Circular economy: FEVE unpacks current EU packaging

As the EU's Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation (PPWR) undergoes significant political scrutiny, packaging and waste management are currently being thrashed out among Brussels' key priorities. Here FEVE investigates the potential implications of the proposed PPWR revision for glass packaging, as well as its potential effects upon brands, retailers, businesses and consumers.

RECYCLABILITY: MEETING CIRCULAR ECONOMY TARGETS

Glass is a material that exhibits endless recyclability, serving as a remarkable testament to the success of recycling efforts. Over the past six decades, glass recycling has witnessed substantial growth - achieving exceptional collection rates of 80 percent within the European Union (EU), which positions it as one of the foremost recycled packaging materials. By harnessing an increased supply of recycled glass for production cycles the reduction of virgin resources and carbon dioxide emissions is attainable - simul-

taneously conserving energy. As evinced by statistics indicating an upward trajectory, the average glass bottle or jar now contains an impressive 52 percent recycled content.

SUPPORTING EU AMBITIONS ON RECYCLABILITY

The European Commission's proposal for the Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation (PPWR) marks a significant stride towards ensuring that only recyclable packaging enters the EU market. By 2030, all packaging in the market must be designed for recyclability, with harmonised criteria introduced to ensure effective collection, sorting and large-scale recycling. Packaging will be categorised into A-E recyclability performance grades - with grade E packaging phased out by 2030. This grading system will also serve as the foundation for eco-modulation of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) fees, adjusting fees according to product recyclability. While FEVE strongly supports this emphasis upon recyclability, it believes further steps can be taken. Closed-loop recycling, an essential component of a functional Circular Economy, must be recognized as a crucial measure to ensure packaging in the market is continuously made from recycled materials instead of virgin resources. This approach would guarantee the highest recycled content in available packaging. Furthermore, it is important to acknowledge that not all packaging materials exhibit equal recyclability. New regulations should acknowledge the accomplishments of such 'permanent materials' as glass to encourage waste reduction that promotes high-quality closed-loop recycling. waste reduction targets - a high priority to ensure a level-playing field and equal commitment to all materials.

NOT ALL PACKAGING MATERIALS ARE CREATED EQUAL

Glass, alongside steel and aluminium, qualifies as a permanent material that can undergo endless recycling within a closed loop, essentially retaining its intrinsic characteristics throughout the process. Furthermore, glass exhibits virtual inertness, which ensures its suitability as a food-safe packaging material regardless of its previous contents. These exceptional attributes enable glass to seamlessly integrate into a closed-loop recycling system. This guarantees its sustained quality and functionality in subsequent cycles.

BOOSTING COLLECTION

Close the Glass Loop strives to bring together the entire value chain to accomplish a target collection rate of 90 percent for glass packaging by 2030 - an objective that aligns with EU circularity and climate neutral-

ity commitments, and so necessitates increased and improved collection efforts to facilitate glass recycling. To support the packaging recyclability requirements outlined in the PPWR it's crucial that measures stimulating investments in collection, sorting and recycling infrastructure be implemented Europewide. Here the manner in which packaging is collected directly impacts the quantity and quality of recyclable materials obtained. As such, separate collection and sorting procedures come as fundamental prerequisites for ensuring high-quality recycling processes as well as adherence to the recyclability criteria.

ACCELERATING THE TRANSITION TO A TRULY CIRCULAR ECONOMY FOR PACKAGING

Mindful of the above, FEVE deems it opportune for policymakers to:

- Incorporate closed-loop recycling into the A-E recyclability performance grades -specifically as A and B grades- in order to increase the presence of recycled packaging in the market. This, in turn, should lead to reduced Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) fees - serving as an incentive for progress.
- Exhibit greater ambition regarding the definition of closed-loop recycling, high-quality recycling and scaled-up recycling. This includes advancing the timeline for recyclability criteria to 2030 rather than to 2035.
- Ensure that packaging is collected, sorted, and recycled to a significant scale in Member States that represent at least 90 percent of the EU population - thereby surpassing the current proposal of 75 percent.
- Recognize the existence of Permanent Materials that retain their intrinsic properties to facilitate high-quality recycling within closed-loop systems. This recognition would contribute to minimising the use of virgin raw materials.
- Promote separate collecting by establishing a mandatory recycling rate of 90 percent for all packaging materials.

As European legislation imposes increasingly stringent requirements upon recycling and sustainability data, brands and retailers must guarantee the genuine recyclability of their products and effectively communicate as much. Today PPWR proposals present an untapped opportunity to prioritise recyclability. It's essential that EU policymakers demonstrate courage in defining recycling for the packaging that we rely upon daily - an approach that can transform the PPWR into a catalyst to encourage producers and the entire value chain to enhance the collection and recycling of glass, moving closer to the 90 percent collection target by 2030 while reducing packaging waste within the EU. Given the urgency of the matter, there is no time to waste.

FEVE
The European Container Glass Federation

FEVE

Avenue Louise 89, Bte 4
B-1050 Brussels - Belgium
Tel.: +32-2-536-0080
Fax: +32-2-539-3752
E-mail: secretariat@feve.org
www.feve.org

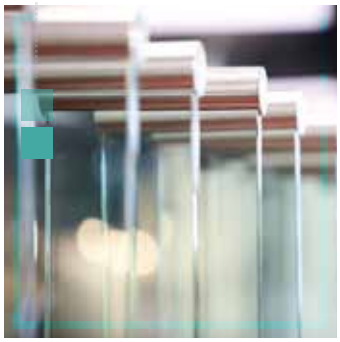
glasspex
GLASS PRODUCTION TECHNOLOGIES & PROCESSES
INDIA

glasspro
FLATGLASS PROCESSING, PRODUCTS & ACCESSORIES
INDIA

14-16 SEPTEMBER 2023 | Hall 2, Bombay Exhibition Center, Mumbai, India

DISCOVER THE NEXT BIG THING IN GLASS

PRODUCTION & INNOVATION



VISITOR REGISTRATION NOW OPEN

SCAN TO REGISTER

To Know More Contact:

Mr. Vivek Bohra

Project Head | Mob.: +91 9654393213 | Email: BohraV@md-india.com

www.glasspex.com | **www.glassproindia.com**

Powered by
glasstec
INTERNATIONAL TRADE FAIR FOR GLASS PRODUCTION • PROCESSING • PRODUCTS

Supported by
AIGMF
THE ALL INDIA GLASS MANUFACTURERS' FEDERATION
www.aigmf.com
VDMA
Glass Technology

Concurrent event
fenestrationpro
DOORS, WINDOWS & FAÇADE
INDIA

GLASS BULLETIN
The Premier Journal Of India For Global Glass Industry

Messe Düsseldorf India