



## TAKEAWAY WASTE: FROM PROBLEM TO SOLUTION

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**The takeaway sales have become increasingly popular in recent years, driven in particular by the confinements linked to Covid-19. New waste generated is added to that of fast-food restaurants that too often end up in the ocean. At the time of the revision of the directive on packaging (scheduled for November 2022) Surfrider Foundation Europe, member of the Rethink Plastic Alliance coalition sends its recommendations to the European Commission.**

### The Takeaway, the great predator of the Ocean

Cutlery, expanded polystyrene boxes, straws... Although some items have been banned since July 1, 2021 by the **Single-Use Plastics Directive** (known as the SUP Directive), there is still too much waste from takeaway sales in the deep blue sea. Surfrider Europe often testifies to this during its ocean initiatives, collecting waste on the beaches in order to feed a database reporting the pollution on our coasts. [The 2021 assessment](#) reports that nearly 75% of the waste collected on the beaches are plastics and single-use packaging among which we count in majority food packaging.

Take-away sales and delivery, which require an exponential use of packaging, are a particularly significant threat to the ocean. Bottles, cups, plastic trays, bowls and lids, plastic bags and other single-use packaging that are still not subject to restrictive regulations continue to pollute the marine environment.

### The solution? Reuse!

However, solutions do exist, provided that the sector commits to a real desire to change practices, which is still far from being the case. Reuse, through the use of returnable packaging and the acceptance of personal containers, is a sustainable solution that has already been tested by catering professionals (see inset).

The implementation of a reusable container system would mathematically result in a reduction of inputs to the ocean.

For the practice of reuse to become widespread, it must be accompanied and supported by an ambitious and restrictive legislative framework, thus allowing the shift towards a more virtuous system of out-of-home consumption of delivery and takeaway.

## All other food service sectors affected

The take-out sector is particularly wasteful. However, this sector is only the tail end of a restaurant industry whose plastic impact is constantly increasing.

From fast food restaurants, from self-service restaurants to school canteens, to transport catering, it is an entire sector that needs to be rethought with a view to reuse.

The food aid associations, for their part, would also like to take part in a plastic reduction process, but would need financial support to help them do so.

## Surfrider sends its recommendations to the European Commission

With this in mind, **Surfrider Europe, supported by the NGO coalition Rethink Plastic Alliance**, sent a complete memo to the European Commission on July 20, outlining its recommendations for adopting an ambitious legislative framework for a real reduction in single-use food packaging, especially plastic, in all areas of catering.

This memo comes at a time when the European Commission will be presenting a draft revision of the Packaging and Packaging Waste Directive in November.

On the takeaway, the demands are clear:

- **Set a goal of 75% of food and beverage packaging and containers being reusable for takeaway and delivery by 2030.**
- **Develop a deposit system** for reusable food and beverage containers and packaging, particularly in take-out and home delivery with appropriate containers (multi-compartment lockable containers), commonly used boxes for different portions (dishes, starters/desserts).
- **Eliminate condiments and other food products in individual bags** - offer the option of adding sauces and condiments directly to the dish at the time of purchase or replace them with small reusable containers with a return system.
- **Inform consumers** about the composition of food/beverages via labelling (digital format -QR Codes).

[Link to the European positioning memo:](#)

## [What the EU can do to reduce single use plastic in food services?](#)

### **Ocean Friendly Restaurant, an initiative to reduce the environmental impact of the restaurant industry**

Ocean Friendly Restaurants is an eco-responsible charter that supports restaurant owners in their efforts to be more environmentally friendly. By adopting this charter, the restaurant owners commit themselves to respect 8 mandatory criteria and 5 optional criteria out of a choice of 14, pre-established by Surfrider Europe. Among the 81 restaurants that have received the label in Europe, some have implemented reuse solutions, in particular by allowing customers to bring their own containers.

[Learn more about Ocean Friendly Restaurant and the restaurants that have joined the charter](#)

#### **For more information :**

- Link to the European campaign [We choose reuse](#)
- **A few figures:**
  - In the world more than **400 million tons of plastics are produced each year**, on this production 1/3 is dedicated to the production of packaging for single use for consumer goods. (Reference: *Atlas of Plastics*)
  - In 2019, **40% of plastic waste in the world is packaging**. (Reference: *Global Plastics Outlook*)
  - **Approximately 36% of all plastics produced are used in packaging**, including single-use plastic products for food and beverage containers, of which approximately 85% end up in landfills or as unregulated waste and much of which will eventually enter the marine environment. (Reference: *Unep*)
  - In 2018 the European food service sector used more than **1130 billion pieces of mostly plastic packaging**. (Reference : *Atlas du Plastique*)
  - **Meal delivery revenues** via online platforms in Europe are experiencing double-digit growth rates and **could reach \$25 billion by 2023**. (Reference: *Deloitte*)

- **In France: The number of fast food takeout outlets** increased 11% from 2019 (pre-Covid benchmark year) to **48,800** (Reference: annual study published in October 2021 by CHD Expert.)

### **About Surfrider Foundation Europe**

Surfrider Foundation Europe, an NGO created in 1990, works to protect the oceans, the coastline, the waves and their users. For 30 years, with a team of experts and 49 volunteer offices in 12 European countries, the association has been working with stakeholders (citizens, private and public sectors) on several major issues: aquatic waste, coastal development, climate change, water quality and user health. Discover the association on <https://surfrider.eu/> or via [this video](#). Surfrider Europe is a member of the European NGO coalition Rethink Plastic Alliance

### **About Rethink Plastic Alliance**

Rethink Plastic, part of the Break Free From Plastic movement, is an alliance of leading European NGOs working for ambitious European plastics policies. It includes Carbon Market Watch, Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL), ClientEarth, Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA), European Environmental Bureau (EEB), European Environmental Organisation for Standardisation (ECOS), Greenpeace, Seas At Risk, Surfrider Foundation Europe and Zero Waste Europe. Together they represent thousands of active groups, supporters and citizens from all EU member states who are working towards a future free of plastic pollution.

### **About We choose reuse**

We Choose Reuse is a campaign born out of the desire to push for ambitious and robust reuse solutions to the plastic pollution crisis. Together with over 50 NGOs, we are calling for robust reuse systems that benefit people and the environment to be put in place across Europe. The campaign engages policy makers, businesses, municipalities and the general public to advocate for a future where reusable packaging is developed and robust reuse systems are put in place.

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