

Packaging and packaging waste

SUMMARY OF:

[Directive 94/62/EC on packaging and packaging waste](#)

[Directive \(EU\) 2018/852 amending Directive 94/62/EC on packaging and packaging waste](#)

WHAT IS THE AIM OF THE DIRECTIVE?

Directive 94/62/EC sets out the [EU](#)'s rules on managing packaging and packaging waste.

Directive (EU) 2018/852 amends Directive 94/62/EC and contains updated measures designed to:

- prevent the production of packaging waste, and
- promote the reuse, recycling and other forms of recovering of packaging waste, instead of its final disposal, thus contributing to the transition towards a [circular economy](#)*

Directive 94/62/EC aims to contribute to:

- improving the quality of the [environment](#);
- protecting human health;
- protecting resources;
- ensure the functioning of the internal market and restrictions on [competition](#) within the EU.

KEY POINTS

Scope

The directive as amended covers all packaging placed on the European market and all packaging waste, whether it is used or released at industrial, commercial, office, shop, service, household or any other level, regardless of the material used.

Measures

EU countries must take measures, such as national programmes, incentives through extended producer responsibility schemes and other economic instruments, to prevent the generation of packaging waste and to minimise the environmental impact of packaging.

EU countries should encourage the increase in the share of reusable packaging* put on the market and of systems to reuse packaging without compromising food safety. This may include:

- deposit-return schemes
- targets
- economic incentives
- minimum percentages of reusable packaging placed on the market for each type of packaging, etc.

EU countries must also take the necessary measures to meet certain recycling targets which vary depending on a packaging material and for this purpose apply the new calculation rules.

Targets

By 31 December 2025, at least 65% by weight of all packaging must be recycled. The recycling targets for each material are:

- 50% of plastic
- 25% of wood
- 70% of ferrous metals
- 50% of aluminium
- 70% of glass, and
- 75% of paper and cardboard.

By 31 December 2030, at least 70% of packaging must be recycled. This includes:

- 55% of plastic
- 30% of wood
- 80% of ferrous metals
- 60% of aluminium
- 75% of glass and
- 85% of paper and cardboard.

Essential requirements

EU countries must ensure that the packaging placed on the market meets the essential requirements contained in Annex II of the directive:

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- to limit the weight and volume of packaging to a minimum in order to meet the required level of safety, hygiene and acceptability for consumers;
- to reduce the content of hazardous substances and materials in the packaging material and its components;
- to design reusable or recoverable packaging.

Biodegradable packaging: oxo-degradable* plastic packaging must not be considered as biodegradable.

The [European Commission](#) is currently examining how to reinforce the essential requirements with the view to improving packaging design for reuse and promoting high-quality recycling, as well as strengthening the enforcement of the essential requirements.

Packaging recovery systems

EU countries should ensure that systems are set up to provide for the return and/or collection of used packaging and/or packaging waste, as well as the reuse or recovery including recycling of the packaging and/or packaging waste collected.

Producer responsibility

By 2025, EU countries should ensure that producer responsibility schemes* are established for all packaging. Producer responsibility schemes provide for the return and/or collection of used packaging and/or packaging waste and its channelling to the most appropriate waste management option, as well as for reuse or recycling of the collected packaging and packaging waste. These schemes will need to comply with some minimum requirements established under the [Waste Framework Directive \(2008/98/EC\)](#). The schemes should help incentivise packaging that is designed, produced and commercialised in a way that allows its reuse or recovery and that has minimal impact on the environment.

FROM WHEN DOES THE DIRECTIVE APPLY?

Directive 94/62/EC has applied since 31 December 1994 and had to become law in the EU countries by 30 June 1996.

Directive (EU) 2018/852 has applied since 4 July 2018 and had to become law in the EU countries by 5 July 2020.

BACKGROUND

For more information, see:

- [Packaging and packaging waste](#) (*European Commission*).

KEY TERMS

Circular economy: a circular economy minimises resource input, waste, emissions and energy leakage. It can be achieved through long-lasting design, maintenance, repair, reuse and recycling. It contrasts to a linear economy which extracts resources, uses them, then throws them away.

Reusable packaging: packaging which has been conceived, designed and marketed to carry out multiple trips in its lifetime by being refilled or reused for the same purpose for which it was conceived.

Oxo-degradable: oxo-degradable packaging is plastic packaging with additives that cause it to break down into microscopic particles. It can contribute to the presence of microplastics in the environment.

Producer responsibility scheme: a system set up by a producer to ensure that they bear some of the responsibility of reducing some of the environmental impacts of the manufacture, placing on the market and disposal of their products.

MAIN DOCUMENTS

European Parliament and Council Directive [94/62/EC](#) of 20 December 1994 on packaging and packaging waste (OJ L 365, 31.12.1994, pp. 10-23)

Successive amendments to Directive 94/62/EC have been incorporated in the basic text. This [consolidated version](#) is of documentary value only.

Directive [\(EU\) 2018/852](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 2018 amending Directive 94/62/EC on packaging and packaging waste (OJ L 150, 14.6.2018, pp. 141-154)

RELATED DOCUMENTS

Directive [2008/98/EC](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 November 2008 on waste and repealing certain Directives (OJ L 312, 22.11.2008, pp. 3-30)