

PPWR. STRICTER RULES, TRUSTED LABEL.



WHAT IS THE PPWR, EXACTLY?

2025/40

Regulation (EU) 2025/40. That's the PPWR's full name. In force since 11 February 2025.

12.08.2026

The date the first obligations actually took effect.

The Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation replaces the old European Packaging Directive from 1994. A directive left every country free to fill in the rules itself. The result: twenty-seven different versions, different definitions, and an uneven playing field.

A regulation works differently. It applies directly, in exactly the same way, in every member state, with no national translation. The European Commission wants one single set of rules for everyone who makes, fills, sells or imports packaging within the EU.

“A fully circular packaging chain in the EU. By 2050 at the latest.

Packaging waste grew faster over the past decade than recycling capacity could keep up with, driven mainly by single-use packaging. The PPWR is meant to reverse that trend, in line with the European Green Deal.

Note: the European Commission still has to publish implementing acts for a number of parts, through to 2028. So keep an eye on developments.

REDUCE. REUSE. ONLY THEN RECYCLE.



1 REDUCE

As little packaging as possible.
No unnecessary layers, double walls or air sold around the product.



2 REUSE

Wherever it can: packaging you take back, refill, or put into circulation again instead of throwing away after a single use.



3 RECYCLE

Only once reducing and reusing aren't possible: material that becomes a raw material again after use.



EVERY PACKAGE GETS A GRADE ON ITS LABEL

From 1 January 2030, every package placed on the EU market must be demonstrably designed for recycling. It gets a **Recycling Performance Grade**: the share of its weight that can actually be recycled.

A ≥ 95% recyclable
widely permitted

B ≥ 80% recyclable
permitted

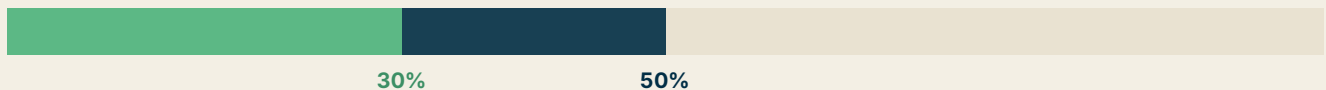
C ≥ 70% recyclable
permitted, temporarily

Below 70%, a package may no longer be placed on the market at all from 2030. Grade C disappears in 2038; from then on, at least grade B is required. From 2035, a **Recycle at Scale** score is added on top: not just recyclable in theory, but actually processable within existing collection and sorting systems.

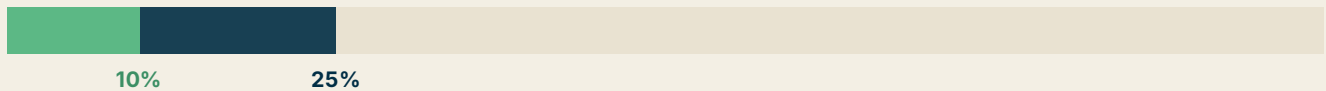
HOW MUCH RECYCLED CONTENT IS REQUIRED?

For plastic packaging, the PPWR sets mandatory minimum percentages of recycled material. The requirement differs by packaging type and rises in two steps: 2030 and 2040.

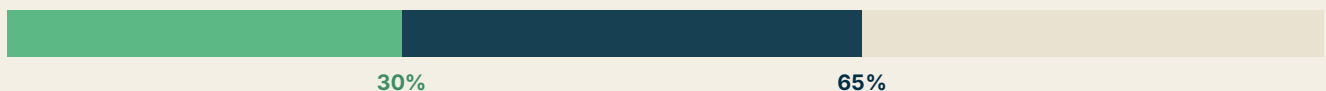
CONTACT-SENSITIVE (PET)



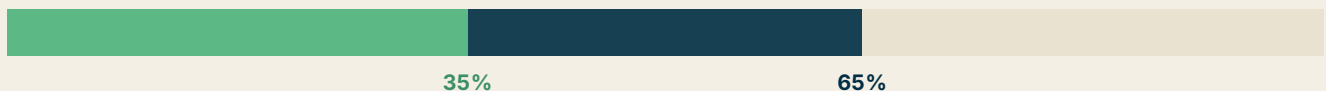
CONTACT-SENSITIVE (OTHER)



SINGLE-USE BEVERAGE BOTTLES



OTHER PLASTIC PACKAGING



2030

2040

minimum share of recycled material

AND ALSO: AS COMPACT AS POSSIBLE

Besides recycled content, the PPWR also mandates minimisation. From 1 January 2030, every package must be reduced to the minimum weight, volume and number of layers still needed to transport the product safely.

50%

is the maximum share of empty space a package, including filler material, may still contain during transport.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR YOUR LABEL?

The PPWR isn't just about boxes and bottles. It reaches directly into what sits on, and around, the packaging.



01



HARMONISED SYMBOLS

From August 2028, a mandatory, EU-wide pictogram for material type and sorting instructions arrives, optionally supplemented with a QR code. That pictogram lands on the label.

02



THE LABEL COUNTS TOWARDS THE GRADE

A package is assessed as a whole for recyclability. A label, sleeve or adhesive layer that doesn't recycle along with it can pull the whole package's RPG grade down.

03



DEPOSIT SCHEMES FOR MORE PACKAGING

For plastic and metal beverage packaging up to 3 litres, member states must collect at least 90% separately from 1 January 2029. That calls for uniform labels for deposit & return.

04



WHAT ALREADY HELPS TODAY

Mono-material labels, linerless labels with no release liner waste, recyclable or washable adhesive systems, and as little ink and laminate as possible.

THE PPWR ON THE TIMELINE

Not everything applies right away. The obligations roll out in phases through to 2040.



WHAT CAN YOU DO ALREADY?

The most important implementing rules are still coming in through to 2028. No reason to wait, but every reason to start with focus.



Map out your packaging and labels. Which materials, adhesive types and laminates do you use today?



Test the recyclability of the label itself. Does it work with the packaging, or does it pull the grade down?



Reduce wherever you can. Less material means less hassle heading into 2030.



Start thinking in sorting symbols now. That way you're ready the moment the harmonised label becomes mandatory.



RILLPRINT THINKS ALONG WITH YOU

We'd rather make what you need than sell what we happen to have. Not sure whether your labels will still fit within the PPWR? Bring it to us, and we'll look at material, adhesive and form together.

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