

The logo consists of a dark blue square with the words "RETHINK" and "PLASTIC" stacked vertically in white, uppercase, sans-serif font. The exclamation mark in "RETHINK" is stylized with a dot that is a small circle.

RETHINK
PLASTIC

Packaging & Packaging Waste Regulation (PPWR) Parliament trashes EU hopes to reduce packaging waste, siding with throwaway industry

Brussels, 22 November 2023
For immediate distribution

Today, the European Parliament voted on the Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation proposal issued by the European Commission in November 2022. The proposal sought to reduce [record levels of packaging waste](#) in Europe. Intimidated by [unprecedented lobbying](#), parliament voted to delete almost all provisions to tackle unnecessary packaging, as well as most of the reuse targets for 2040. Some reuse targets (e.g. for beverages) were lowered but retained, and accompanied by broad derogations, making the reuse targets virtually ineffective sending a massively negative signal to the nascent reuse sector and circular economy frontrunners.

These choices directly give into false claims, scaremongering, and intense lobbying from the most wasteful industries, decimating any ambition necessary to prevent waste. After the Environment committee, the lead parliamentary committee on this file, already watered down the ambition of the proposal in October, the Plenary today **dealt the final blow to** provisions needed to deal with the packaging waste crisis.

While **support for measures** to make all packaging recyclable will help to boost stagnant recycling levels in the Union, they will do nothing to reduce record levels of waste generation.

The fast-food lobby and single use packaging industries will be celebrating the hypocrisy of the EU, which claims to be a global leader on the implementation of a circular economy. Notably MEPs deleted provisions which would limit the use of single use packaging when dining in the largest restaurants as well as wrapping fruit and vegetables where it is not necessary to protect them.

A tiny glimmer of consolation are the overarching waste prevention targets secured for Member States (to reduce total levels of packaging waste by 5% by 2030 and 15% by 2040) to set a direction of travel for the packaging industry. Additionally, a long overdue ban on the use of PFAS- and BPA - highly toxic and persistent substances - in food packaging was added by Parliament.

Now the Member States in Council must adopt an ambitious mandate on reuse and packaging waste prevention in order to redress the course of this important policy. The regulation is expected to enter trilogues in the beginning of 2024 with only a limited amount of time to adopt the text before the European elections.

“Today, Parliament made itself clear by choosing to listen to the sirens of the single-use industries before the voices of the people. At a time when we are facing an unprecedented pollution crisis, MEPs have demonstrated their disconnection from reality by voting for a text that will increase packaging waste - all the while hiding behind political considerations and false information peddled by the industry.”

Lucie Padovani, Marine Litter's Policy Officer for Surfrider Foundation Europe

“Faced with record levels of waste, MEPs chose to side with throw-away packaging producers and fast food giants. Deleting provisions which would simultaneously reduce waste, scale up reuse and create new economic opportunities for Europe - they served the interest of polluters today. While the EU claims to be leading the way towards a circular economy, its lawmakers did not even have the courage to stop fruit being unnecessarily wrapped in plastic or to promote the use of plates in restaurants.”

Marco Musso, Senior Policy Officer for Circular Economy at the European Environmental Bureau

“The outcome goes beyond outrageous: all meaningful restrictions were removed. The very few that remain will actually increase paper packaging, as they are only aimed at curtailing plastic. This spells disaster for forests not only in Europe but all over the world. We already cut down 3 billion trees for packaging alone. Thanks to the European Parliament, the grotesque paper packaging demand will continue to grow. It's utterly unsustainable.”

- **Sergio Baffoni**, Senior Paper Packaging Campaigner at the Environmental Paper Network

Notes for editors:

- The European Commission is revising its existing Packaging Directive as it failed to address the uncontrolled growth of packaging waste, which is a key environmental concern that poses problems for municipalities and citizens alike .
- The latest [annual waste data](#) published on Thursday 19th October reveals Europe's packaging waste has reached a new record of 188.7kg per capita.
- A concise summary of the arguments can be found in this FAQ on [Prevention and reuse – the only solution to record levels of packaging waste](#)
- For more information, read our factsheet on [Reusable Takeaway Packaging](#), our report on [Disposable Paper-based Food Packaging. The false solution to the packaging waste crisis.](#)
- Please refer to the [Media Briefing on industry lobbying and the continuous watering-down of the PPWR](#), as well as this [Media briefing on the explosion of paper packaging in the EU](#)

About:

Rethink Plastic is an alliance of leading European NGOs, representing thousands of active groups, supporters and citizens in every EU Member State.

We are part of the global Break Free From Plastic movement, consisting of over 11,000 organisations and individuals worldwide demanding an end to plastic pollution.

The Rethink Plastic alliance has been working on the packaging file together with an informal alliance of NGOs with expert knowledge and hands-on experience on the entire lifecycle of plastics and paper. The members of this informal coalition are [Zero Waste Europe](#), [European Environmental Bureau](#), [ECOS](#), [ClientEarth](#), [Deutsche Umwelthilfe](#), [Recycling Netwerk Benelux](#), [Fern](#) and the [Environmental Paper Network](#).

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