

Circular Economy Action Plan

POSITION PAPER

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Building on the previous actions launched in 2015, the new Circular Economy Action Plan is one of the main building blocks of the European Green Deal.

It proposes measures along the entire life-cycle of products with the aim of making our economy fit for a greener future. It focuses on design and production for a circular economy where resources used are kept in the EU economy for as long as possible.

The food and drink industry will continue to preserve the value of resources and materials that go into producing food and drink products to achieve increased circularity and a climate neutral sustainable economy.

Towards sustainable packaging

The food and drink industry has been making progress to reduce and optimise the use of packaging materials, find sustainable alternatives to plastic and increase the use of recycled content. These efforts are part of our active contribution to tackling climate change and reducing plastic pollution.

Ensuring a high level of food safety and preventing food waste should be central objectives in the transition towards a circular, climate-neutral economy and more sustainable food systems. It is a joint responsibility of all partners in the food supply chain.

All public and private actors should also work to further engage consumers by offering a wide range of sustainable products and helping them choose, use and dispose of them in a more sustainable manner.

ESSENTIAL STEPS TO A CIRCULAR ECONOMY

- Base measures to reduce and improve packaging on scientific evidence and follow a life-cycle approach, recognising the role of packaging to prevent food contamination and waste.
- Ensure policy for a more sustainable and circular economy is ambitious, yet smooth and flexible, to allow every sector and economic operator, including SMEs, to adapt.
- Contribute to common EU definition of recyclability, based on the potential of the packaging material to be recycled and considering existing and emerging technologies and infrastructure.
- Enhance 'Extended Producer Responsibility' schemes to increase packaging waste collection and sorting.
- Support the development of EU information on proper sorting of packaging waste and zero littering to further engage consumers.
- Ensure recycled plastic materials for use in packaging that are in contact with food are safe and readily available to the food and drink industry.
- Ensure product environmental claims are clear, transparent and reliable, using the PEF methodologies where possible.
- Deploy efforts to prevent and reduce food waste across the entire food value chain, in alignment with the 'food waste hierarchy'.
- Properly implement and enforce the Water Framework Directive to ensure better quality and a sustainable management of water in agricultural and industrial processes.

We are committed to helping achieve **climate neutrality** in the EU by 2050

We are working with value-chain partners to ensure that **10 million tons of recycled plastic** make their way into new products by 2025

We are determined to help address global challenges by moving towards more **sustainable food systems** and implementing the UN SDGs

OUR CORE POLICY ASKS

1 Put safety first

The review of the Packaging and Packaging Waste Directive should address the circularity of packaging based on science and following a life-cycle approach. There should be no compromise on food safety. The review should consider the functionality of packaging, in particular to preserve food from contamination and waste.

There is a need for a clear and common EU definition of what is recyclable which should be based on the potential of the material to be recycled considering existing and emerging technologies and infrastructure across the EU.

2 Support recycling infrastructure

Collection, sorting and recycling technologies and infrastructure should be further developed across the EU to meet common minimum quality requirements. Extended Producer Responsibility schemes should be enhanced to increase packaging waste collection and sorting.

Rules should also be established for the safe recycling of plastic materials other than PET into food contact materials. Coordination and alignment with the food contact materials regulations will be key. It is imperative that our industry has access to the steady availability and affordability of safe recycled packaging materials for our food and drink products.

3 Empower consumers

Product environmental claims should be transparent, reliable and, wherever possible, based on the Product Environmental Footprint methodologies. EU information provision schemes on proper sorting of packaging waste and zero littering should be developed to further engage consumers in improved waste management. We call for an EU framework to ensure that minimum requirements

for separate collection and deposit return schemes are implemented, without compromising the efficiency of the already well-functioning systems.

4 Enhance food waste reduction

Our industry has committed to support the implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goal 12.3 to halve food waste by 2030. Efforts need to be fostered and shared among all actors of the food supply chain, in alignment with the food waste hierarchy.

The reliability and comparability of the data reported by Member States on food waste needs to be verified before further legislative measures are taken.

5 Ensure coherence & consistency

The Circular Economy Action Plan should be implemented in coherence and consistency with other key EU policy initiatives, particularly with the other parts of the European Green Deal, such as the Climate Law and the future Farm-to-Fork and Biodiversity strategies. Policy and regulatory changes need to be ambitious and forward looking, yet smooth and flexible to allow every sector and economic operators, including SMEs, to adapt.

ABOUT FOODDRINKEUROPE

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To read our position in more detail, [click here](#)

