

PPWR

The world of
packaging is changing!

MORE RESPONSIBLE PACKAGING

With the new European PPWR regulation, all companies placing packaging on the market are affected.

The regulation applies as from August 12, 2026, but most measures will apply starting from 2030.

WHAT'S CHANGING FOR YOU STARTING IN 2026

Substances of concern

Packaging must be manufactured in a way that minimises the presence and concentration of substances of concern. A specific restriction applies to per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in food-contact packaging starting from **August 12, 2026**, with specific limit values. The presence of heavy metals (lead, cadmium, mercury, hexavalent chromium) remains restricted to the minimum.

Recyclability

All packaging placed on the market must be recyclable. This means they must be designed for material recycling, enabling the production of secondary raw materials of sufficient quality.

As of January 1, 2030, recyclability will be assessed according to design-for-recycling criteria, classifying packaging into performance grades:

- A = 95% recyclable
- B = 80% recyclable
- C = 70% recyclable

Packaging below category C will no longer be allowed on the market as of this date.

Producers' financial contributions under the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) will have to be modulated according to these performance grades.

While recyclability criteria will be harmonised at the European level, financial contributions will remain specific to each country.

Good to know

As of January 1, 2035, packaging must be effectively recycled at scale within the EU, meaning that at least 55% of each type of packaging placed on the market by a producer in the EU must be recycled (with the exception of wood, for which the rate is 30%).

As of January 1, 2038, only packaging classified in grades A and B will be allowed on the European market.



More Recycled Content

Any plastic part of packaging must contain a minimum percentage of certified post-consumer recycled content.

	From	
	2030	2040
PET food-contact packaging	30%	50%
Non-PET food-contact packaging	10%	25%
Single-use beverage bottles	30%	65%
Other packaging	35%	65%

Exemptions exist for certain types of packaging :

- Medicinal products
- Medical devices
- Infant food or special dietary foods
- Dangerous goods
- Compostable packaging
- Any plastic part representing less than 5% of the packaging weight

Compostable packaging

As of February 12, 2028,

Certain packaging (tea/coffee bags, fruit/vegetable stickers) must comply with industrial composting standards. Consumers must be informed that compostable packaging is intended for industrial composting and not for home composting.

Less waste

As of January 1, 2030

- The weight and volume of packaging must be reduced to the minimum necessary to ensure functionality.
- For grouped, transport, and e-commerce packaging, the maximum empty space must not exceed 50%. Packing or cushioning materials are considered empty space.

Prevention

Waste reduction targets: each Member State must reduce the quantity of packaging waste generated per capita compared to 2018: by 5% by 2030, 10% by 2035, and 15% by 2040.



“More Reuse

Quantitative reuse targets are set for economic operators using packaging starting in 2030 (and aspirational targets by 2040).

Transport and sales packaging:

- Within the same Member State or between sites of the same company within the EU: 100% reusable by 2030.
- Between Member States: 40% reusable by 2030 and 70% by 2040.

Group packaging:

10% reusable by 2030 and 25% by 2040.

Sales packaging for beverages (for final distributors): 10% to be made available in reusable packaging by 2030 and 40% by 2040. Exceptions apply (for highly perishable beverages and certain wines/spirits).



Good to know

Examples of transport and sales packaging: pallets, drums, crates, jerrycans, cans, buckets, stretch wrap, strapping.

Exemptions from these targets

- Packaging for dangerous goods
- Custom-designed packaging used for transporting large machinery, equipment, and goods
- Flexible packaging in contact with food and animal feed
- Cardboard boxes

“Obligations related to refill

In the HORECA sector for takeaway sales

- As of 2027, businesses must offer consumers the possibility to bring their own containers and must clearly inform them of this option.
- As of 2028, businesses must offer consumers the use of reusable packaging and clearly inform them of this option.

In retail, for stores with sales areas larger than 400 m²

- As of 2030, 10% of their sales area must be dedicated to refill stations.

“Less single-use plastic

As of January 1, 2030, it will be prohibited to place certain single-use packaging formats on the market.

- Plastic packaging used to group single-use packages that encourage bulk purchasing.
- Plastic packaging for fruits and vegetables.
- Plastic packaging for on-site consumption of food and beverages in the HORECA sector.
- Plastic packaging for condiments, sauces, and other small packaging formats in the HORECA sector.
- Small plastic packaging for cosmetic and toiletry products used in the hospitality sector.
- Non-compostable very lightweight plastic bags.

“Labelling

As of 2028, a European labelling system will facilitate sorting for consumers and clearly identify reusable or compostable packaging.

A harmonised label: as of 2028, packaging must bear a standardised label across Europe, featuring pictograms indicating the material composition to facilitate consumer sorting.

Labelling of waste bins: selective waste collection bins must also display harmonised labels across Europe, matching those on packaging.

Reuse: as of 2029, reusable packaging must be clearly labelled as such and provide information on the reuse system via a QR code or other digital means. Labelling regarding recycled content or bio-based plastics must be harmonised across Europe.





VALIPAC, to support your successful transition

Faced with these new requirements, Valipac is by your side! We help you understand the regulations, anticipate their impact on your business, and implement tailored solutions. Our expertise and services are your strongest allies in turning these obligations into real opportunities for sustainable growth.

Together, let's make the new legislation a driver of innovation and performance for your company!

2026	●	PPWR applies (08/12/2026) Restrictions on chemical substances in food packaging
2027	●	Refill obligations in the takeaway food sector
2028	●	Reuse obligation in the takeaway food sector Labeling requirements
2030	●	All packaging complies with Design for Recycling (D4R) Reuse targets Recycled content targets Ban on certain packaging formats Waste prevention target of 5% Empty space <50%
2035	●	All packaging is recyclable at scale Waste prevention target of 10%
2038	●	Extension of the ban on the use of non-recyclable packaging
2040	●	Higher recycled content targets Higher reuse targets Waste prevention target of 15%

Disclaimer

This document is a simplified overview of the PPWR regulation approved on December 16, 2024. It is not exhaustive and in no way replaces the official text of the regulation. Valipac disclaims any liability regarding the interpretation or use of the content of this document.

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