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## **POLICY ISSUES**

### **PACKAGING AND PACKAGING WASTE**

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MEPs on the European Parliament's Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI) validated, on Tuesday 19 March, the Interinstitutional Agreement reached between the European Parliament and the Council of the EU on 4 March on the 'Packaging and Packaging Waste' Regulation. The Member States' ambassadors to the EU had already given the green light to the provisional political agreement on Friday 15 March.

*Agence Europe 19/03/24*

### **NEW PACKAGING RULES SET TO BECOME LAW DESPITE COMMISSION OBJECTIONS**

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EU national governments agreed on Friday (15 March) to a new regime of packaging waste rules, following a dramatic few weeks during which the European Commission threatened to veto an agreement reached between governments and the European Parliament [earlier this month](#) and withdraw the proposal before it could become law. [Link to Article](#)

*Source: Euractiv, 18/03/24*

### **NEW 'EU BIOTECH AND BIOMANUFACTURING INITIATIVE'**

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The Commission has proposed a series of targeted actions to boost biotechnology and biomanufacturing in the EU. The Communication on Building the future with nature identifies the challenges and barriers and proposes to tackle them, in line with the Communication on the long-term competitiveness of the EU. Link to [article](#)

Link to [EC Questions and answers on the Communication on Biotechnology and Biomanufacturing](#)

*Source European Commission 20/03/24*

### **EUDR - EU DELAYS STRICTER RULES ON IMPORTS FROM DEFORESTED AREAS**

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The EU intends to delay strict policing of imports from areas prone to deforestation after several governments in Asia, Africa and Latin America complained that the rules would be burdensome, unfair and scare off investors. Brussels will put off classification of countries into low, standard or high risk, which was due to be implemented by December, instead designating every country as standard risk to give them more time to adapt to the anti-deforestation regulation, three EU officials told the Financial Times. [Link to Article](#)

*Source: Financial Times 08/03/24*

## WASTE FRAMEWORK DIRECTIVE REVISION

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Next Environmental Council Agenda items include the examination of a partial Presidency compromise text based on a Steering Note from the Presidency on the revised Waste Framework Directive, Click [here](#) for the agenda.

The Belgian presidency of the Council is planning [on 13 - 14 June 2024](#) a workshop “ a future Waste framework directive” intending to bring together experts from all EU 27 Member States, the European Commission, the European Environment Agency and the key EU stakeholders. Breakout sessions will cover the following topics: Prevention, Waste hierarchy, Waste/non-waste, Bio-waste collection, Substances of concern in material cycles and Waste incineration in a circular economy.

*Source: Council of the European Union, 19/03/24*

## CORPORATE SUSTAINABILITY DUE DILIGENCE: GREEN LIGHT TO NEW BILL ON FIRMS' IMPACT ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND ENVIRONMENT

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The Legal Affairs Committee approved a bill, agreed with EU governments, requiring firms to mitigate their negative impact on human rights and the environment.

MEPs on the [Legal Affairs Committee](#) adopted with 20 votes for, 4 against and no abstentions new, so-called “[due diligence](#)” rules, obliging firms to alleviate the adverse impact their activities have on human rights and the environment, including slavery, child labour, labour exploitation, biodiversity loss, pollution and destruction of natural heritage. The requirement to prevent, end or mitigate their negative effects also concerns companies' upstream partners working in design, manufacture, transport and supply, and downstream partners, including those dealing with distribution, transport and storage. Once formally approved by the European Parliament and the member states, the directive will enter into force on the twentieth day following its publication in the EU Official Journal.

[Link to article here](#)

## FDA ANNOUNCES PFAS USED IN GREASE-PROOFING AGENTS FOR FOOD PACKAGING NO LONGER BEING SOLD IN THE U.S.

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The FDA announced that grease-proofing substances containing [Per and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances \(PFAS\)](#) are no longer being sold by manufacturers for food contact use in the U.S. market. The completion of the voluntary market phase-out of these substances used on food packaging paper and paperboard, eliminates the primary source of dietary exposure to PFAS from authorized food contact uses. [FDA announces PFAS used in grease-proofing agents for food packaging no longer being sold in the U.S.”](#)

*Source: US FDA 28/02/24*

## GREATER LYON SEEKS PFAS COMPENSATION:

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The Lyon metropolitan area, in France, has launched civil court proceedings to establish whether the chemical manufacturers Arkéma and Daikin can be held legally responsible for pollution caused by per- and polyfluorinated substances, otherwise known as PFAS or “forever chemicals.” If the companies' role in the pollution is proven, Lyon may request payment for the damage caused.

Several companies and business associations have raised concerns over the European Chemicals Agency's Committee for Risk Assessment's opinion that nitrous oxide should be classified as a presumed human reproductive toxicant. The European Dairy Association, for example, holds that it's not justified based on the “available science” and could “have a dramatic impact on Europe's culinary value chain and innovation as it may lead to a ban under REACH on the use of nitrous oxide in whipped cream.” (When a chemical is sorted into a certain hazard class it can eventually trigger future restrictions on the chemical in question.)

*Source: Politico 20/03/24*

## EU GIVES FINAL GREEN LIGHT TO CRITICAL RAW MATERIALS STRATEGY

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The Council of the EU gave its final approval on Monday (18 March) for a strategy to secure a sustainable supply of raw materials critical for the green transition, digital industries, and defence sectors, it said in a [press release](#).

Europe is largely dependent on other countries for the supply of these critical elements, such as lithium for battery making and rare earth elements used in electronics.

The Critical Raw Materials Act (CRMA) approved today is an attempt to reduce the EU's reliance on these third countries, particularly China, which has a chokehold on the supply chains of many of these elements. Link to [article](#)

*Source: Euractiv, 18/03/24*

## MICROPLASTICS: STRICTER RULES TO MINIMISE PLASTIC PELLET LOSSES

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The Parliament is scheduled to vote on its position during the April II 2024 plenary session. The file will be followed up by the new Parliament after the European elections on 6-9 June. MEPs want to improve the definition of plastic pellets, used as feedstock in plastic product manufacturing and plastic recycling operations, to also include powders, cylinders, beads and flakes. The new rules would require all entities carrying out economic activities that involve the handling of plastic pellets to ensure that losses are avoided. Where spills and losses occur, they would be responsible to take immediate action to contain and clean-up those spills and losses.

*Source: European Parliament, 19/03/24*

## RESEARCH AND INNOVATION (R&I) WEEK

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The fifth [R&I Days event](#) will take place on 20 and 21 March 2024 both physically in Brussels and online, allowing everyone to get involved from anywhere.

## BIODIVERSITY - NATURE RESTORATION DELAY

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The bloc's top envoys were expected to give their backing to the EU's new nature restoration rules on 20 March, paving the way for them to be formally adopted by EU environment ministers on Monday. But the Belgian presidency decided to push the vote back to Friday because it hadn't been able to secure a qualified majority in favor of the text, according to three EU diplomats.

What happened: Italy, the Netherlands, Poland and Sweden signalled they wouldn't back the text. Three other countries — Austria, Belgium and Finland — said they would abstain, while Hungary was still undecided.

Hungarian question mark: Hungary's indecision was unexpected, as the country previously supported the legislation — including when EU ambassadors signed off on the provisional inter-institutional deal struck in November. In the European Parliament, 10 of the 13 MEPs belonging to Viktor Orbán's Fidesz party also voted in favor of the text in plenary last month. Link to article [here](#).

*Source: Politico 20/03/24*

## EU GREEN DIPLOMACY

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Council conclusions reaffirm the EU's commitment to work closely with partners to accelerate a global just and inclusive green transition. Link to article [here](#)

*Source : Council of the European Union, 18/03/24*

## PROPOSAL FOR A REGULATION ON A MONITORING FRAMEWORK FOR RESILIENT EUROPEAN FORESTS

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An information note from the Presidency will be discussed under "Any other business" at the Council (Environment) meeting on 25 March 2024. Link to [document](#)

*Source : Council of the European Union, 18/03/24*

## EU ELECTIONS: EUROPEAN LIBERALS, CENTRISTS AND DEMOCRATS PRESENT THEIR LEADING CANDIDATES AHEAD OF LAUNCH OF RENEW EUROPE NOW PLATFORM

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On the eve of the launch of the Renew Europe Now campaign for the European elections on Wednesday 20 March in Brussels, European Liberals, Centrists and Democrats officially presented their main candidates for the Renew Europe Group's "Team Europe" in the European Parliament.

## PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS

- Food safety – plastic food contact materials (FCMs) (deadline 10 April) Link [here](#)
- [EU emissions trading system](#) – update of the Verification and Accreditation Regulation Deadline 15 April 2024
- Single Market Programme – interim evaluation (deadline 31 May 2024) Link [here](#)
- [Climate reporting](#) – amended templates to reflect 'Fit for 55' outcomes deadline 11 April 2024

## POSITION PAPERS

### STAKEHOLDER REACTIONS TO PPWR

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[Europe's recyclers applaud milestone PPWR deal](#), By EuRIC 15 Mar 2024

[Compromise on the new EU Packaging law will lead to unprecedented, grievous effects on the functioning of the Single Market and dramatically damage fresh produce consumption](#) By Freshfel12 Mar 2024

[New packaging rules put supply chains at risk](#) By APPLIA 12 Mar 2024

## STUDIES/REPORTS/ARTICLES

On March 19, 2024, a peer-reviewed scientific [article](#) providing an overview of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in food packaging and other food contact materials was published in Environmental Science & Technology (ES&T). In this article, Drake Phelps and authors from the Food Packaging Forum summarize evidence from 47 scientific studies that analyzed PFAS in different food contact articles. In addition, the availability of hazard information and biomonitoring data is illustrated by combining multiple data sources into a Toxicological Priority Index (ToxPi) score.

[Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances in food packaging: Migration, toxicity, and management strategies](#). *Environmental Science & Technology*. Phelps DW, Parkinson LV, Boucher JM, Muncke J, and Geueke B (2024).