
PPWR

LEAKED COMMISSION NOTICE ON PPWR PROVISIONS

A draft guidance document on the interpretation of the Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation (PPWR) is currently circulating. The Regulation entered into force on 11 February 2025 and will apply from 12 August 2026.

The draft clarifies the scope of “packaging” and highlights key distinctions between “manufacturer” and “producer,” including provisions to identify producers of transport packaging. It also confirms that branches cannot qualify as importers under the PPWR.

The guidance confirms that PFAS limits for food-contact packaging apply without a transitional period: packaging placed on the market after 12 August 2026 must comply, while existing products may remain available. Article 7(5) further provides automatic exemptions from recycled content targets for certain food-contact packaging and for plastic components below 5% of total packaging weight.

All packaging must be recyclable from 12 August 2026, with additional design-for-recycling rules applying from 2030 or 24 months after the adoption of delegated acts expected by 2028.

On packaging minimisation, the Commission will ask CEN to update the existing standard by February 2027. The draft also links minimisation obligations to the empty space ratio requirement for grouped, transport, and e-commerce packaging, with a calculation methodology to be set by implementing act by February 2028.

The guidance outlines reuse targets, including 40% by 2030 and 70% by 2040 for transport and sales packaging, and 10% reusable beverage packaging in HORECA by 2030, subject to limited national exemptions. Member States retain some flexibility to introduce higher recycling or reuse requirements within harmonised EU rules.

It further clarifies the role of waste management operators in supporting reporting obligations and explains the interaction between the PPWR and the Single-Use Plastics Directive, allowing certain national packaging bans to remain in place until 1 January 2030.

Finally, the draft confirms that Member States must achieve 90% separate collection of single-use plastic bottles and metal containers by 1 January 2029, typically through deposit return systems.

SOURCE: OPP 4/02/2026

LABELLING REQUIREMENTS IN THE EU: A STEP TOWARDS HARMONISATION

The IMCO Committee [held](#) an exchange of views on “Labelling requirements: How to overcome fragmentation of the Single Market to the benefit of consumers” to examine the impact of fragmented national rules on product labelling, packaging and recycling.

Participants highlighted the significant costs for businesses and impact on cross-border trade, as well as the implications for consumer information in the Single Market.

The Commission echoed these concerns, identifying regulatory fragmentation as a key source of market disruption in its 2025 Single Market Strategy and pointing to upcoming EU initiatives on Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation and the revision of textile labelling rules to balance clear consumer information with lower regulatory burdens.

Industry representatives warned of a costly “labelling maze” driven by unilateral national measures, while civil society and MEPs called for EU-level harmonisation with mandatory, simple and accessible on-product information, cautioning against overreliance on digital labels such as QR codes.

SOURCE: OPP 4/02/2026



CIRCULAR ECONOMY

EU UNLIKELY TO SECURE NEEDED CRITICAL RAW MATERIALS BY 2030, AUDITORS WARN

The European Court of Auditors' latest special report [warns](#) that the EU is not on track to secure sufficient supplies of critical raw materials for the energy transition by 2030, despite the Critical Raw Materials Act setting a strategic framework.

The auditors find that key pillars of EU policy are underperforming. Import diversification has delivered few tangible results, domestic extraction, processing and recycling remain constrained by financing, permitting and administrative bottlenecks, and circular economy potential is underused. Targets under the Act are non-binding, weakly justified and not clearly linked to energy and industrial objectives. While the EU's new "strategic project" label offers faster permitting and visibility, many projects are at early stages and lack financing or offtake agreements, making it unlikely they will contribute meaningfully by 2030.

To change course, the court urges the Commission to strengthen the data and methodology that underpin raw materials policy, ensure that diversification efforts translate into real supply security, close financing gaps, and make better use of recycling, substitution, and resource efficiency.

SOURCE: OPP 4/02/2026

EUROPEAN RECYCLERS STRONGLY SUPPORT THE CALL FOR A EUROPEAN PREFERENCE THAT PUTS MATERIALS 'MADE IN THE EU' AT THE HEART OF EUROPE'S INDUSTRIAL AND ECONOMIC STRATEGY, WHILE SAFEGUARDING OPEN AND UNHAMPERED MARKETS FOR RECYCLED MATERIALS.

A proactive "Made in Europe" policy is essential to strengthen Europe's industrial base, secure strategic material supplies, and deliver on the EU's target of achieving a 24% Circular Material Use Rate (CMUR) in the EU, as set out in the Clean Industrial Deal (CID).

"All recycled materials produced by European recyclers are already Made in Europe, as they originate from waste collected, sorted, and reprocessed within the EU, said Maria Vera Duran, Policy Director at Recycling Europe. Recognising this reality through a European Preference material is a simple and powerful way to reinforce Europe's industrial resilience."

Alongside many of its Members and Partners who have signed the call, Recycling Europe stresses that a "Made in Europe" preference must be paired with targeted incentives under the upcoming Industrial Accelerator Act, the revision of EU rules on public procurement, and the new Circular Economy Act, to boost the uptake of recycled materials across products and value chains. This approach would secure raw material supply through greater circularity, strengthen European manufacturing and industrial competitiveness, and accelerate decarbonisation, as recycled materials typically have a significantly lower carbon footprint than primary, extracted materials.

Recycling Europe therefore calls on EU policymakers to incentivise the use of recycled materials in products through green public procurement, product design, and upcoming industrial and circular economy legislation, to strengthen the share of "Made in Europe". "Incentives are far more powerful than restrictions with multiple side effects and should go hand in hand with a much-needed simplification of EU rules to boost circular value chains and market access", concluded Vera Duran.



ZERO WASTE EUROPE ISSUES RECOMMENDATIONS ON EPR FOR FOOD PRODUCTS

Zero Waste Europe (ZWE) [has published policy recommendations](#) for an Extended Producer Responsibility mechanism for food products (EPRFP), aimed at enhancing circularity and supporting bioeconomy.

With the EU Circular Economy Act's anticipated changes to the Waste Framework Directive, ZWE sees a unique opportunity to implement EPRFP across the Single Market.

The mechanism could alleviate funding burdens on public authorities by shifting financial responsibility to food producers and retailers.

ZWE therefore calls for comprehensive EPRFP implementation, specific targets for bio-waste in mixed waste, and a robust legal framework.

These recommendations align with prior proposals made in January 2026 in a study co-authored with the Bio-based Industries Consortium.

ZWE's recommendations are available [here](#).

SOURCE: OPP 3/02/2026

INDUSTRIAL AND CLIMATE POLICY

THE COMMISSION IS PREPARING YET ANOTHER PIECE OF LEGISLATION TO SPEED UP THE GRANTING OF PERMITS FOR INDUSTRY, INCLUDING ENERGY-INTENSIVE SECTORS.

Contexte has published a working version of the “industrial acceleration” regulation that the executive plans to present on 29 January; it has also been published by Table Media. Its ambition is to raise the share of manufacturing industry to at least 20% of the EU's gross value added by 2030. One of the keys to achieving this is faster permitting procedures—a recurring issue in Brussels that is already covered by several pieces of legislation, the most recent being the environmental omnibus presented at the end of 2025.

This time, the Commission wants to cover all industrial projects, with a particular focus on decarbonisation projects in energy-intensive industries such as chemicals. These projects are deemed “strategic” and therefore benefit from a presumption of overriding public interest, which entails several fast-track privileges during the permitting application and assessment process.

The executive is repeating this approach by introducing time-limited deadlines and the concept of tacit approval in the absence of a response—two measures that are unpopular with certain Member States, including France.

To designate national industrial “acceleration” zones, capitals will have to “take Natura 2000 sites into account” and provide measures to mitigate environmental impacts. Within these zones, project promoters may benefit from exemptions from required environmental assessments.

SOURCE: CONTEXTE 19/01/2026

SOME CIRCULAR ECONOMY MEASURES IN THE DRAFT REGULATION ON “INDUSTRIAL ACCELERATION,” PENDING FURTHER STEPS

According to a draft of this regulation, which is due to be unveiled on January 29, the Commission wants to encourage Member States to “ensure” that metals (steel, aluminium, copper, black mass) are “first made available to be recovered, recycled or reused within the Union.” This would apply in particular in “industrial acceleration zones,” meaning sites that Member States will be required to designate in order to create industrial clusters.

The executive pledges to monitor markets, prices and export flows and reserves the right to resort to “protective measures” to prevent any shortage of these materials. It also states that it wants to “promote” the use of plastic produced in Europe with a low carbon footprint in the construction sector.



Pointing to the decline in plastic production in Europe, the Commission highlights the need for “significant investments in recycling and the plastics value chain [...] in order to reverse the trend.” For the rest, it refers to forthcoming circular economy legislation, expected in the second half of 2026.

SOURCE: CONTEXTE 20/01/2026

INDUSTRIAL ACCELERATOR ACT TARGETS ENERGY, AUTOS

The European Commission wants to implement its European preference for energy-intensive industries, net-zero technologies and the European automotive industry, according to a draft of the Industrial Accelerator Act obtained by POLITICO.

Production by energy intensive industries has “substantially decreased since 2021” and net-zero technologies face “significant supply chain vulnerabilities,” the Commission says in the 103-page document. It adds that downstream industries are also under pressure, pointing to the auto industry. “The proposal introduces a balanced regulatory approach for the industry to boost its competitiveness and mitigate, as well as prevent, strategic dependencies in key sectors,” the draft states.

The proposal also sets conditionalities for foreign direct investments as “these are necessary to achieve the objective of maximising the benefits of these investments,” the Commission says. EU countries would have to screen foreign investments over €100 million in “emerging key strategic sectors.” Some parts of the document are likely to change before its final presentation by the Commission on Jan. 29. It contains some comments pointing to the need for improvement.

SOURCE: POLITICOPRO 19/01/2026

INNOVATION

PARLIAMENT’S PROPOSALS TO SUPPORT INNOVATIVE COMPANIES

Parliament has developed a series of recommendations for a new legal framework supporting innovative companies in the EU, known as the 28th regime. MEPs want the Commission’s proposal to be submitted in the first quarter of 2026 with fully harmonised rules on a separate corporate form registered with 48 hours and recognised across the EU.

[Press conference streamed live:](#)

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT PRESS ROOM 20/01/2026

REPORTS STUDIES

ECODESIGN FOR SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTS REGULATION (ESPR)

A new development from Joint Research Centre related to Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation (ESPR) has been added: [JRC Technical Report: Method for the integration of the support to ESPR impact assessments within the evaluation process of products, including international trade aspects and impact of measures on third countries.](#)

More information: This report offers best practices and recommendations to support ESPR preparatory studies, highlighting how a coordinated approach can reduce duplication, conserve resources, and maintain high scientific and regulatory standards, thereby accelerating ESPR implementation.

SOURCE: CONTEXTE 13/01/2026
