

EU takes step towards recycled packaging

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Each person in the EU throws away 190 kilograms (420 pounds) of packaging waste per year, on average.

An EU push towards bloc-wide rules on recyclable packaging to cut plastic and other waste got initial support in the European Parliament on Tuesday.

The nod by the legislature's environment committee paves the way for a parliamentary vote in November to set the lawmakers' negotiating stance with European Union member countries.

The goal is to reduce the 190 kilograms (420 pounds) of [packaging](#) waste each European throws away annually, on average—a mountain of plastic, polystyrene, aluminum, paper and cardboard that has grown by more than 30 kilograms per person over a decade, according to EU statistics office Eurostat.

But companies involved in making packaging—an industry worth more than 355 billion euros (\$378 billion) in the bloc—as well as fast-food groups reliant on them warn the changes could require higher water and energy inputs.

Under the proposed legislation from the European Commission, packaging should be minimized, and would have to be either recyclable or reusable, with specific targets set for 2030 and 2040.

EU [lawmakers](#) say they want to see consumers no longer finding ultra-thin [plastic](#) bags in supermarkets and being encouraged to take their own receptacles to fast-food outlets and takeaway coffee places.

They and the commission also want to see a phase-out of hazardous chemicals used in packaging.

"There can be no effective recycling or reuse policy without safe packaging, which is why the ban on intentionally added harmful chemicals is a major victory for the health of European consumers," the lead lawmaker on the issue in the parliament, Frederique Ries, said.

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