

What we need to ensure the safety of food packaging



5 JUNE 2023 | 15:00-17:00 CEST

Event hosted by Malte Gallée, MEP

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Ensuring safety of food packaging

– *setting the scene*

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Did you know?

In Europe...

83% of the plastic put on the market is **NOT** recycled.

180 kgs

the amount of packaging waste each European generates in an average year



Most plastics promises either fail or are never reported on again

Based on 37 identified past pledges by food and drink companies regarding plastics or recycling



Press Release: Global Commitment 2022:

Progress needs fresh acceleration as key target

aimed at tackling plastic pollution set to be missed

Packaging: 2023 reality check

- **40%** of plastics and **50%** of paper used in the EU is destined for packaging
- Packaging accounts for **36%** of municipal solid waste
- Plastic food and drink packaging makes up about **40%** of the total plastic packaging
- Around **5%** of plastic food packaging is currently recycled in a closed loop in the EU
- Recycling of paper and cardboard food packaging: ?

Unsafe substitutes and recycles

Single-use plastic is often replaced with single-use paper packaging and reusable plastic with alternative materials like 'bamboo' cups and tableware that **can be of equal concern for leaching hazardous chemicals into food as conventional plastics.**



arnika.org/en/publication



[EU enforcement action \(2021\)](#)



www.hbm4eu.eu

Hazardous chemicals found in food packaging and in our bodies



The body burden of PFASs: cause for concern

Exposure and health impacts of bisphenols call for additional regulatory action

Despite decreasing exposure, phthalates are still a health concern in Europe

www.hbm4eu.eu

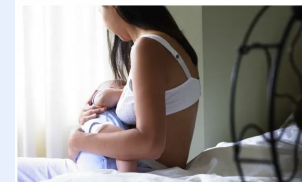
Microplastic release from the degradation of polypropylene feeding bottles during infant formula preparation

Microplastics in humans: After blood, scientists find traces in the lungs



Microplastics found in human breast milk for the first time

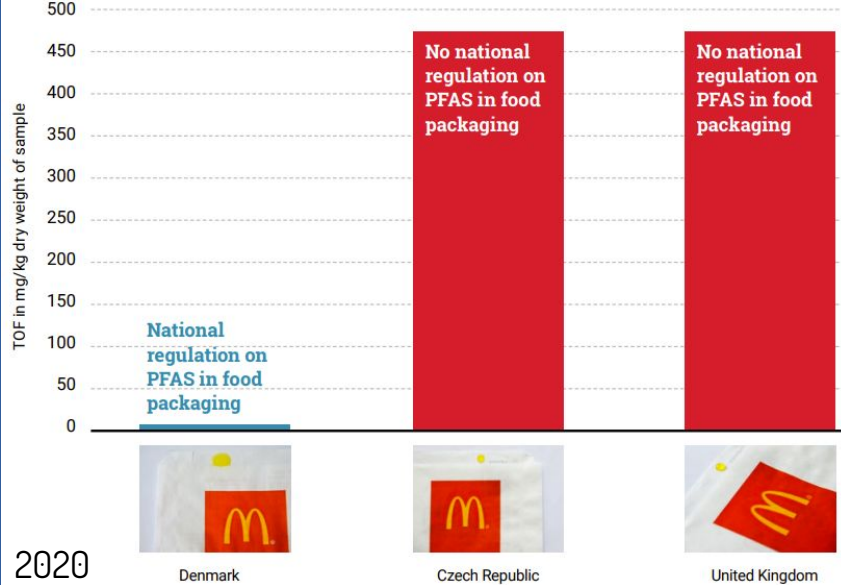
Exclusive: Researchers concerned over potential health impacts of chemical contaminants on babies



Microplastics revealed in the placentas of unborn babies

Health impact is unknown but scientists say particles may cause long-term damage to foetuses





No specific EU legislation for:

- Paper and cardboard
- Wood
- Glass
- Metals
- Silicones
- Coatings
- Adhesives
- Printing inks
- ...

May 2023 statement from investors managing \$10 trillion urging FMCG sector to:

- significantly reduce consumption of single-use plastics
- eliminate the use of hazardous substances in products and packaging**
- implement re-use systems for packaging
- back the EU's revision to the Packaging and Packaging Waste Directive and "do not lobby against"



Long wait for reform...

When will we see stricter and harmonised rules?

May 2020: Farm to Fork Strategy & Oct 2020: Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability - promised revision of FCM legislation

December 2020: the European Commission kicked off a revision of EU FCM law (indicative planning: Q4 2022)

June 2022: Evaluation of the FCM Regulation completed - a number of shortcomings have been identified

Dec 2022: **New deadline “2024 and beyond”**

What consumers say about safe and sustainable food packaging

 **WHAT WE FOUND?** **11 EU countries** online survey
11,232 consumers responded

- Notable concerns about the negative impact food packaging could have on **health** (70%) and the **environment** (80%)
- Significant support for **protective EU action**, e.g.
 - **9 in 10** consumers support EU rules to reduce the use of hazardous chemicals in food packaging
 - **4 in 5** (strongly) agree that the EU should require producers to only use reusable and recyclable packaging materials
 - **9 in 10** (strongly) agree that green claims should be strictly regulated

[BEUC \(2023\)](#)

>70%
of people

surveyed in Germany, France, Sweden, Italy and Finland are
'troubled by the rise in paper & cardboard packaging'

3/4
of Europeans

surveyed in Germany, France, Sweden, Italy and Finland
think governments should be responsible for reducing paper & cardboard packaging & resulting waste

[FERN \(2023\)](#)



Safety of single-use vs. reusable food packaging



Safety and hygiene are critical for all packaging and are determined by how the packaging is manufactured, managed and handled, not whether it is single-use or reusable.

Chemicals in food packaging, human health and circular economy



zerowasteurope.eu/resources/library



Thank you

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Sign up to our joint NGO Food Contact Materials newsletter:
chemtrust.org/food-contact-materials/#newsletter

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