



New EU packaging rules start to apply, including restrictions on PFAS in food-contact packaging

The measures will also help strengthen the Single Market for packaging and facilitate cross-border businesses through common rules.

NEWS ARTICLE

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Directorate-General for Environment

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From 12 August, the [Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation](#) (PPWR) applies across the EU.

The PPWR establishes a harmonised framework for packaging and packaging waste in the Single Market. The new rules mark a major step towards reducing packaging waste and lowering compliance costs for the packaging industry.

They will also make the waste value chain more sustainable, helping to reduce the Union's dependence on imports of virgin materials, strengthening the market for secondary raw materials, and supporting the EU's transition to a competitive circular economy and climate neutrality by 2050.

By replacing fragmented national requirements with a common set of EU rules that cover the entire packaging life cycle, the PPWR brings greater legal certainty and efficiency gains for businesses operating across borders, while creating stronger conditions for investment, innovation and growth in circular packaging solutions.

A key measure entering into application today is a **restriction on per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in food-contact packaging**. From now on, food-contact packaging containing PFAS above strict limits can no longer be placed on the EU market.

The measure is designed to reduce exposure to so-called 'forever chemicals' – a group of highly persistent substances that can accumulate in the environment and in the human body.

PFAS have been commonly used in food packaging such as takeaway containers, fast-food wrappers, microwave popcorn bags, bakery paper and pizza boxes, to repel water or grease. By limiting the use of PFAS in food-contact packaging, the new rules will help protect human health while reducing the release of these harmful substances into the environment.

"The new Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation is an investment in Europe's future: it will help reduce waste, increase recycling, make food-contact packaging safer for the consumers by limiting harmful substances such as PFAS, and reduce our dependence on virgin raw materials. These are essential steps towards a truly circular economy."

At the same time, the Regulation will replace fragmented national rules difficult to navigate for economic operators in the internal market. But new rules also come with adjustment costs, and we have worked intensively with market operators to implement the new rules in a pragmatic and unbureaucratic way."

Jessika Roswall, Commissioner for Environment, Water Resilience and a Competitive Circular Economy

Next steps

The new rules kicking in today are, in addition to protecting consumers from PFAS exposure, set to improve the functioning of the internal market.

From 2028, a **harmonised labelling system for packaging** will apply across the EU to facilitate waste sorting, thereby increasing efficiency in the recycling and composting waste streams, saving the packaging industry several billion euros over the years.

Concrete measures to reduce the generation of packaging waste, such as new limits on empty space, restrictions on certain single-use plastic packaging or reuse targets, will apply as of 2030.

In addition, measures fostering the circular economy, including the mandatory use of **recycled plastic waste** in new plastic packaging and the requirement that all packaging is recyclable, will apply from 2030.

The Commission is advancing its work swiftly to put forward the necessary secondary legislation in time, while striving to ensure that it is effective and does not create unnecessary administrative burden. In doing so, it will continue to work closely with national authorities, industry and civil society to ensure the efficient and pragmatic implementation of the new rules.

Background

The regulation responds to both environmental and economic challenges. Without action, packaging waste in the EU was projected to grow by 19% by 2030, while plastic packaging waste could rise by as much as 46%.

The [Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation](#) entered into force in February 2025, and its rules begin to apply on a phased basis from 12 August 2026. Its key objectives are to:

- **Stop the everlasting trend of increasing packaging waste generation**
- **Improve the functioning of the internal market**
- **Foster efficiency in the waste value chain**
- **Promote the circular economy**

The wide-ranging set of measures is expected to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions, water use and environmental costs in the packaging sector, while saving businesses substantial compliance costs in the medium term.

By promoting a more circular economy, the PPWR will help keep valuable materials in use for longer and increase the recovery and use of secondary raw materials within the EU. This will reduce pressures linked to resource extraction and waste generation, while strengthening the resilience and competitiveness of European industry through a more secure and sustainable supply of materials.

In March 2026, the Commission published [guidance to support the implementation of the PPWR](#), including practical information for businesses, national authorities and other stakeholders on the application of the new PFAS restrictions.

More information

[Packaging & Packaging Waste Regulation | European Commission](#)

[Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation | EUR-Lex](#)

[Guidance document for Regulation \(EU\) 2025/40 on Packaging and Packaging Waste | EUR-Lex](#)

[Updated Frequently Asked Questions on PPWR | Publications Office of the EU](#)

[Plastic packaging waste in the EU: 35.3 kg per person | Eurostat](#)

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