

BTS Négociation et Digitalisation de la Relation Client

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EU unveils plans to cut Europe's plastic and packaging waste

The EU executive wants to ban mini-shampoo bottles in hotels and the use of throwaway cups in cafes and restaurants, so as to curb Europe's mountains of waste as well as an end to e-commerce firms wrapping small items in huge boxes.

5 The new rules, which will have to be approved by EU member states and the European parliament, are intended to tackle the surge in plastic and other packaging waste. EU officials estimate that 40% of new plastics and 50% of paper are used in packaging.

10 The EU passed a law in 2019 to ban the most common single-use plastic items, such as plastic cutlery, straws, but officials want to go further to tackle soaring amounts of packaging rubbish. The average European is thought to generate 180kg of packaging waste each year, which could rise by 19% by 2030, without action.

15 Under the latest proposals, EU member states would have to reduce packaging waste per person by 15% by 2040 compared with 2018. Officials think this could be achieved by more reuse and refilling, as well as tighter controls on packaging. For example, e-commerce retailers would have to ensure that empty space in a box is a maximum 40% in relation to the product.

Some "avoidable packaging" would face an outright ban, such as mini-shampoo bottles in hotels and single-use packaging for small quantities of fruit and vegetables. Hotels, cafes and restaurants would no longer be able to use throwaway cups and plates for consumers dining in.

20 By 2040, restaurants offering takeaways would be obliged to serve 40% of their meals in reusable or refillable packaging, while most coffees on the go would come in a reusable cup or one supplied by the customer.

25 "The way goods are packaged can and should be done a lot better," said the European Commission executive vice-president Frans Timmermans. "Such overpacking is a nuisance to us and is increasingly damaging to our environment."

"We want more packaging to be reusable, because we cannot recycle ourselves out of a growing stream of waste. And reusable packaging in a well-functioning reuse system is better for the environment than single-use options."

30 The commission also hopes to end confusion about recycling: it proposes harmonised labels, probably pictograms, to make it clear to consumers which bin to use.

Jennifer Rankin, 30 Nov 2022, abridged from
<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/>