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European Directive on Packaging and Packaging Waste

The European Parliament and Council adopted Directive 94/62/EC on packaging and packaging waste in 1994¹. Since then, it has been updated several times. The latest update was in 2018 with the amending Directive 2018/582/EC². The aim is to prevent packaging waste and promote reuse, recycling and other forms of recovery of packaging waste.

- **Avoiding packaging waste**
- **Increasing recycling rates by 2030 and 2040**
- **Introduction of recycling systems**
- **Extended producer responsibility**

EU Packaging and Packaging Waste Directive 94/62/EC

The EU Packaging Directive 94/62/EC sets out the European Union's rules for the management of packaging and packaging waste. It requires EU countries to adopt measures to reduce the amount of packaging waste and its impact on the environment.

The objectives of the Directive are to harmonize national regulations on the management of packaging and packaging waste, and to achieve a high level of

¹ [EU Directive 94/62 on packaging and packaging waste](#)

² [EU Directive 2018/852 of 30 May 2018 amending Directive 94/62/EC on packaging and packaging waste](#)

environmental protection by preventing and reducing the impact of packaging and packaging waste on the environment.

To this end, the directive prescribes measures whereby the prevention of packaging waste has top priority. Other main principles are the reuse of packaging, recycling and other forms of recovery of packaging waste and, as a consequence, a reduction in the final disposal of waste in order to contribute to the transition to a circular economy.

EU Directive 2018/852/EC

This directive amends Directive 94/62/EC and includes updated measures intended to prevent packaging waste and promote the reuse, recycling and other forms of recovery of packaging waste, thus contributing to the transition to a circular economy.

It requires EU countries to take measures to increase the reusable content of packaging, as well as to set up systems to reuse packaging in an environmentally sound manner, without compromising food and consumer safety. This may include deposit systems, targets, economic incentives, minimum percentages of reusable packaging placed on the market for each type of packaging, etc.

Recycling rates

One of the core elements of the directive is the once again increased recycling quotas for packaging waste. For example, EU member states must recycle at least 65 percent of their packaging waste by 2025. This quota will increase to 70 percent by 2030. In addition, there are targets for individual packaging materials.

Recycling targets by material

Material fraction	Recycling rate until 31.12.2025	Recycling rate until 31.12.2030
Plastic	50 %	55 %
Wood	25 %	30 %
Ferrous metal	70 %	80 %
Aluminium	50 %	60 %
Glass	70 %	75 %
Paper and cardboard	75 %	85 %

Recovery systems

EU member states to introduce recovery systems to enable the return as well as collection of used packaging and/or packaging waste and the reuse or recovery, including recycling, of packaging and/or packaging waste.

Extended producer responsibility

Furthermore, the EU Packaging Directive specifies in a binding manner that the extended producer responsibility set out in the Waste Directive 2008/98/EC³ must also be applied to producers of packaging. EU member states must set up systems to ensure that product manufacturers bear the financial or organizational responsibility for managing the waste phase of the product life cycle. This is to include incentives for packaging that is designed, manufactured and marketed in a way that enables high-quality recycling to minimize environmental impact.

Note

The content of this article has been carefully researched and compiled, but does not replace legal advice in individual cases and the reading of the respective legal texts. No responsibility is taken for the correctness and completeness of the information provided, nor for any changes made in the meantime.

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³ [EU Waste Directive 2008/98/EC](#)