
POLICY ISSUES

UPCOMING ENVIRONMENT COUNCIL - ENVIRONMENT MINISTERS INVITED TO IDENTIFY GAPS IN CIRCULAR ECONOMY LEGISLATION

Ahead of the Environment Council scheduled on [27 March](#), Member states will discuss, among others, the challenges in advancing a circular economy, including potential legislative gaps in scaling up reuse, remanufacturing, and recycling. Ahead of the meeting the Council released two policy notes to guide discussions.

- [Policy note on environmental dimension of the Clean Industrial Deal](#), aiming to drive industrial growth through decarbonisation while integrating key economic and trade policies.
- [Policy note on Global environmental policies](#): highlights the continuation of global plastics treaty negotiations at the fifth session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee in August.

Council of the European Union 14/03/2025

PACKAGING AND PACKAGING WASTE – EXEMPTIONS FROM THE REUSE OBLIGATIONS FOR PLASTIC WRAPPINGS AND STRAPS (DELEGATED ACT)

The Commission published [an upcoming initiative](#) (Q4 2025) on possible delegated act under the Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation (PPWR) that would establish exemptions from the PPWR's reuse obligations for plastic wrappings and straps.

Source: European Commission 10/03/2025

JRC FACTUAL SUMMARY REPORT OF TARGETED STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION ON EU HARMONISED WASTE SORTING LABELS AS PART OF THE PPWR

As the European Union (EU) continues to deal with the increasing quantities of packaging waste and its environmental impact, one area of focus is the harmonisation of waste sorting labels across EU Member States. This effort aims to for easier and more accurate packaging waste sorting in the EU.

In this context, between 2 September and 30 September 2024, the European Commission Joint Research Centre (JRC) invited stakeholders to a targeted consultation to gather insights on key aspects of the waste sorting labels currently being developed. The consultation concerned the design and implementation of material-based waste sorting labels as part of the Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation (PPWR). These labels will be applied to packaging and waste receptacles, providing clear guidance on proper disposal to people in the EU. This document provides a factual summary of the stakeholder contributions against the backdrop of outlining how the consultation was conducted.

Summary Report available [here](#)

Source: Joint Research Centre 10/03/2025

TOWARDS A CIRCULAR, REGENERATIVE AND COMPETITIVE BIOECONOMY

The Commission published [an upcoming public consultation](#) on the new Bioeconomy strategy (Q1 2024). The bioeconomy initiative aims to offer solutions for a circular and climate neutral economy, boosting the EU's prosperity and competitiveness within planetary boundaries. Citizens and Stakeholders will be soon called to provide input on how to make the best and most sustainable use of biomass, keep material and products in the economy for as long as possible, reconciling planet, people and prosperity.

Source : European Commission 10/03/2025

EU DEFORESTATION REGULATION (EUDR)

The Commission published a new document providing an overview of how the obligations apply, depending on the company type (operator/trader), size and position in the supply chain within the EU, illustrated through 10 different supply chain scenarios on our website and here: [EUDR compliance - Publications Office of the EU](#)

Source: European Commission 10/03/2025

REVISION OF WASTE FRAMEWORK DIRECTIVE VALIDATED BY MEPS AND COUNCIL

On March 18, members of the European Parliament's Envi Committee [approved the agreement reached during the trilogues](#) held at the end of February. The following day, the ambassadors (Coreper 1) of the Twenty-Seven also supported the compromise, which must now be approved in the plenary and by ministers in the coming weeks. While the Commission's initial proposal, focused on harmonizing the extended producer responsibility (EPR) scheme in the textile sector, did not address the "fast fashion" model, the co-legislators decided otherwise. Member States will be able to adapt the EPR contribution based on the durability and longevity of products. The agreement also contains numerous review clauses, including those to assess the possibility of establishing prevention, collection, reuse, and recycling targets for textiles. As the directive requires, capitals will have to transpose it.

Source: Contexte 20/03/2025

EC PROPOSES TO CUT RED TAPE AND SIMPLIFY BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

The European Commission has adopted new proposals that will cut red tape and simplify EU rules for citizens and business.

- [Simplifying EU rules and boosting competitiveness](#) – Omnibus I
- [InvestEU - European Union](#) – Omnibus II
- [Questions and Answers - Omnibus package](#)

Collectively, with these measures, the Commission wants to reduce administrative burdens by 25%, and by 35% for small and medium-sized businesses, by the end of its mandate in 2029.

The proposals will now be submitted to the European Parliament and the Council for their consideration and adoption. For more information [Press release: Commission simplifies rules on sustainability and EU investments, delivering over €6 billion in administrative relief](#)

Source: European Commission 26/03/2025

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: EPP WANTS TO ADOPT OMNIBUS ON REPORTING OBLIGATIONS QUICKLY

The omnibus package aimed at amending the Directives on Due Diligence (CS3D) and Non-Financial Reporting (CSRD) consists of two proposals. This will result in a two-year postponement of the initial obligations under the CSRD (2027 instead of 2025) and a 1 year postponement of the transposition of the CS3D (July 2027 instead of July 2026).

- In Parliament, the EPP wants to keep pace with this and submitted a request on March 13 to trigger the emergency procedure provided for in Rule 170 of the Parliament's Rules of Procedure. MEPs will have to decide whether to use this procedure **in plenary on April 1**.
- If approved, President Metsola will be able to set debate and voting on the directive.
- On March 19, the EPP appointed Swedish MEP Jörgen Warborn as rapporteur. Several committees will issue opinions, namely the Environment, Employment, Economic Affairs, International Trade, and Foreign Affairs committees.

Source: Contexte 21/03/2025

GREEN CLAIMS DIRECTIVE - WORKING PARTY ON THE ENVIRONMENT 28 MARCH

EU Preparation for a trilogue on the proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on substantiation and communication of explicit environmental claims (Green Claims Directive). [Click here](#) to view the agenda

Source: OPP 21/03/2025

EUROPEAN LEADERS WANT FASTER SIMPLIFICATION DRIVE

EU heads of state and government will discuss simplification and cutting red tape at a [European Council meeting](#) in Brussels. While they back the Commission's simplification drive — as embodied in the first omnibus simplification package presented last month — they want the EU to go even faster, according to the latest draft [Council Conclusions](#):

Meanwhile, the European Parliament will be voting on whether to apply the urgent procedure to fast track the adoption of the Commission's proposal to "stop the clock" on the implementation of the corporate sustainability reporting, due diligence and taxonomy rules [on April 1](#).

Source: Politico and European Council 21/03/2025

FCM - THE EU INTRODUCED STRICTER PURITY AND MIGRATION LIMITS FOR PLASTIC FOOD CONTACT MATERIALS UNDER REGULATION (EU) 2025/351

On February 24, 2025, the European Union released [Commission Regulation \(EU\) 2025/351](#), amending existing laws related to food contact plastics and recycled plastic materials. This new regulation, which will come into effect on March 16, 2025, revokes the outdated recycled plastic regulation (EC) No 282/2008 and introduces several critical updates aimed at improving safety and sustainability in the industry. The Regulation bringing significant changes to the manufacturing and use of plastic food contact materials across the European Union. Effective 24 March 2025, the amendments introduce stricter purity requirements, migration limits, and labelling obligations for both virgin and recycled plastics. Businesses have until 16 September 2026 to ensure full compliance or risk market restrictions.

Source: European Commission 16/03/2025

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT PLENARY ROUND-UP – MARCH 2025

The future of European Union defence unsurprisingly topped the [March 2025 plenary session agenda](#). Debates looked also at the Commission's vision for agriculture and food, and the first 'omnibus' simplification proposals, as well as on supporting EU regions vulnerable to the effects of climate change; the social and employment aspects of restructuring processes.

Source: European Parliament 14/03/2025

COMMISSION RESPONDS TO UNJUSTIFIED US STEEL AND ALUMINIUM TARIFFS WITH COUNTERMEASURES

In response to the imposition of new, unjustified US tariffs on EU steel and aluminium imports, the Commission has launched swift and proportionate countermeasures on US imports into the EU.

The Commission's response is carefully calibrated, based on a two-step approach:

- First, the Commission will allow the [suspension of existing 2018 and 2020 countermeasures](#) against the US to lapse on 1 April. These countermeasures target a range of US products that respond to the economic harm done on €8 billion of EU steel and aluminium exports.
- Second, in response to new US tariffs affecting more than €18 billion of EU exports, the Commission is putting forward a package of new countermeasures on US exports. They will come into force by mid-April, following consultation of Member States and stakeholders.
- See here [MEMO: EU countermeasures on US steel and aluminium tariffs explained](#)

Source: European Commission 11/03/2025

EU COMPETITIVENESS COUNCIL

The Competitiveness Council saw the presentation of a non- paper by four Member States (Spain, Portugal, Slovakia and Slovenia) with [proposals for a Strategic Framework](#) and the establishment of a robust industrial pillar within the future European Competitiveness Fund.

Source: Contexte 7/03/2025

FOREST AND FORESTRY STAKEHOLDER PLATFORM (9 APRIL 2025)

The agenda concerns an introduction from the Commission followed by questions or input from members on Bioeconomy, an input from members on the CAP, an update from the Commission followed by possible questions or input from members on the Nature Restoration Regulation (TBC) and on Biodiversity certification and nature credits (TBC), as well as information and possible follow up from the Commission on the webinar on Closer to Nature Forest Management certification of 14 March 2025, information from the Commission on the Workshop on the implementation of the European Commission's Forest guidelines in the Boreal Region and the Circular Bio-based Europe Joint Undertaking (CBE JU) call for proposal 2025 and previous and ongoing projects on forest and forestry.

Source: European Commission 10/03/2025

PLASTICS RECYCLERS IN CRISIS

Europe's plastic recycling sectors have put out a call for help as more and more recycling centers are forced to close down. The sector is struggling to compete with cheaper virgin plastic imports as sky-high energy prices push up their operating costs.

Plastics recyclers are calling policy makers to introduce "effective import controls and enforcing existing legislation, including the restriction of importing materials which do not meet equivalent EU sustainability and safety standards,".

INDUSTRY MINISTERS' WIDE-RANGING SUGGESTIONS FOR EVER GREATER "SIMPLIFICATION" OF ENVIRONMENTAL TEXTS

The Commission left the Competitiveness Council on March 12 with a long "to-do list." The Polish Presidency had asked Industry Ministers to identify other legislation that should be subject to "simplification" measures, following the first two packages at the end of February. The Czech Republic and Slovenia mentioned the Deforestation Regulation; Bulgaria, Slovakia, Austria, and Estonia discussed the Urban Wastewater Directive; Lithuania highlighted product texts (packaging, labeling, extended producer responsibility), supported by Slovakia, which added the Ecodesign Regulation to the list. Estonia and Slovakia also mentioned the Chemicals Labeling Regulation (CLP). "We take note of your suggestions, which could be candidates for the next step in the simplification agenda," responded Commissioner Dombrovskis. During this debate, all Member States welcomed the omnibus package on the duty of care (CS3D) and non-financial reporting (CSRD). Many, like France, supported the proposal to suspend their implementation while the omnibus texts are adopted and to negotiate quickly.

POSITIONS

ASSOCIATIONS CALLS ON EU POLICYMAKERS TO HARMONISE, SIMPLIFY AND CLARIFY THE GREEN CLAIMS DIRECTIVE TO SAFEGUARD BUSINESSES' COMPETITIVENESS

AIM, together with 13 other associations calls on EU policymakers to carefully evaluate options to simplify, clarify and streamline the Green Claims Directive during ongoing negotiations, through the lens of the EU simplification and competitiveness agenda. Link to [position here](#)

POSITION PAPERS ON OMNIBUS PACKAGE

[EuroCommerce](#): Omnibus sustainability package: simpler rules for a greener future

[BusinessEurope](#): 1st EU Omnibus: A positive step towards making it easier to do business in Europe

POSITION: HOW EU MEMBER STATES CAN SLASH WASTE WHEN IMPLEMENTING NEW PACKAGING RULES

National and local governments could slash record levels of packaging waste if they follow this roadmap. By the Rethink Plastic alliance with Break Free From Plastic, Zero Waste Europe, ClientEarth (Europe), Environmental Coalition on Standards (ECOS), Fair Resource Foundation, and the European Environmental Bureau (EEB). Link [here](#)

Source: ECOS 20/03/2025

STUDIES

FACTUAL SUMMARY REPORT OF TARGETED STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION ON EU HARMONISED WASTE SORTING LABELS AS PART OF THE PACKAGING AND PACKAGING WASTE REGULATION

As the European Union (EU) continues to deal with the increasing quantities of packaging waste and its environmental impact, one area of focus is the harmonisation of waste sorting labels across EU Member States. Study available [here](#)

Source: Joint Research Centre 10/03/2025

PLASTIC BAGS, CUPS, AND OTHER LITTER FOUND AT DEEPEST POINT OF MEDITERRANEAN SEA

A JRC-led study recently published in Marine Pollution Bulletin has revealed that the deepest point of the Mediterranean Sea, the Calypso Deep, has one of the highest concentrations of marine litter.

[View](#)

Source: Joint Research Centre 12/03/2025

ECONOMIC BULLETIN ON INPUT COSTS - OCT 2024-JAN 2025

FoodDrinkEurope published its Economic bulletin on input costs, the [Packaging section is available here](#)

Wood and paper packaging

- December year-on-year, producer prices index of wooden containers increased by 2%, and returned to the value of August 2021, well above pre-COVID level.
- Producer price indices of pulp, paper and paperboard increased by 5% compared to December 2023, and was up 16% compared to August 2021.

Source: FoodDrinkEurope 11/03/2025

EVENTS

Event: 32nd Annual [Packaging Waste & Sustainability Forum](#) (Brussels on 25-27 March 2025)
Empowering the Future of Sustainable Packaging in Europe

From policy to production, from materials to waste management – get a complete range of stakeholder perspectives on sustainability at Europe's leading packaging conference.

Event: Reducing plastic, enhancing sustainability: smart solutions for every business (Hamburg, Germany & Online, 2 April 2025)

Event: 2025 Basque Circular Summit (Bilbao, Spain 02 Apr 2025 to 04 Apr 2025)

The 2025 Basque Circular Summit will be the largest event on the circular economy in southern Europe this year. It will analyse the challenges and opportunities posed by the circular economy for companies, society and the economy in the Basque Country and show what has already been achieved.

Event: Sustainable Packaging Innovation Forum (Amsterdam, the Netherlands 6-7 May 2025)

This two-day business conference will bring together key industry players to discuss the sustainable packaging solutions that work for consumers, the environment and business reality. We'll assess the impact of evolving legislation and how brands can adapt to leverage the value and commercial advantage in sustainable packaging strategy.

Event: World Circular Economy Forum 2025 (San Paulo, Brazil and Online 13- 16 May 2025)

The World Circular Economy Forum 2025 (WCEF2025) will take place in South America. It will explore the potential of tropical solutions for sustainable growth, the power of regeneration and bioeconomy strategies, along with how the production sector is driving the transition toward a circular economy. The forum will also address key topics relevant to Latin America and the world.

Accelerator sessions will be held by WCEF collaborators on 15 and 16 May.