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## EUROPEAN AGENDA

### EU FOOD SAFETY OMNIBUS DELAYED AS PARLIAMENT SCHEDULES KEY VOTES ON GENOMIC TECHNIQUES

Discussions around the European Union's food and feed safety omnibus regulation are facing a short delay, as lawmakers adjust their legislative calendar to accommodate parallel debates on sensitive files. The presentation of the European Parliament's draft report, initially planned for mid-June, will now take place on July 6 during a joint meeting of the Environment (ENVI) and Agriculture (AGRI) committees. The postponement was confirmed by MEP Herbert Dorfmann, co-rapporteur on the file, who explained that the timeline shift reflects scheduling constraints and the overlap with other major legislative priorities. In particular, the delay is closely linked to developments surrounding the regulation on new genomic techniques (NGTs), another highly debated dossier within the Parliament.

Originally expected earlier, the vote on NGT legislation has now been rescheduled for June 15 within the ENVI committee. This adjustment follows a late intervention by left-wing Members of the European Parliament seeking to reopen discussions after a prior inter-institutional agreement. The sequencing of these debates has made it difficult to handle both files simultaneously, especially given the complexity and political sensitivity attached to each.

Beyond scheduling considerations, the omnibus regulation itself represents a significant effort to simplify and streamline a wide array of EU food safety rules. The proposal covers multiple areas, including pesticides, biocides, feed additives, hygiene requirements, and official controls, with the overarching objective of reducing administrative burdens for businesses and authorities alike.

One of the most contentious aspects under discussion is the proposed shift in pesticide approval rules. The draft suggests moving away from the current system of fixed renewal periods—typically between 10 and 15 years—toward open-ended approvals for most substances, excluding the most hazardous ones. This potential change has sparked debate among policymakers and stakeholders, reflecting broader tensions between regulatory simplification and environmental and health safeguards.

Against this backdrop, the coming weeks will be decisive for both files. The mid-June vote on NGTs and the early July presentation of the omnibus report are expected to shape the direction of EU policy on food safety, innovation, and regulatory efficiency, highlighting the delicate balance between simplification, scientific progress, and public trust. [Read more](#)

SOURCE: POLITICO PRO 21/05/2026

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### EUROPEAN PAPER-BASED PACKAGING CUTS CARBON FOOTPRINT ACROSS THE BOARD

Europe's paper-based packaging sector is making steady progress in reducing its carbon footprint, with new studies highlighting significant improvements across both carton packaging and paper sacks between 2021 and 2024.

According to the 2025 Carbon Footprint of Carton Packaging Study conducted by the Swedish research institute RISE and reviewed by Germany's ifeu institute, the European carton and folding carton industry has reduced its fossil CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 8% since 2021. The annual fossil carbon footprint fell from 929 kg CO<sub>2</sub>e to 854 kg CO<sub>2</sub>e per tonne on a cradle-to-gate basis. The findings reinforce carton packaging's positioning as a low-carbon alternative for brands seeking to move away from fossil-based materials.

The study draws on data from 70 production sites, representing around 60% of European carton production and 16% of folding carton output. It provides a detailed snapshot of the sector's sustainability performance and reflects ongoing efforts to transition toward a bio-based circular economy.

Similar progress is being observed in the paper sack segment. A separate study conducted by RISE on behalf of the European Paper Sack Research Group (a collaboration between EUROSAC and CEPI Eurokraft) shows that the carbon footprint per paper sack decreased by 9% over the same period. In addition, the fossil carbon footprint per tonne of sack kraft paper declined by 5%.

A key driver behind these improvements has been the increased use of renewable energy in both sack kraft paper production and paper sack manufacturing. This shift highlights the sector's broader efforts to decarbonize its operations while maintaining performance and scalability.

Taken together, the findings from both studies point to a consistent trend across the paper-based packaging value chain. Whether in cartons or sacks, manufacturers are reducing reliance on fossil inputs and improving energy efficiency, strengthening the role of fiber-based packaging as a lower-carbon solution within Europe's packaging landscape. [Read more](#) and [Read More](#).

*SOURCES: PAPERFIRST 16/04/2026 AND EUWID PAPIER UND ZELLSTOFF 06/05/2026*

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## CIRCULAR ECONOMY

### EU WASTE SHIPMENT REGULATION INTRODUCES DIGITAL TRACKING PLATFORM

The European Union has launched a new digital system to modernize and strengthen the monitoring of waste shipments across its territory. Adopted in April 2024 and recently amended, the regulation introduces the Digital Waste Shipment System (DIWASS), which came into force on May 21.

The new platform is designed to progressively replace paper-based procedures with real-time electronic processing of notifications and authorizations. Under the updated rules, all waste shipments subject to prior consent procedures—including hazardous waste and mixed municipal waste—must now be processed through DIWASS, marking a significant shift toward fully digital compliance.

Industry stakeholders had expressed concerns ahead of the rollout. Several industrial federations called for a one-year transition period and requested leniency in enforcement during the initial phase of implementation. These proposals were ultimately not adopted, meaning companies are required to comply with the system immediately despite potential operational challenges.

Beyond digitalization, the regulation also tightens controls on the export of plastic waste. As of May 21, any export of plastic waste to countries outside the European Union requires prior authorization. Further restrictions are already scheduled, with a complete ban on exports of plastic waste to non-OECD countries set to take effect on November 21, 2026.

These measures reflect the EU's broader ambition to enhance traceability, reduce environmental risks, and ensure stricter oversight of waste flows, both within Europe and internationally. [Read more](#).

*SOURCE: EU COMMISSION NEWSLETTER 21/05/2026*

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### EUROPEAN COMMISSION RETHINKS THE ROLE OF ECO-CONTRIBUTIONS IN UPCOMING CIRCULAR ECONOMY REGULATION

The European Commission is reassessing how eco-contributions could be used in its forthcoming circular economy regulation, expected to be presented in September. Speaking at the Circular Economy Forum in Paris on May 13, Aurel Ciobanu-Dordea, Director for Circular Economy at the European Commission's Directorate-General for Environment, outlined ongoing reflections aimed at expanding their role.

Currently, eco-contributions are primarily used to finance end-of-life product management, including collection, sorting, and recycling operations. However, the Commission is now considering broadening the scope of their use by introducing additional mandatory allocation targets. The objective is to make these financial contributions a more versatile tool in supporting the transition to a circular economy.

One of the key ideas under discussion is to use eco-contributions as a way to influence the behavior of economic operators, particularly in their choice of materials. By doing so, they could help address the price gap between virgin raw materials and recycled alternatives, thereby encouraging the use of secondary materials.

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The Commission is also exploring how eco-contributions could better reflect product design choices. In particular, future rules may allow schemes to differentiate more clearly between products designed for durability and those with shorter lifespans, reinforcing incentives for longer-lasting and more sustainable products.

These reflections highlight a shift toward using eco-contributions not only as a financing mechanism for waste management, but also as a strategic economic lever to drive more sustainable production and consumption patterns across the European Union. [Read more.](#)

SOURCE: CONTEXTE 21/05/2026

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## CLIMATE POLICY

### EXTRACTIVE AND METALS INDUSTRIES PUSH FOR STRATEGIC STATUS IN EU PERMITTING RULES

Europe's extractive and metallurgical industries are calling for clearer recognition of their strategic importance as discussions continue סביב the EU's upcoming Industrial Acceleration Act (IAA). In a note published on May 21, the so-called "informal permitting coalition"—which includes Euromines, European Metals, and representatives from the oil and gas sectors—welcomed the Commission's intention to streamline permitting processes, but argued that the proposal does not go far enough. While the current draft of the IAA aims to accelerate project approvals in support of decarbonization and resilience objectives, it does not include a precise or exhaustive list of sectors or projects considered "strategic." The coalition is urging the Commission to establish a clear and lasting definition to ensure that all relevant industrial activities, including foundational sectors, are explicitly covered.

According to the group, the criteria linked to decarbonization and resource efficiency risk unintentionally excluding essential industrial activities. It argues that these conditions should be reworded to avoid creating gaps that could undermine Europe's industrial base.

The coalition is also advocating for stronger alignment between the IAA and existing sector-specific permitting frameworks, emphasizing the need for consistency across EU legislation. Beyond procedural timelines, it promotes a broader concept of "permitability," which goes further than simply speeding up administrative steps. This approach considers whether a project is genuinely able to obtain, maintain, and implement its permits throughout its lifecycle.

Overall, the position reflects a push by industry actors to ensure that regulatory reform not only accelerates permitting processes but also secures a stable and inclusive framework that supports long-term industrial activity in Europe. [Read more.](#)

SOURCE: CONTEXTE 21/05/2026

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### PLASTICS EUROPE WARNS OF SLOWDOWN IN CIRCULAR PLASTICS GROWTH

The growth of circular plastics production in Europe is showing signs of slowing, according to a report published on May 19 by Plastics Europe. While both production and market demand for circular plastics—including recycled (mechanically and chemically) and bio-based materials—have continued to rise since 2022, the pace of growth has dropped sharply.

The report indicates that annual growth in circular plastics production has fallen from 13.6% between 2018 and 2022 to just 1.2% over the 2022–2024 period. This slowdown comes at a time when global production of these materials is expanding at a faster rate, raising concerns about Europe's competitiveness in the sector.

Industry leaders attribute this trend to a combination of structural challenges. Plastics Europe President Rob Ingram highlights high energy and raw material prices, the cost of emissions, and what he describes as a lack of a level playing field in international trade as key factors weighing on growth.

Despite the slowdown in production growth, recycling rates continue to improve, reaching 29.6% in 2024. However, a significant share of collected plastic waste still does not re-enter the material cycle. According to the report, around 70% of plastic waste is either incinerated (48.9%) or sent to landfill (21.5%), underlining persistent gaps in Europe's waste management system.

The industry is calling for stronger policy support to accelerate the transition toward a circular plastics economy. Virginia Janssens, Managing Director of Plastics Europe, stresses that this transition should be treated not only as an environmental priority but also as an industrial one. The sector is now looking ahead to the European Commission's forthcoming circular economy regulation, expected after the summer, as a key opportunity to address current barriers and stimulate further investment and growth. [Read more.](#)

SOURCE: CONTEXTE 20/05/2026

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