



## Conference-Book

# Reusable Packaging in Europe: Boosting Business and Closing the Loop

6<sup>th</sup> European ReUse-Conference, 23 March 2017

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## Introduction

The ReUse-Conference is organized every two years by the Environmental Action Germany (Deutsche Umwelthilfe – DUH), the European Association of Beverage Wholesalers (CEGROBB) and the Association of Small and Independent Breweries in Europe (S.I.B.). This year, the conference has been also co-hosted by the ReLoop platform for the first time.

The timing for the 6<sup>th</sup> ReUse-Conference set on the 23 March 2017 in Brussels could not have been better. With the ongoing negotiations of the Circular Economy Package (CEP), 2017 sets the course for the future European waste policy. The CEP was released on 2 December 2015 by the European Commission, led by Jean-Claude Juncker. Besides a series of waste-specific Directives, the legislative proposal also includes Directives on packaging.

Before the conference, on 14 March 2017, the EU Parliament voted for strengthening the resource efficiency, thus signaling a strong political support for the transitions towards a European Circular Economy. The Members of the European Parliament voted for ambitious targets. By 2030, 70 % of municipal waste and 80 % of packaging waste should be recycled. Moreover, a 5 % quota from the municipal waste is supposed to be prepared for reuse. For packaging waste, 10 % should be prepared for reuse, although this target is not binding. A Circular Economy can only be built on the foundation of smarter Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), standards, accountability and meaningful measurement. The Parliament has shown that they agree that Circular Economy can only come with a shift in the financing of resource management, from the public to the user. The EU Council is expected to take position on the CEP in the upcoming months, most likely shortly after the meeting of the EU Environment Ministers on the 9 June 2017.

In between these legislative negotiations, the ReUse-Conference provided a unique platform for a professional exchange of nearly 100 stakeholders involved in the topic of waste prevention via reusable packaging and refillables. Among the participants, representatives from all three branches of the European legislative (EU Commission, EU Parliament, EU Council) were present. Moreover, the conference aimed at building networks among different interest groups present, such as regional to multi-national companies operating in the field of reuse, as well as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and scientific and research groups.

The conference agenda led to vibrant discussions on Europe's future resource management. Starting with the positions on reuse from the EU Commission, the EU Parliament and the EU Council, European business initiatives from Spain, Netherlands, Germany and France were invited to present the opportunities and economic feasibility of reuse in Europe in the second part. Political measures can be inspired by lived best-practice examples to show the feasibility of reuse in Europe. In the afternoon two panel discussions complemented the program by addressing urging questions on how to implement the reuse principle in the European waste policy.

The conference offered the unique opportunity to guide this transition towards a Circular Economy in Europe in the right direction – a direction towards the principle of reuse that fosters innovation and best practices, reduces pollution and creates green jobs for Europe. The main focus of this year's ReUse-Conference was on refillables as well as on reuse transport packaging and their potential as a strategy for waste prevention.

## Opening remarks: Günther Guder, President of CEGROBB

“95 % of plastic packaging material is lost after one-time use. The only way to tackle our excessive waste production is the transition from a Linear Economy to a Circular Economy and the implementation of the principle of reuse.”



“This conference aims at pushing the principle of reuse on the top-level of the agenda of the CEP”. With that sentence, Mr. Guder emphasized the overall aim of this year’s ReUse-Conference right at the beginning. Reuse is placed above recycling in the European Union’s waste hierarchy, yet this is largely ignored, instead of focusing on reuse, that can achieve exponential waste prevention results. Thus, ideas and strategies need to be exchanged on how to achieve real waste prevention in Europe.

Today we are overrun by packaging waste.

Between 2000 and 2015 the share of plastic packaging has grown 5 % per year and now claims a share of more than 25 % of the market by weight. However, most of plastic packaging material is lost after a one-time use. Günther Guder claimed, that the only way to tackle our excessive waste production is the transition from a Linear Economy to a Circular Economy and the implementation of the reuse principle.

Refillables have an important role in the Circular Economy. From glass beer bottles, to refillable plastic soft drink bottles, to coffee cups, refillable beverage containers can be reused several times before they are recycled, which is key to keeping valuable resources in the production cycle for as long as possible. The greater the cycles, the greater the benefits.

CEGROBB’s member businesses operate according to the principles of a Circular Economy providing efficient closed loop systems for beverages. But the refillable beverage container appears to be under pressure. For a variety of reasons, more and more distributors or brands decide to sell their products in one-way packaging. A current example is Coca-Cola, who stopped distributing their 0.5 L and 1.5 L refillable bottles in Germany in favor for disposable one-way bottles. This has led to a loss of more than 1,000 jobs alone in one year. A devastating commitment to one-way packaging while at the same time Coca-Cola signs a global action plan called “The New Plastic Economy” by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, which aims at a transition to a Circular Economy.

The European Parliament has sent a clear signal that it wants to introduce drivers for change that will lead to a sustainable resource management in Europe. “In order achieve this transition, we must aim high”, Mr. Guder said. To ensure a success, reuse needs to be promoted within the European CEP. This could be done by e.g. economic support, establishing target rates for reuse or rates for waste prevention.

## The Circular Economy Package – Opinions from the European Legislation

Keynote Speech: José A. Herrera, President of the EU Council and Maltese Minister for the Environment, Sustainable Development, and Climate Change

### “The Role of Packaging Reuse in Waste Prevention and Sustainable Jobs in Europe”

“Member states should urgently encourage the use of reusable packaging by creating appropriate economic incentives.”

With Malta currently holding the Presidency of the EU Council and leading the discussions on the draft EU waste legislation in the Council, it was an honour for us to present José A. Herrera, Maltese Minister for the Environment, Sustainable Development, and Climate Change, as our keynote speaker.

“Packaging waste is a raw material. But so far, plastic packaging is responsible for the highest share of plastic pollution worldwide”, stated Mr. Herrera. Thus, valuable resources are literally going to waste. So it is clearly necessary that Europe realizes the shift from a Linear Economy to a more sustainable Circular Economy. The advantages of this transition process are obvious, Mr. Herrera pointed out: For Europe this is the chance to create access to new markets. Furthermore, the transition will provide new jobs and thus boost the economy.

Mr. Herrera addresses deposit systems as one important step on the way towards a Circular Economy. Member states should urgently encourage the use of reusable packaging by creating appropriate economic incentives. A full commitment of all European Member States is required. Nevertheless, legislations on waste prevention should include some flexibility to address the individual needs of the different countries in the European Union. Mr. Herrera sees the consumer in the center of the transition process towards a European Circular Economy. When discussing our modern consumer behaviour, we can achieve an improvement in resource consumption. Moreover, key topics like eco-design, reparability of products as well as reusability play an important role.

## Karl-Heinz Florenz, Member of the EU Parliament & ENVI Committee

### “The EU Parliament pushing forward the Implementation of Reuse in Europe”

“Circular Economy is not only about reducing packaging waste, the transition will moreover lower Europe’s dependency on other countries. Waste prevention and reuse should be measurable with standardized units within the EU to be comparable. On the other hand, a wide range of measurement points is not acceptable.”



As member of the European Parliament and part of the ENVI Committee, Karl – Heinz Florenz startet his speech with a brief example to provide an idea about the complexity of European policy: If every conference participant was supposed to give one comment or one postiton regarding the conference, but was only given the chance to vote yes or no in order to find a compromise that suits the majority, this would be a complex task. “You may now see how complicated it is to find compromises in the European policy when more serious proposals like the CEP need to be discussed”, Mr. Florenz emphasised.

Europe is running out of materials. That makes Europe highly dependend on uncertain raw material imports from countries like China or Argentina. 60 % of Europe’s fossile materials are imported. With e.g. China’s economy constantly growing, the need for raw material increases correspondingly what will, as a consequence push up ressource prices exponentially. “Raw materials have to be saved for the future”, Karl – Heinz Florenz stated. “In that context, Circular Economy is not only about reducing packaging waste, the transition will morevoer lower Europe’s dependency on other countries.”

Looking back onto the proposals concerning waste legislation in the last 20 years in Europe, the actual implementation of waste legislations in the EU member states constitutes the major challenge. “We are in an urgent need for a new CEP. For a successful implementation of the proposals however, harmonizing standards within the EU is more important than some percentage points regarding regulatory quotas”, Mr. Florenz emphasised. Waste prevention and reuse need to be measurable with standardized units within the EU to be comparable. A wide range of measurement points on the other hand is not acceptable.

Mr. Florenz pointed out that Europe now has the chance to learn from the consequences of the last legislation. The current negotiations on the new CEP open up a new period and a new beginning in Europe’s resource and waste management. The upcoming framework is supposed to motivate the member states in taking a big and decisive step forward towards a sustainable economy.

With the proposal of including higher recycling quotas and a reuse quota for packaging within the CEP, the EU Parliament sent a strong signal for the strengthening of reuse systems in Europe. A 5 % quota from the municipal waste is supposed to be prepared for reuse. For packaging waste, 10 % should be prepared for reuse, although this target is not binding.

## Bettina Lorz, Member of the EU Commission, Directorate-General for Environment

### “Building a Foundation for greater Packaging Reuse in the Circular Economy Package”

“Circular Economy is a win-win situation for Europe’s economy and the environment. Since the member states are obliged to monitor and measure on waste prevention, defined measures are supposed to enhance the acceptance of the waste legislation in Europe. Regarding the explicit implementation of measures, a separate quota for reuse and recycling needs to be considered. The lack of reliable data may be one limiting factor in the starting process of the transition.”



Although waste management in the EU has improved considerably in the past decades, almost a third of municipal waste is still landfilled and less than half is recycled or composted, with wide variations between Member States. Some EU Member States generate four times more packaging waste than others do. The negative trend leading to more packaging waste is, among others, caused by the declining sector of reusable packaging. The introduction of refillable bottles for shampoo in Japan for instance has reduced waste by 55 % regarding packaging for shampoos.

“Circular Economy is a win-win situation for Europe’s economy and the environment”, said Bettina Lorz. This idea built the basis for the 2015 proposal of the new CEP under the Juncker administration. In a long-term perspective, the Framework aims at keeping resources in the loop to guarantee their provision in the future. The CEP is amended by four legislative proposals, among them the Waste Framework Directive (WFD) and the Packaging Waste Directive (PWD).

The WFD sets the overarching legislative framework in the European waste legislation. Waste should first be prevented and reduced before it comes to reuse. However, Ms. Lorz pointed out that the choice for the right option will also be determined by the input of energy. “What is more energy efficient – reuse or the production of new packaging? That question should be considered”, Bettina Lorz said.

To guarantee the success of the future European resource management, Ms. Lorz advises a “fitness-check” of the framework, explicitly addressing the challenge of defining adequate indicators and targets to make waste prevention measurable. Since the Member States are obliged to monitor and measure waste prevention, defined measures are supposed to enhance the acceptance of the waste legislation in Europe. Standardized data collection is supposed to be easy and feasible.

Regarding the explicit implementation of measures, Ms. Lorz corresponds to the claim, which is unanimously shared by the conference organizers: a separate quota for refillables and recycles needs to be considered.

Good data for the most relevant plastic flows are available. In the recent report of the Allen MacArthur Foundation it is claimed, that with redesign and innovations 50 % of plastic packaging could be recycled. 20 % of the packaging material provide an interesting opportunity for recycling and reuse. At this point

however, Ms. Lorz states that regarding reuse, the lack of reliable data could be a limiting factor in the starting process of the transition.

Moreover, raising awareness is a crucial point that needs to be addressed in the CEP. Bettina Lorz sees a strong need for an action strategy that will complement the legislative process comprehensively, addressing the impacts of plastic waste on our society.

## Success Stories and Living Examples for Reuse

“The transition towards a Circular Economy is not a choice anymore – it has become a need”, Mr. Guder stated in his opening speech, and it is feasible indeed. Four successful European businesses from Spain, Netherlands, Germany and France presented the opportunities and the economic feasibility of reuse in Europe.

### Eusebio Martinez de la Casa, Founder of Recircula

#### “Is the Reusable Packaging threatened in Spain?”

“The waste problems are created by the industry and the industry will not take over responsibility. So we are obliged to act.”



“Is the reusable packaging threatened in Spain?” That was the title of Mr. Martinez de la Casa’s presentation. The sad answer is “yes”, but at least, we have all the possibilities to make it better.

Ten years ago, the glass container was the only container for beverage packaging. But beer cans have grown 50 % in ten years and now hold a share of more than 30 % of the beer sold on the market in Spain. This development made the share of reusable bottles drop

by over 15 % for beer. Mr. Martinez de la Casa called, that the can is the most dangerous predator of the reusable container leading to tremendous littering and landfilling of resources.

For soft drinks, the offer of reusable bottles dropped by more than 60 %. One-way now holds an overall share of over 80 % compared to reusable beverage packaging on the Spanish market. Whereas there are virtually no refillable bottles available in retail. Only the Hotel/Restaurant/Café (HORECA) sector still operates with reusable bottles, but the trend goes to one-way alternatives, too.

“The current waste prevention program in Spain is useless”, Mr. Martinez de la Casa stated. There are no mandatory targets, not even voluntary targets, no tools, no nothing, just lost opportunities. This waste prevention plan is not helping at all to promote reusable drink containers in Spain.” The new Waste Management Framework (2016 – 2022) was supposed to set actual targets for reuse at least in HORECA (80 % beer, 70 % soft drinks, 50 % water). In the version that was approved by the Council of Ministers however, the targets were gone. “Through lobbying the industry has won again. The reusable packaging for beverages have disappeared in retail and are in a dangerous regression in HORECA.”

Without mandatory regulations from the EU, the situation in Spain will not change. The CEP urgently needs to offer tools to protect and to reinforce the utilization of reusable packaging. Specific demands according to Mr. Martinez de la Casa are:

- strengthening of EPR,
- introduction of reasonable measures to ensure transparency in data management,
- marking of beverage containers to enable a differentiation between refillables and disposables,
- introduction of mandatory targets,
- prohibition of landfilling.

“The problems are created by the industry and the industry will not take over responsibility. So we are obliged to act”, Mr. Martinez de la Casa emphasised at the end of his presentation.

## Laura Caniot, Project Manager Zero Waste France

### “Deposit Systems – a Way towards Resource Efficiency and a Circular Economy?”

“500,000 tons of packaging waste per year are avoided through the use of reusable beverage systems mainly in cafés, hotels and restaurants in France. 10,000 jobs are connected to the reusable beverage branch within 500 companies in sales and distribution of drinks.”

Zero Waste France (ZWF) is an environmental NGO. By providing described information on the complex topic of waste prevention and by giving actual support in that field, ZWF conducts successful lobbying by pushing forward deposit schemes and refillable systems in France.

“500,000 tons of packaging waste per year are avoided through the use of reusable beverage systems, mainly in cafés, hotels and restaurants in France. 10,000 jobs are connected to the reusable beverage branch within 500 companies in sales and distribution of drinks”, Laura Caniot emphasized. But statistics show a negative trend.



“The implementation of a deposit system in France has been blocked for years”, Ms. Caniot said. But by supporting initiatives and with the empowerment and mobilization of citizens, ZWF managed to form a counterweight to the industry which increases investments in one-way packaging. “The most powerful driver for a transition is the motivation among the citizens”, Ms. Caniot stated. This made it possible to set up a voluntary deposit system in Northern France. Although not much is communicated about this project, it finds great acceptance by the citizens. All glass bottles are accepted by the return system even if they are not reusable. On top, every deposit is rewarded with a voucher. Setting up a deposit network for municipalities and entrepreneurs, ZWF managed to support among others two innovative examples operating with pool bottles for wine, vinegar and oils as part of the so-called “Boreal program”.

## Pit Klepatz, Sales Manager Logipack Pool GmbH

### “Standardization of Reusable Packaging and Components: The Key for Efficiency and Sustainability within the Supply Chain”

“If there would only be one type of refillable bottle and one complementing logistic system, the beverage industry would probably have an easy life. The variety of reusable bottles is creating inefficiency, but Logipack is coping with the challenge.”



“How would the perfect reusable world for the beverage industry look like?” With that question Pit Klepatz started his presentation. If there would only be one type of refillable bottle and one complementing logistic system, the beverage industry would probably have an easy life. But reality looks different.

There are at least 150 types of reusable bottles only for beer on the German market with glass still being the preferred material for beverage packaging. “That variety creates an inefficiency”, said Mr. Klepatz. But Logipack is coping with that

challenge by providing one solution for reusable individual bottles of all kinds. As pool operator, Logipack developed unique, non-branded carrier systems compatible for the wide range of refillable bottles on the market. Moreover, Logipack offers an efficient packaging service including the sorting of reusable bottles.

This makes it possible to offer the logistic process for reusable bottles from a single source. Thus, the circulation speed of reusable bottles can be increased significantly through the reduction of transport distances, in particular. Compared to a logistic process linked to a specific bottle type, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions can be reduced by 40 %.

The consumer should be able to distinguish reusable beverage packaging from the environmental unfriendly disposable ones. Therefore, Pit Klepatz clearly demands a labelling of the bottles. Moreover, the benefits of reusable bottles should be urgently communicated via different media campaigns to the public to raise awareness.

#### European Refillable Award

The Logipack Pool GmbH was awarded at this years' ReUse-Conference for their intelligent concept of multifunctional and neutrally designed carriers, which facilitate the logistics for reusable bottles in the so called “LOGIPACK-Cycles”. Congratulations!



## Kurt Jäger, Executive Director Euro Pool System International (Deutschland) GmbH

### “Solutions for facilitating Distribution and Reuse”

“The reduction of greenhouse gases through reusable transport packaging amounts to 40 %. 95 % less waste is produced and the energy consumption is reduced by 40 %.”

Euro Pool System is another vivid example for the success of returnable packaging. Euro Pool System offers a unique combination of logistics services and a pool system of crates for fresh and packaged food. The foldable trays can be used in completely automated systems. One rotation cycle starts with an order of the tray via web application and ends with a washing, cleaning and sorting process in one of Euro Pool’s service centres. Thereby one tray can last up to 100 cycles. This returnable packaging solution is provided all over Europe. The system itself runs via deposit with each stakeholder in the chain being responsible.



According to Kurt Jäger, cardboard boxes are the least ecological packaging box. Contrary to one-way boxes, the benefits of returnable trays predominate: A 40 % reduction of greenhouse gases through reusable packaging, avoidance of 95 % waste and a reduced energy consumption by 40 %. Moreover, studies show that returnable packaging has a positive impact on food loss. “34 out of 35 damages on food products can be prevented by using more stable and robust returnable packaging”.

## Addressing the EU Politics

Clemens Stroetmann, Executive Director Stiftung Initiative Mehrweg,  
State Secretary, retired

### “Building Reuse in the Transport Packaging Sector”

“By definition, packaging that is prepared for reuse, cannot be considered as waste. A combined quota for recycling and reusable packaging will miss higher targets and will fail the aim of closing the loop.”

The use of packaging and packaging material is inevitable and part of our everyday life. It is our responsibility to handle the waste occurring through the excessive use of packaging material in an environmental friendly way. Reusable packaging in this context is practiced waste prevention and in perfect accordance with the first rule of the waste hierarchy implemented in all EU Member States.

The new CEP can act as a milestone strengthening up reusable packaging. Therefore, Clemens Stroetmann used his speech to send a clear message to the policy makers:

1. Regulations for reusable packaging and especially for transport packaging need to be included in the CEP’s Directives.
2. A combined quota for recycling and reusable packaging is not acceptable.

“By definition, packaging that is prepared for reuse, cannot be considered as waste. A combined quota for recycling and reusable packaging will miss higher targets and will fail the aim of closing the loop,” Mr. Stroetmann emphasised. The main and ideal principle of a Circular Economy is the concept of a closed system that envisages a future economy that would operate by reproducing the limited stock of inputs and recycling waste outputs. Such a closed economy would seek to maintain the total capital stock and would stand in contrast with the open materials-reliant industrial economy that we live in now.

The EU member states therefore are obliged to work on the fulfillment of the ideas and principles behind CEP. If we keep in mind the privilege that the EU offers to us, which is nothing less than a life in peace, this idea will help us to achieve better results as a community.

Jürgen Resch, Executive Director Environmental Action Germany

### “Opportunities for Growth in the Circular Economy Package”

“The negative environmental impacts of the product should be reflected in the product price. Such an economic instrument would clearly increase the attraction of refillables. As long as it is cheaper to do what is environmentally incorrect and go with disposable products or waste incineration, there is no incentive for most companies to do business sustainably”

Our European waste hierarchy demands a reuse before recycling. In this context, refillable bottles are “low hanging fruits” for politics. In a good running refillable system, glass bottles can be refilled 50 times. Crates can be circulated up to 100 times before going into recycling. The benefits of refillables are quite obvious and a model example for applied reuse:



- waste prevention,
- resource efficiency,
- climate protection,
- promotion of sustainable, regional jobs.

Despite all of these advantages, the reuse system for beverages is in danger. Multinational companies like e.g. Coca-Cola attack the German refillable system. “The future belongs to one-way and cans”, that is the opinion of the former Coca-Cola executive Ulrik Nehammer in Germany.

Jürgen Resch briefly summarizes, what is needed to protect and promote reuse in Europe.



1. Binding targets for a reduction of municipal waste as basis to take effective measures for waste prevention and as a promotion for reuse.
  - a. Residual waste target max. 150 kg in 2025 and 130 kg in 2030 per year and resident;
  - b. Packaging waste target max. 120 kg in 2025 and 90 kg in 2030 per year and resident.

Currently 260 kg residual waste and 160 kg packaging waste are generated per resident and year in the European average.

2. Separate reuse and recycling quotas are needed to implement the waste hierarchy and encourage reuse systems.

A joint quota would lead to less recycling, as already existing reuse systems would be counted within the quota. Moreover, there would hardly be an incentive for intensifying reuse, if recycling is equal according to the target.

3. Separate reuse quotas are needed differentiating between sales-, transport- and beverage packaging.
4. Clear labelling of one-way beverage packaging or refillables on the product.
5. Implementation of a resource tax for materials such as plastic.

Financial instruments are needed that reward reuse and thus give an incentive. Janez Potocnik said in 2014: “As long as it is cheaper to do what is environmentally incorrect and go with disposable products or waste incineration, there is no incentive for most companies to do business sustainably”. “The negative environmental impacts of the product should be reflected in the product price. Such a tax would clearly increase the economic attraction of refillables”, Mr. Resch stated.

6. Implement an EU-wide deposit system for one-way beverage packaging in order to reduce littering, enable a closed loop recycling and provide take-back systems.

The introduction of a deposit system for single-use packaging can also simplify the introduction of reusable bottles, because the infrastructure of the return system then already exists.

The whole development is supposed to be accompanied by an effective monitoring framework that allows an early intervention if necessary to safeguard the attainment of the targets and to inform the European public about the achievements towards a Circular Economy.

## Panel discussions

The EU Council recognized some of the complexity around the issue of introducing measurements concerning waste prevention. They pose a series of questions that were addressed in the two panel discussions. The answers to these questions can form the path towards the solution of how a successful transition to a vibrant Circular Economy can be realized. Clarissa Morawski, Managing Director Reeloo Network, moderated both panels.

### Plenary Session I – How to measure Reuse?



#### Measurement is Control

Policies cannot be done on something that is not measurable. Without measurement, the success of what is regulated cannot be controlled. For losing weight, one counts kg. To fight climate change, pollution is measured in CO<sub>2</sub>-equivalents. In the case of waste prevention, the unit should be understandable for the public. Otherwise, the results are difficult to communicate. Defined targets are supposed to illustrate reality. We do not need to measure the industry's performance. We should rather concentrate on the question of how to manage real statistics to work with. However, there is no need to make the implementation of measurements and targets unnecessarily complicated. Rather we have to examine if the existing systems are adequate for the new regulations.

To regulate e.g. the return of used electrical and electronic equipment we see a good example in the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Directive (WEEEED). The companies have to register what they bring into the market. This register again builds the basis for all the products we want to take back in the future. It is worth investing in the bureaucracy behind such a register, if we keep in mind the savings we can achieve by the prevention of waste.

#### Databases and Statistics

There was a consensus among the panelists that the data and statistics on what we need already exist. We just need to find a way to transfer the data from the industries involved to a neutral platform. Not until 2024 the EU Commission shall present data from measurements to decide which targets are useful and which are not. Since most data already exist and only need to be analyzed, this waiting period is exaggerated.

Data for refillable bottles for instance can be directly collected at the bottling plant and should than be merged in a centralized database for tracking. Regarding the variety of refillable bottles on the market, standardization is needed. With a defined standard, regulations can be achieved more cost effective.

With regard to transport packaging, the use of transport packaging per year can be tracked via web application. Businesses like Amazon can easily keep track of their packaging material and register how often it is used and how long it lasts.

### **Reuse and recycling**

If a combined quota for reuse and recycling is introduced, the economical decision will always fall in favor of recycling, because recycling will mostly be cheaper than reuse. Recycling refers to waste whereas reuse refers to products. Thus, a different approach should be used here requiring separate quotas for recycling and reuse. We need to think out of the waste system, when talking about reuse.

Moreover, the quota of 5 % aiming to prepare municipal waste for reuse is not ambitious enough. If the quota remains this low, the market will find a cost effective solution for that issue, which will not fulfill the real purpose of this target.

Downcycling cannot be counted as recycling. A bottle for instance must become a bottle again. Regarding beverage packaging, there should be no competition between recycling and refillables. Refillables are priority if we want to achieve a sustainable waste management in Europe.

### **Voluntary vs. binding regulations**

As long as there are no regulations, the powerful one-way-industry will push its disposable products into the market. Voluntary targets are far from being enough. The industry tries to avoid whatever instrument possible. Binding regulations hence are the only solution to start acting in the right direction. Market failures can only be controlled with such regulations.

When e.g. ordering fresh food online, only one out of seven companies uses returnable packaging. The other six companies produce three times more packaging waste. Mainly educated people order food online and thus produce waste. The public awareness of those people should be raised and binding regulations are needed, otherwise, the world will swim in waste.

## Plenary Session II – How can the Circular Economy Package boost Reusable Packaging?



### Barriers for Reuse

Taxes in Europe hinder the promotion of reuse enormously. There are added taxes on rental items. Reusable packaging e.g. is seen as a rental item and is thus being charged fees. In Italy exists a fee for placing reusable packaging on the market. Another example are taxes on take-away food, which are lower than for the consumption in a restaurant. These are definitely the false political incentives.

False political incentives are also given in terms of recycling. Disposables are convenient and the consumer is pleased when giving materials or packaging to recycling, because it is assumed to be the most environmentally friendly act. We need other motivating and sustainable alternatives that promote reuse as the first choice. Therefore, economic advantages need to be installed as a first step.

The CEP as it is designed now leaves too much of an open space for interpretations, which is a special issue in the new EU Member States. The terms reuse, preparing for reuse and recycling cannot be put together in one pot. A separate consideration and exact definition of these terms needs to be provided.

### Boosting Reuse

There is no need to reinvent the wheel. The recognition, stabilization and applications of the already existing best-practices would be the best incentives for a transition towards a Circular Economy. We have to strengthen good examples for reuse and be as precise and concrete as possible. This will help to push the theoretical discussion into a real transition process. The challenge is to fill this lack of knowledge with good examples by spreading ideas of existing and successful systems. As a good best-practice example the deposit systems in Germany can be seen. 99 % of refillables and 97 % of one-way bottles are returned.

A reuse system for refillables requires a good network of collecting points. By building hubs at the outskirts of cities, transport distances can be reduced to simplify the reusable transport logistics. In this context it should be considered, that standardization leads to closed loops and pooling. In the case of refillables, standardization helps minimize sorting costs and reduce transport distances within the logistic process. The shorter the supply chain, the less negative ecological effects are generated and the better reuse can be considered.

We should get rid of the economic barriers. A solution in the right direction would be a resource tax incorporated in the EPR-system that rewards the most environmentally friendly activities. With

appropriate taxes, we are providing ourselves the right option and start investing in reuse. But until now, we are literally still burning our resources.

Another crucial point to boost reuse is the education of the final consumer. By raising awareness, we can change consumer behavior towards the best alternative and thus establish an environmental responsibility. The consumer therefore needs to have the freedom to choose between reusable or one-way packaging. Meaning that for instance Amazon should offer the option of shipment in reusable or one-way packaging as free choice.

This conference was supported by Sinalco



20170616



**Deutsche Umwelthilfe e.V.**  
(Environmental Action Germany)  
Office Radolfzell  
Fritz-Reichle-Ring 4  
78315 Radolfzell / Germany  
Tel.: 0049 (0) 77 32 9995-0

Headquarter Berlin  
Hackescher Markt 4  
Neue Promenade 3  
10178 Berlin / Germany  
Tel.: 0049 (0) 30 2400867-0

**Contact**

Thomas Fischer  
Head Circular Economy  
Tel.: 0049 (0) 30 2400 867 43  
E-Mail: fischer@duh.de

Philipp Sommer  
Dep. Head Circular Economy  
Tel.: 0049 (0) 30 2400 867 462  
E-Mail: sommer@duh.de

[www.duh.de](http://www.duh.de) [info@duh.de](mailto:info@duh.de) [umwelthilfe](https://twitter.com/umwelthilfe) [umwelthilfe](https://facebook.com/umwelthilfe)

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