



European Commission



# Circular economy: New rules on Packaging and Packaging Waste

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#EUGreenDeal



## Why we need to act

Goods need packaging to be protected and safely transported, but

- packaging and packaging waste has a **big impact on the environment** and use of virgin materials
- there is more and more packaging waste – it is growing faster than our economy or our population



▶ **177 kg of packaging waste per person, or 79.3 million tonnes in total,** was generated in the EU27 in 2020



▶ **Around 40% of plastics and 50% of paper** used in the EU is destined for packaging



▶ **Reuse of packaging dropped dramatically** over the last 10 years



▶ Packaging causes CO<sub>2</sub> emissions **equal to the total CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of a small-medium EU country**



▶ Packaging pollutes soil and land, and is about **half of marine littering**



▶ Packaging waste **increased by more than 20%** over the last **10 years** in the EU, and will increase by another **19% until 2030, if no action is taken.** For **plastic packaging waste, the expected increase is 46% by 2030.**

## → Objectives of the proposed measures



▶ **Prevent and reduce packaging waste,** including by more **reuse and refill systems**



▶ **Make all packaging on the EU market recyclable** in an economically viable way **by 2030**



▶ Increase **use of recycled plastics** in packaging in a safe way



▶ Decrease the use of **virgin materials** in packaging and put the sector on track to **climate neutrality by 2050**

## Key measures

- 🌱 **Targets** for packaging **waste reduction in Member States** and **mandatory reuse or refill targets** in sectors such as retail and catering
- 🌱 EU-wide **standards for over-packaging**; maximum allowed empty space in **e-commerce packaging**; **ban** on certain forms of **unnecessary packaging**
- 🌱 Design criteria for **all packaging to increase recycling rates**
- 🌱 **Mandatory compostability** for some packaging types, where composting is environmentally beneficial
- 🌱 Mandatory **deposit return system** for **plastic bottles** and **aluminium cans**
- 🌱 **Labels on all packaging** to facilitate correct waste sorting by consumers and **corresponding labels on recycling bins** to make it clear where to put each package



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## Biobased, biodegradable and compostable plastics



These types of materials, representing a growing share of plastics, can be confusing to consumers. The Commission will act to **improve the understanding** of these plastics and set **clear guidance**:

- 🌱 Promoting **sustainable sourcing of biomass** and **compliance with sustainability criteria**
- 🌱 Defining the **use** and **suitable applications** of biodegradable and compostable plastics, such as:
  - **Industrially compostable plastics**: bags for the separate collection of biowaste, very light plastic carrier bags, tea bags, filter coffee pods, fruit and vegetable stickers, if certified against appropriate standards.
  - **Biodegradable plastics**: mulch films used in agriculture, if certified against appropriate standards.
- 🌱 Setting **criteria for what can be claimed about these plastics**, for example:
  - Specify that **industrially compostable plastics** are intended for industrial composting, while also explaining the way to dispose of them
  - Specify the receiving **environment** (soil, water etc) and **timeframe required for biodegradation of plastics**
  - Ban **confusing claims on biodegradation of litter-prone products**
  - Disclose the **share of biobased** plastic content.

