EU rules on recycled plastic used in food packaging: updates and clarifications

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Commission Regulation (EU) 2026/2376 as regards the management of the Union register, compliance documentation, test methods, and documents to be presented upon release for free circulation

What is changing and why?

The European Commission has updated the rules for recycled plastic materials and products that come into contact with food, such as food packaging, plastic wrap, and kitchenware, sold in the EU. The rules also apply to non-EU exporters supplying prepacked food products to the EU in recycled plastic packaging .

The new Regulation:

- Reduces paperwork for food businesses that use recycled plastic packaging but do not change its composition. Instead of providing a declaration of compliance to retailers and distributors, they can provide information on the recycled plastic content through labels or other documents.
- Improves traceability by clarifying what information each operator in the supply chain must provide.
- Introduces two new compliance documents (in addition to existing Declarations A for plastic recyclers and B for plastic converters):
  - Declaration C: for converters and other operators using recycled plastic without changing its composition.
  - Declaration P: for operators producing plastic inputs used to make recycled plastic.
- Simplifies information requirements by removing the need to pass batch numbers along the supply chain when the plastic composition has not changed.
- Creates an electronic registration system to help operators and authorities manage decontamination installations.
- Clarifies rules on the use of plastic offcuts and scrap.
- Introduces new technical requirements for pre-processed plastic inputs to improve the quality and consistency of recycled plastic.

Exporters using recycled plastic food packaging must keep the required compliance documents, including declarations from packaging suppliers. If requested by EU authorities, this information must be provided within 10 working days. If requested by a retailer or distributor, it must be

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provided within 20 working days.

Timeline

The new rules apply from **18 November 2026**.

For traceability of recycled plastic, the following dates apply:

- products already compliant with Regulation 2022/1616 and accompanied by Declaration A or B may continue to be placed on the EU market until 18 February 2027
- products that will require the new Declaration C or P may be placed on the EU market without those declarations until 18 May 2027.

Any recycled plastic materials and articles made from products placed on the market during these transition periods may continue to be sold until stocks are exhausted.

For more information see the full record on the AGRINFO website – where you can also view the latest AGRINFO Update newsletters and search the database.

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