

PRESS RELEASE

Promoting resource and climate protection: EU needs economic incentives and binding targets for reusable packaging

Organisers of the seventh European REUSE Conference in Brussels call for the strengthening and expansion of reuse systems in Europe - Reuse must play a decisive role in the European Plastics Strategy - Economic incentives to boost reusable packaging are required - Transparent information is necessary so that consumers can distinguish between disposable and reusable packaging - "European Refillable Award" for dairy producer Brodowin, "European Reusable Award" for FC Bayern Munich

Brussels/ Berlin, 24/9/2019: As part of its Plastics Strategy, the European Commission is committed to curbing plastic waste and littering as well as promoting a real circular economy. At the REUSE Conference in Brussels, the organisers Environmental Action Germany (DUH), the European Association of Beverage Wholesalers (CEGROBB), Private Breweries Germany and ReLoop platform called upon the European Commission to promote reuse systems as a crucial component of a strategy against plastic waste. Critical measures to meet this objective include the implementation of binding reuse targets, economic incentives for the use of reusable packaging and transparent labelling of disposable and reusable packaging.

"The global plastics production has increased 20-fold since the 1960s. 95 percent of plastic packaging in Europe is lost after one single use because it is incinerated, landfilled or littered in the environment. If we care about environmental, resource and climate protection, we need a transition from a linear economy to a real circular economy. With reuse systems, we can achieve exactly that by reusing packaging and not always remanufacturing it. For beverage packaging, and crates for meat, fruit and vegetables, efficient reusable alternatives are already on the market, but they need much more support from the EU," said Michel Haelterman, President of the European Association of Beverage Wholesalers (CEGROBB), when he opened the REUSE conference.

"There is an urgent need for binding reuse targets for the entire EU. In Germany, there is already a reuse quota of 70 percent for beverage packaging for the whole beverage industry. The calculation of the market share of refillables simply relies on reported market data. Better than an overall quota, however, would be a target that must be met by each individual business in the sector. Like that, no company could shift the responsibility for quota achievement onto others. Such reuse targets comply with EU legislation and can be implemented immediately by the member states. National governments that do not want to wait for Brussels should immediately introduce binding reuse targets," said Roland Demleitner, Managing Director of Private Breweries Germany.

"At EU level, reusable packaging must be incentivised. As long as it is more attractive to harm our environment by relying on disposable packaging or waste incineration, most companies lack the motivation to become more sustainable. The EU should oblige member states to promote reuse systems. National governments could for example make reusable packaging more economically attractive through tax reliefs. The EU Commission should provide clear guidelines with regard to the effectiveness of economic instruments. Equally, an EU plastic tax could boost the use of

reusable packaging," said Barbara Metz, Deputy Executive Director of Environmental Action Germany (DUH).

"All across the EU, consumers should be enabled to make purchasing decisions in favour of environmentally-friendly reusable packaging. Therefore, we need transparent consumer information. Packaging should be clearly labelled as reusable or disposable. This particularly applies to beverage packaging, because both reusable and non-reusable glass and plastic bottles are available and, in the case of deposit systems, both can be returned to the retailer. In addition, EU-wide uniform labelling would create the same rules for all businesses in the EU single market. Thus, it would facilitate a broad implementation of reuse systems", said Reloop's Managing Director, Clarissa Morawski.

Moreover, the introduction of deposit systems for single-use beverage containers could also facilitate the introduction of refillable bottles, Morawski added. The development of take-back infrastructures for single-use bottles allows for a simple return of returnable bottles as well. Therefore, deposit systems for single-use plastic bottles and beverage cans should be introduced in the entire EU.

For the seventh time, Environmental Action Germany, CEGROBB, Private Breweries Germany and Reloop presented the "European Refillable Award". With this prize, the organisations honour best-practice examples that demonstrate how reuse systems can be optimised and strengthened. This year's award went to the German dairy producer Brodowin, which uses eco-friendly refillable bottles for the regional distribution of organic fresh milk. By doing so, Brodowin conserves valuable resources, reduces waste and contributes to climate protection.

For the first time, the "Reusable Award" was presented for particularly eco-friendly packaging systems aside from the classic beverage packaging in the retail sector. The first winner of the "Reusable Award" is Bayern Munich, one of the world's most popular football clubs. At their home matches in the Allianz Arena, drinks are served in reusable cups. After each game, the used cups are washed close to Munich. The use of reusable cups saves 1.9 million single-use plastic cups per season. The examples from FC of Bayern Munich and the Brodowin are unique success stories and should serve as a model throughout Europe.

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