

EUROPEN Press Release
Adoption of the Single-Use Plastics Directive
EUROPEN calls for harmonised, consistent and proportionate implementation

Brussels, 27 March 2019 – Noting the adoption of the Single-Use Plastics (SUP) Directive by the European Parliament today, EUROPEN supports the EU's overarching objectives of taking bold action against litter and marine litter in particular and raising awareness about this problem among EU citizens and globally. EUROPEN calls on the European Commission and Member States to clarify without delay the provisions in legislation that remain ambiguous in order to ensure unified implementation across Europe. EUROPEN also calls on EU policymakers to focus their future work on ensuring coherence among the various (existing and upcoming) EU laws that regulate the production and use of packaging as well as the management of packaging waste in Europe.

EUROPEN regrets that the SUP Directive does not provide an EU harmonised approach, presenting a serious risk for the Internal Market. For instance, it will allow Member States to adopt unilateral bans on specific packaging applications to reduce consumption of certain items which remain poorly defined in legislation. Therefore, there is a risk that different national interpretations will impede the Internal Market. We call on EU policymakers to develop evidence-based implementation guidance on the unclear terms without delay. Nonetheless, we welcome the requirements that such measures are subject to certain conditions and must be proportionate, non-discriminatory, and pre-notified to the European Commission. We call on the European Commission and Member States to ensure that all national, regional and local measures to implement the SUP are notified to the Commission in accordance with the Directive.

EUROPEN and its members have long been strong advocates of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) schemes as an essential component of waste management in Europe and consequently supported the adoption of EU minimum requirements in the revised Waste Framework Directive. Although we deplore the lack of policy coherence in having these requirements now dealt with through two different legislative texts, EUROPEN welcomes the SUP Directive recognition that “the fight against litter is a shared effort between competent authorities, producers and consumers”. Accordingly, it is now essential that the Commission develops EU-wide guidance for clarifying and delineating the allocation of litter clean-up costs urgently, in order to ensure a harmonised, proportionate and transparent implementation of the measure in Member States.

“Looking ahead, our collective priority must now be to ensure as much uniformity as possible in the implementation of the SUP and resolve these legal uncertainties resulting from an unprecedentedly rushed legislative procedure”, said Hans van Bochove of Coca-Cola European Partners and EUROPEN Chairman. *“The packaging value chain is committed to innovating for sustainability. This will require investments at scale. For this to happen, business needs clarity on the applicable rules and a coherent, long-term and stable EU policy framework. One single EU Circular Economy is preferable to 28 or 27 different ones,”* underlined Van Bochove.

EUROPEN looks forward to working with the EU institutions in the coming months to help clarify all aspects of the SUP Directive that remain ambiguous and to provide input from the packaging value chain for the EU to formulate evidence-based guidance in order to ensure harmonised, consistent and proportionate transposition of the Directive at national level.

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About EUROPEN

EUROPEN -- the European Organization for Packaging and the Environment -- is a cross-industry organization presenting the opinion of the packaging supply chain in Europe on topics related to packaging, packaging waste and the environment, independent of any specific packaging materials or systems. EUROPEN members are comprised of multinational corporate companies spanning the packaging value chain (raw material producers, converters and brand owners) plus national packaging organizations all committed to continuously improving the environmental performances of packaged products, in collaboration with their suppliers and customers.

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