a monthly average of **150,000 tonnes of plastic waste** beyond its borders, under which plastic packaging accounted for 75% (by weight).

At the core of the solution



Packaging should be redesigned for prevention and reuse

By eliminating packaging that we don't need or else designing the one we need for multiple uses (aka reuse) **we can save precious resources**, and drastically reduce CO₂ emissions and waste, in line with the waste hierarchy.



Reuse infrastructure should be provided as a public good

Consumer and business owners should find it **easier and cheaper to use/set up reusable packaging** as opposed to disposable ones. There are already many businesses interested in reuse, but they have to create their own infrastructure, because of lack of support.



Enabling conditions for reuse systems for packaging should be set up for large scale

A set of complementary measures and **economic incentives are key to support the transition to reuse**, including: reuse and waste prevention targets, extended producer responsibility (EPR) fees with a dedicated fund to support reuse, levies on single-use packaging, among others.



Managed pooling systems for reusable packaging should be set up to ensure efficiency

These pooling systems are the basis for an **effective reuse system** work by having a central governance structure; ownership; shared access; and self-imposed quality and efficiency standards.



Packaging should be toxic-free

Ambitious reforms of the EU policies related to chemicals are an opportunity for the **transition towards an effective phase-out of the most hazardous chemicals**, and ensure a real circular and safe economy for packaging.



Packaging should be part of an efficient closed loop system

Closed-loop systems, like deposit return schemes (DRS), should be in the toolbox of solutions and measures to achieve true circularity for packaging by **reducing waste and litter, minimising the use of resources, CO₂ emissions, and ensuring a high quality recycling** at the end of its product life cycle.

The Packaging and Packaging Waste Directive is the opportunity for the European Commission to scale up reuse and ensure interoperable, accessible systems that allowing for the use of packaging that is good for our health, the environment, and society at large.

Get serious. Get moving. Get back.



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