Packaging and packaging waste consultation: minimum recycled plastic content

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Three opportunities to comment on future EU rules on minimum recycled content for plastic packaging

Public consultations on

Sustainability criteria for plastic recycling technologies

Harmonisation of rules for calculating and verifying recycled content in plastic packaging.

Conditions for importing recycled materials into the EU for use in packaging

Update

The Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation 2025/40 (PPWR) sets minimum recycled-content targets by 2030 for plastic packaging, including imported packaged food products, put on the European Union (EU) market. The EU will develop detailed rules to support these targets.

The European Commission has launched a series of consultations to gather technical and practical information, including information relevant to non-EU countries, to help it develop rules that reflect the current technologies, markets, and control systems for recycled plastics.

Interested stakeholders can provide feedback and evidence on:

- Sustainability criteria for plastic recycling technologies
- Harmonisation of rules for calculating and verifying recycled content in plastic packaging.
- Conditions for importing recycled materials into the EU for use in packaging.

Impacted products

Packaged products

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What is changing?

Under the PPWR (Regulation 2025/40, Art. 7), plastic packaging, including imported packaged food products, put on the EU market from 2030 will have to meet minimum recycled-content targets.

The European Commission has launched three consultations to collect technical and practical evidence from stakeholders, including those based outside the EU, to help prepare the detailed rules that will support the implementation of these targets.

Interested stakeholders can provide feedback and evidence on the following.

Sustainability criteria for plastic recycling technologies

In particular, what is the:

- availability of current recycling technologies?
- economic and environmental performance and quality of the output?
- availability of waste?
- energy needed and environmental impact (e.g. greenhouse gas emissions)?

Harmonisation of rules for calculating and verifying recycled content in plastic packaging

In particular:

- what data is available on recycled content used in non-EU countries?
- what are the audit and certification costs associated with audit and certification of recycled plastic in non-EU countries?
- what certification capacity is there outside the EU?
- what are the potential impacts of upcoming EU requirements on international recycling of plastic and packaging supply chains?

Conditions for importing recycled materials into the EU for use in packaging

Evidence is sought on:

- current markets, including the quantity and origin of imported recycled plastic and plastic packaging
- verification, certification, or chain of custody schemes currently used to verify origin, traceability, and recycled plastic content.

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Why?

To implement the recycled plastic content targets, the European Commission wants to develop rules that are workable, verifiable, and enforceable by collecting insights from operators.

Conditions for importing recycled materials into the EU for use in packaging

The EU is aiming to set new rules that allow plastic materials collected or recycled in non-EU countries to be assessed, verified, and certified in a way that is equivalent to such materials in the EU.

Harmonisation of rules for calculating and verifying recycled content in plastic packaging

By setting EU-wide rules on how to calculate and verify the content of recycled plastic in packaging, the Commission intends to facilitate compliance with the rules.

Sustainability criteria for plastic recycling technologies

The EU aims to support the positive environmental impacts of using recycled plastic in packaging.

Timeline

The rules are expected to be adopted in the fourth quarter of 2026.

What are the major implications for exporting countries?

In these consultations, the European Commission is not asking specific questions. This is an opportunity for operators – both packaging manufacturers, and food operators exporting packaged foods to the EU – to highlight the challenges they anticipate and the measures that could help non-EU operators to effectively participate in the transition to a circular economy. In particular, information on plastic recycling in non-EU countries regarding the available technologies, availability of waste, and the energy needed will help EU policymakers to develop relevant and informed measures.

Recommended Actions

The three European Commission consultations closed on 16 September 2026.

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Background

The PPWR requires plastic packaging to contain at least a minimum percentage of recycled plastic per unit of packaging by 2030, with more ambitious targets set for 2040. By 31 December 2026, the European Commission will indicate a methodology to calculate the amount of recycled content. For more details see New EU packaging rules explained.

Packaging is one of the main users of virgin materials and is a significant contributor to waste. In the EU, the share of recycled packaging has been growing slowly between 2014 and 2023 (European Commission 2025) – but much recyclable packaging is still not recycled. This is because there are not enough suitable and economically viable collection and recycling processes.

The PPWR is part of the EU's circular economy action plan (European Commission 2020) which commits to making all packaging reusable or recyclable by 2030, and to reducing (over) packaging and packaging waste. To achieve this objective, the PPWR introduces minimum recycled-content targets for plastic packaging to reduce the use of primary raw materials and create demand for recycled plastics.

Resources

AGRINFO webinar resources: New EU rules on packaging and packaging waste (PPWR)

European Commission (2020) A new Circular Economy Action Plan - For a cleaner and more competitive Europe

European Commission (2025) Packaging waste statistics

Sources

Public consultations on

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