

EU POLICY

Larissa Copello (Consumption & Production Campaigner) larissa@zerowasteeurope

Just like you cannot run trains on roads, you cannot run reuse in a system designed for single-use.

It's time to #<u>GetBack</u> to the good reuse practices that preceded the boom of single-use packaging, and ensure we use our resources in a sustainable & circular way.









Building on the findings of the **Reuse Vanguard Project (RSVP)** and its summary report, the campaign aims at objectively guide European policy-makers on how to accelerate the transition to effective reuse systems; what is needed in terms of legislative framework; and from where we should start.

\*The Reuse Vanguard Project (RSVP) is a project aiming to put reusable systems in the center of the solutions agenda and create the conditions for these systems to get to scale.







#### **THE FUNNEL APPROACH**



- the main type of material from which the packaging was made of (products with assumed plastic • packaging were mostly prioritised) and
- the potential impact of a given product based on its market share and/or share in total household ۲ expenditures.

From the results of the Part 1 (quantification); together with products were identified to be qualitatively assessed in terms of their possibilities for shifting from disposable to reusable packaging (or packaging free).







## **Quantitative assessment** Packaging consumption: Beverages

In 2019, 14.38 MILLION <u>tons</u> of single-use beverage packaging was consumed in the EU28.

% of beverage products in single-use packaging % of single-use packaging by beverage material



#### **Quantitative assessment** Packaging consumption: Take-away food & beverage

In 2019, more than 17 BILLION <u>units</u> of take-away packaging for warm drinks consumed and disposed, and Over 16 BILLION <u>units</u> of packaging for take-away meals in the EU28 in one year.









### Quantitative assessment Packaging consumption: E-commerce



In 2019, almost 60 BILLION units of packaging, including cardboard, paper and plastic, were used in the postal services sector in the EU28.





## **Quantitative assessment** Packaging materials

Products with **glass** packaging represent by far the **largest weights**. A high weight is also visible for cardboard (corrugated board) **shipping boxes for packages**. Although plastic is the material most used for packaging, their weight is not large due to its lighter composition (same case for aluminum).

The material weights are indicators for the resources needed to produce these materials, and not of the environmental impacts of resource extraction, production, waste management and end-of-life stage of the packaging.







## **Quantitative assessment**

#### Packaging material & associated environmental impacts

The top 5 products as regarding their overall environmental impact are:

- Wine
- Beer
- Soda drinks
- Water (sparkling and still)
- Cardboard packages

Therefore, from the 20 products analysed, the packaging sectors that have the highest environmental impacts overall are: Beverage packaging sector and e-Commerce packaging There is a **strong correlation between the energy used** for producing materials **and the other environmental impacts** for producing those materials.

From the 20 products analysed:

•**Global warming** (CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from the production phase): Beer, wine, soda drinks, and water.

•**Energy use** (from non-renewable sources): <mark>Wine</mark>, <mark>beer</mark>, <mark>soda</mark> drinks, and <mark>water</mark>.

•<u>Land use</u>: Cardboard boxes and envelopes, wine and milk in cardboard boxes.

•<u>Eutrophication</u>: <mark>Beer</mark>, <mark>wine</mark>, <mark>soda drinks</mark>, and <mark>cardboard</mark> boxes.

•<u>Water consumption: <mark>Beer</mark>, wine</u>, <mark>soda drinks</mark>, and <mark>cardboard</mark> boxes.







## **Quantitative assessment** Packaging recycling

Most statistics available on the recyclability of packaging are inaccurate and differ greatly between countries according to their recycling capacity and calculation method.

- The calculation method for recycling differs country by country;
- The most common calculation method is by weight of the separated collected packaging - that is, without excluding losses of sorting and cleaning;
- A separate collection for recycling does not mean that the packaging is going to be effectively recycled in fact, one third of plastic packaging destined for recycling is shipped outside of EU territory to developing countries without recycling capacity;
- Most single-use packaging placed in the EU market is made out of complex materials (e.g. layers, different materials and polymers); which implies the existence of waste management infrastructures equipped to deal with these products, which is not the case in practice;
- Current recycling statistics do not take into account inappropriate disposal and littering.







## **Qualitative assessment** Priority sectors to transition to reuse systems



Start with **beverages**, **take-away food & drinks** and **e-Commerce packaging**: These are market sectors that are already in route to deliver on reuse and offer the biggest potential to increase their reuse rates in the coming years.

Developments in these sectors can create the conditions and infrastructure for other sectors to introduce reusable packaging systems in the future







## Qualitative assessment

#### **Priority sectors to transition to reuse systems: BEVERAGES**









# Qualitative assessment

#### **Priority sectors to transition to reuse systems: TAKEAWAY**

#### Scaling up reuse in this sector by **50% by 2030** delivered combined savings for beverages and food containers of:

27.1 MILLION tonnes less resources used

7. Y BILLION cubic meters of water saved

2.6 MILLION tonnes CO<sub>2</sub> eq

10.4 BILLION EUR in savings











# Qualitative assessment

#### Priority sectors to transition to reuse systems: E-COMMERCE

Scaling up reuse for e-commerce to v50% by 2030 delivered savings of:

250,000 tonnes less resources used

) BILLION cubic meters of water saved

**129,000** tonnes CO<sub>2</sub> eq











# Bônus: ReWine, RePack & ReCircle

Successful packaging reuse systems in Europe











# Reuse infrastructure should be provided as a public good.

Consumer and business owners should find it easier and cheaper to use reusable packaging as opposed to disposable ones. There are already many businesses interested in reuse, but they have to create their own infrastructure, because of lack of support.

















