

Meeting Summary: Environment Council - AOB: Addressing implementation challenges of the packaging and packaging waste Regulation (25 June 2026)

Live Coverage

Single Market, Products & Consumers

Environment & Sustainability

Description

Key takeaways:

- The debate focused on the implementation of the Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation (PPWR) ahead of its application on 12 August.
- While Member States broadly supported the Regulation's objectives, many expressed concerns that the absence of key delegated and implementing acts, together with insufficient guidance on issues such as labelling, PFAS restrictions and Annex V, was creating legal uncertainty for businesses, particularly SMEs, and increasing the risk of divergent national implementation, fragmentation of the single market and higher compliance costs. They therefore urged the Commission to provide a clear implementation timeline, accelerate the adoption of secondary legislation and ensure a harmonised interpretation of the rules.
- In response, the Commission acknowledged these concerns, reaffirmed its commitment to a timely and transparent implementation process, and highlighted its ongoing work through guidance, FAQs, expert groups and forthcoming implementing measures.

Cyprus Presidency

- This AOB item was requested by Czechia and Romania, supported by Bulgaria, Italy, Latvia, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia, regarding the implementation of the Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation (PPWR).

Czechia

- They supported the prevention of the creation of packaging waste and the harmonisation of the single market;
- They raised the importance of the implementation of this regulation, which could have an impact on EU's competitiveness;
- The Regulation would become applicable from 12 August this year

- However, there were not harmonised rules yet, neither interpretation;
- As such, economic operators must make crucial decisions without sufficient legal certainty;
- This fear had been shared by representatives of EU companies;
- There were a lack of certainty and a growth of costs as regards marking, packaging and rules for the processing of PFAS;
- Czechia, with the other six countries, referred to Annex 5 of the Regulation, that was unclear in terms of interpretation
- This increased the risk of MS adopting different approaches
- This would risk disrupting the internal market;
- Czechia called for a single interpretation and fast completion of implementing rules.

Bulgaria

- Bulgaria was concerned that, despite the Commission's effort to support the implementation of the PPWR, the current level of clarity remained insufficient;
- With the application date approaching in August, a number of essential requirements, including packaging labelling and PFAS tests, remained insufficiently specified
- This created significant legal and investment uncertainty, especially for SMES;
- In this regard, they believed that the Commission should urgently provide a clear and consolidated timeline for the preparation and adoption of all delegated and implementing acts;
- Timely clarification of secondary legislation and a harmonised approach to implementation were key for the legally sound and technically feasible implementation of the regulation, as well as for the successful achievement of its environmental objectives.

Finland

- They broadly aligned with the views set out in this non-paper
- It was highly important that economic operators knew in good time which obligations applied to them;

- To ensure consistent implementation across all EU MS, guidance from the Commission and joint discussions with the MS were required;
- They also raised concerns about the reuse targets of beverage packaging in sparsely populated countries with very well-functioning deposit and return systems
- Finland had this system in place since the 1950s: it was working really well. They had a reuse rate of over 95%;
- These MS should have the possibility to be exempt from reuse targets for beverage packaging, provided that they have very well-functioning separate collection systems, with a recycling rate of over 90%.

Italy

- Italy was worried as well by the entry into force of the Regulation
- There were too many issues pending;
- They raised the need for basic acts
- The lack of them was creating confusion for businesses, SMEs and all economic operators;
- There was a real risk of fragmentation of the internal market, as rules applied differently across MS;
- There was also a risk of increased costs without any real environmental benefits;
- Italy needed more clarity, less complexity and a clear schedule for implementing acts, focusing first on reuse, labelling, EPR systems and the management of critical substances;
- Italy wanted a pragmatic approach with clear applicable rules.

Croatia

- Croatia supported the objectives of the PPWR;
- It was essential to ensure that implementation of the new rules was timely, legally certain and feasible;
- They advocated for a uniform understanding and application of obligations
- Only through timely clarification and a coordinated approach to implementation could the objectives of the regulation be achieved.

Denmark

- Denmark understood and shared the concerns raised by the MS;
- Getting the implementation of this Regulation right was important, both to make life easier for companies operating across Europe, but also to deliver the environmental and climate benefits for which the Regulation was designed in the first place.

Germany

- Authorities and economic actors were preparing for the introduction of the new measures
- They raised the need to ensure a good transition: to this end, open questions had to be clarified;
- They thanked the Commission for the guidelines presented and the FAQ;
- They wanted further clarification in the FAQ, as there were a number of contradictions;
- The secondary legal acts foreseen in the Regulation also had to be brought forward in a timely manner.

Romania

- Romania appreciated the Commission's hard work in preparing guidance, sharing frequently asked questions and reaching out to stakeholders;
- However, they still wanted more clarity, since there was no complete legal certainty for companies;
- They raised the need of a system that worked in a more harmonised way
- As they stood, the rules were too complex and costly, especially for small and medium businesses;
- MS were also still waiting for key secondary legislation
- In the absence of that, companies could not plan ahead;
- Different national rules would create a fragmented market.

Belgium

- Belgium agreed with the main conclusions of the other MS;

- Secondary legislation was key to ensuring legal certainty and effective implementation of the Regulation.

Austria

- Austria agreed as regards the limitations mentioned under Annex 5;
- They raised the need to avoid making too many changes;
- They considered that accountability should be increased when it came to online trade;
- Provisions on labelling should be more flexible.

France

- France fully supported the PPWR and its implementation in the timeframe proposed by the Commission
- Packaging accounted for about 40% of EU plastic waste;
- Delaying actions would weaken environmental ambition and industrial investments;
- It was time to implement this regulation in a coordinated manner;
- The adoption of any measures facilitating implementation by economic operators would be a step in the right direction.

Slovakia

- Slovakia fully supported the statement delivered by Czechia;
- They saw a particular need for clarification of the term “necessity to facilitate handling”, including in relation to the use of shrink wrap.

Jessika Roswall, Commissioner for Environment, Water Resilience and a Competitive Circular Economy, European Commission

- The rules would enter into force on 12 August; some would apply from 2030;
- The Council had called to create a true single market and make a stronger use of regulations instead of directives
- This was what the PPWR was about;
- The new rules would replace 27 national packaging laws and promote a single market for packaging;

- This could foster much-needed investments in the packaging and recycling sector, and support the circular economy, increasing it at-scale;
- This was a big transformation for MS and THE industry
- A lot of questions had to be asked, clarifications had to be provided, and unforeseen issues had to be solved;
- The Commission was working hand-in-hand with stakeholders to provide these clarifications;
- She agreed with the need for clarity about practical and consistent implementation to avoid unnecessary fragmentation of the single market;
- Based on many trips across Europe, and hundreds of stakeholders' meetings, in March 2026, the Commission provided a broad set of clarifications to address these needs
- This process was continuing;
- On 1st July, the Commission would hold a high-level meeting of the Waste Expert Group to go through any remaining and outstanding issues;
- Going forward, the Commission commits to regularly updated frequently asked questions to give more clarity and involve the industry, NGOs and MS in the implementation via consultation, expert groups and bilateral meetings;
- Supplement recommendations about the practical aspect related to PFAS restriction in food contact packaging would also give further clarifications;
- This matter was a complex one, causing concerns;
- PFAS rules were added by the co-legislators when the regulation was negotiated;
- For PFAS, the guidance continued to hold: she counted on MS to follow the guidance consistently to ensure a harmonised enforcement in the EU;
- The Commission remained fully committed to a transparent and timely adoption of the implementing measures
- MS and the Parliament had given the Commission a clear timeline and logical sequencing of the implementation measures;
- She stressed that national authorities had a key role to play

- Some of the measures, such as derogations from reuse targets, could only be triggered by national authorities;
- She encouraged MS national experts to get back to the Commission on this matter;
- MS involvement and continued engagement were essential to ensure a harmonised, clear and pragmatic application of the PPWR.

Cyprus Presidency

- The council had taken note of the information provided by Czechia and the interventions by the Commission and delegations.