

JOINT PRESS RELEASE

European Circular Economy Package: Waste prevention targets and separate reuse quotas necessary

Organisers of the sixth European ReUse-Conference in Brussels call for the intensification and development of reuse systems in Europe – Financial incentives to promote reuse and transparent consumer information are required – “European Refillable Award“ being given to Logipack Pool GmbH

Berlin, 23/3/2017: The European Commission is currently working on the Circular Economy Package to redesign the European waste policy. At the ReUse-Conference, held today in Brussels, the conference organisers Environmental Action Germany (Deutsche Umwelthilfe - DUH), the European Association of Beverage Wholesalers (CEGROBB), the Association of Small and Independent Breweries in Europe (S.I.B.) and the ReLoop Platform are in favour of considering reusable systems to a far greater extent than before in the current EU Circular Economy Package. For this purpose, compulsory targets need to be established to prevent waste, promote reusable packaging and reduce resource consumption.

Reuse systems play a particularly important role in implementing the five-stage European waste hierarchy. In a decreasing sequence of priority, non-avoidable waste should be reused, recycled, recovered or disposed of. Reusable packaging ideally corresponds to this targeting and it outperforms recycling. As compared to continually manufacturing new products, the reuse of packaging and products not only saves resources, avoids waste and protects the climate, but it is also an engine that creates green employment in the region.

In the view of DUH General Manager Jürgen Resch, clear targets for a reduction in municipal waste generation are inevitable as a base to take effective measures for waste prevention and promoting reuse. *“A change in thinking must take place in Europe. Waste should not be accepted as a given, but should rather be actively avoided. Waste prevention quotas strengthen measures for reuse and contribute to the development of reuse systems. Refilling reusable bottles and the transport of fruits and vegetables in reusable crates would take a leap forward.”* For residual waste, there should be a target of a maximum of 150 kg in 2025 and 130 kg in 2030 per year and resident. For packaging waste, the target should be a maximum of 120 kg in 2025 and 90 kg in 2030 per year and resident. On average, every European currently contributes about 260 kg of residual waste and about 160 kg packaging waste.

The president of CEGROBB, Günther Guder, points out the fact that there should be no joint target for reuse and recycling, as has been provided so far in the draft of the Circular Economy Package proposed by the EU Commission. *“On the one hand, a joint quota would lead to less recycling, because already existing reuse systems would be counted towards attainment of the targets; on the other hand, there would hardly be an incentive for intensifying reuse. Only by separating the recycling and the reuse quotas can there be an assurance that the waste hierarchy is maintained, reuse encouraged and that business does not focus primarily on recycling.”*

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Reloop Managing Director Clarissa Morawski calls for separate reuse quotas for sales-, transport-, and beverage packaging. *“The European Parliament has expressed the desire for reuse quotas for packaging of between 5 and 10 percent. That is an important step in the right direction. However, these goals are non-binding. In addition to binding targets, we need an even clearer delimitation between the various reuse systems, such as for example beverage bottles, transport crates or common sales packaging.”* For sales-, transport-, and beverage packaging, the compulsory portion of reusable packaging of the packaging placed on the market should therefore be increased by 10% by 2025 and by a further 20% by 2030 in comparison to the status of 2018.

“On the European level, reusable packaging must be promoted by economic incentives”, says Jürgen Resch. “As long as it is cheaper to do what is environmentally incorrect and go with disposable products or waste incineration, there is no incentive for most companies to do business sustainably. Tax advantages for reusable packaging would be one way to clearly increase economic attraction. The EU Commission should provide clear handling recommendations for this purpose.”

In order for consumers to make purchasing decisions in favour of environmentally friendly reusable packaging, there should be a clear labelling on the product, whether it is reusable or single-use only. This is necessary in particular for beverage packaging, because there are reusable as well as disposable bottles of glass and plastic and, in the case of a deposit system, both are returned at retail level.

The introduction of a deposit system for single-use packaging can also simplify the introduction of reusable bottles. The development of take back systems for disposables also provides the infrastructure for reusables. Moreover, deposit systems are particularly well suited to stop the littering of the environment with plastic bottles and to enable closed-loop material cycles. For this reason, Europe-wide deposit systems should be introduced for disposable plastic bottles and beverage cans.

For the sixth time, DUH, CEGROBB, S.I.B. and Reloop will honour pioneering examples of optimising and intensifying reuse systems with the European Refillable Award. The award is being given this year to the Logipack Pool GmbH, for its neutrally-designed multipack crates, standardized trays for disposable bottles, uniform reusable barrels, and for six sorting centres in Germany that greatly reduce transport distances for reusable bottles. As a result, valuable resources are protected and climate change mitigated. The example of Logipack Pool GmbH is a unique success story and should be an example throughout Europe.

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