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Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation (EU)

Regulatory Signals · October 2026

A Regulatory signal on the EU Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation: the PFAS limits for food-contact packaging, the implementing acts that are late, producer registration country by country, and the rules for counting recycled content. Read for a mid-sized packaging manufacturer that converts film, paper and board for food, beverage and consumer goods brands. Four signals from one cycle.

#	SIGNAL	CONFIDENCE	HORIZON	STATUS
1	EU PFAS limits for food-contact packaging have applied since August 12, 2026, but there is no harmonized EU test method; enforcers can start with a total fluorine screen	High	Immediate (0–3 months)	Review
2	Two PPWR implementing acts have missed their legal deadlines: the producer register format, due February 12, 2026, and the harmonized label, due August 12, 2026	High	Short-term (3–12 months)	Review
3	The first EU producer report moved to June 2030, and on October 5 the ENVI committee voted to suspend the authorized-representative rule for EU firms until 2035	High	Short-term (3–12 months)	Review
4	Calls for evidence on counting recycled plastic, including recyclete imported from outside the EU, closed September 16, 2026; adoption is targeted for December 31	Medium	Short-term (3–12 months)	Review

Every signal rests on two or more dated events. Confidence is published as a band. Where a signal sits below High, the reasoning names the evidence that is missing. Status says where the evidence stands: Verified, Review, or Inconclusive — we looked, and the evidence does not yet support a firmer call.

SIGNAL 1 OF 4

EU PFAS limits for food-contact packaging have applied since August 12, 2026, but there is no harmonized EU test method; enforcers can start with a total fluorine screen

HIGH Immediate (0–3 months) · Regulatory Agency Actions · **Review**

Since August 12, 2026, food-contact packaging placed on the EU market must meet three PFAS limits: 25 ppb for any single PFAS, 250 ppb for the sum of targeted PFAS, and 50 ppm for total PFAS including polymeric PFAS. The limits apply to the packaging itself, not to migration into food. The Commission's guidance of June 5, 2026 sets a stepwise test approach, and the Commission says there is no harmonized EU method for PFAS in food-contact packaging.

REASONING

Two dated events point the same way: the Commission published testing guidance on June 5, 2026, and the limits applied on August 12, 2026. The conformity assessment and the EU Declaration of Conformity started on the same date, so the limits now come with a paper trail. The 25 ppb and 250 ppb limits exclude polymeric PFAS; the 50 ppm limit includes it. Total fluorine is a screening step in the guidance, not the limit. Status is Review while we confirm the wording of Article 5(5) against the official text.

PATTERN

June 5, 2026: the Commission published PFAS testing guidance as a Commission Notice. It sets a stepwise approach: screen for total fluorine; above 50 mg/kg, test whether the fluorine is organic, and the operator may have to show how much of it is PFAS; use TOP analysis for the 25 ppb and 250 ppb limits. August 11, 2026: the Commission announced that the new packaging rules, including the PFAS restrictions for food-contact packaging, start to apply. August 12, 2026: the PFAS limits took effect, together with conformity assessment under Annex VII and the EU Declaration of Conformity under Article 39 for the heavy metals rule (Article 5(4)), the PFAS rule (Article 5(5)) and, where relevant, reusable packaging (Article 11(1)). Files must be kept for 5 years for single-use and 10 years for reusable packaging. August 13, 2026: Hogan Lovells published its reading of the Commission's August FAQ. Manufacturers can delegate the Declaration of Conformity but not the technical documentation, and must make best efforts to get missing supplier data.

IMPLICATION

The evidence demand lands on the converter. Brand owners sign the declaration, but they must make best efforts to get supplier data, so they will ask converters for test results and material data on coatings, inks, adhesives and board. With no harmonized method, the first test an enforcer is likely to run is a total fluorine screen, and a result above 50 mg/kg means more questions about the material.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Within the next 30 days, ask brand-owner customers which SKUs need PFAS evidence and in what form. Before they ask, screen every food-contact coating, ink, adhesive and board grade for total fluorine, and send results against 25 ppb (single PFAS), 250 ppb (sum of targeted PFAS) and 50 ppm (total PFAS including polymeric PFAS) with your declaration inputs. Keep supplier declarations on file for 5 years for single-use and 10 years for reusable packaging.

SOURCES & WHAT THEY SIGNAL

- [Food Packaging Forum — PFAS limits under the PPWR now apply, August 12, 2026](#) — The three limits, the June 5 testing guidance and the lack of a harmonized EU method.
- [European Commission — New EU packaging rules start to apply, including restrictions on PFAS in food-contact packaging, August 11, 2026](#) — The Commission's announcement that the PFAS restrictions apply.
- [Food and Drink Federation — PPWR business guidance page](#) — Conformity assessment and declaration from August 12, 2026, and the retention periods.
- [Hogan Lovells — No time to waste V: European Commission's updates to the PPWR FAQ, August 13, 2026](#) — What the FAQ says on delegating the declaration, supplier data and identification marks.
- [EUR-Lex — Regulation \(EU\) 2025/40 on packaging and packaging waste](#) — The regulation's official text.

SIGNAL 2 OF 4

Two PPWR implementing acts have missed their legal deadlines: the producer register format, due February 12, 2026, and the harmonized label, due August 12, 2026

HIGH Short-term (3–12 months) · Regulatory Agency Actions · **Review**

The implementing act on producer registers and the reporting format was due on February 12, 2026 and has not been adopted. The implementing act for the harmonized label was due on August 12, 2026 and has not been adopted either, and no official delay has been announced. The label applies 24 months after its act enters into force, so a late act moves the label date later rather than shortening the time to comply.

REASONING

Two legal deadlines have passed without the acts they called for. Each missed date has a direct effect on later dates: the label date runs from the label act, and the first producer report has already been moved back in the Commission's FAQ. The design-for-recycling acts are the next deadline, and the grade rules depend on them in the same way.

PATTERN

February 12, 2026: deadline for the implementing act on producer registers and reporting format; not adopted (Hogan Lovells, August 13, 2026). August 12, 2026: deadline for the harmonized label implementing act; not adopted, with no official delay announced (FoodNavigator, August 28, 2026). January 1, 2028: deadline for the design-for-recycling delegated acts. Grade requirements apply from January 1, 2030 or 24 months after those acts enter into force, whichever is later, and only grades A and B are allowed from January 1, 2038 (Food and Drink Federation).

IMPLICATION

For a converter, the label artwork change will come later than the earliest statutory date, and the date will only be fixed once the act is adopted. Brand customers cannot yet give final recyclability grade specifications, because the grade rules wait on acts due by 2028. Expect interim specifications to change.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Track the Commission packaging page and EUR-Lex each month for adoption of the label act and the register act. When the label act enters into force, set the label artwork deadline 24 months out and agree changeover dates with each brand customer within 60 days.

SOURCES & WHAT THEY SIGNAL

- [Hogan Lovells — No time to waste V: European Commission's updates to the PPWR FAQ, August 13, 2026](#) — The producer register act, due February 12, 2026, has not been adopted.
- [Food and Drink Federation — PPWR business guidance page](#) — The design-for-recycling timeline and the 2038 grade A and B rule.
- [EUR-Lex — Regulation \(EU\) 2025/40 on packaging and packaging waste](#) — The regulation's official text, where adopted acts will be published.

SIGNAL 3 OF 4

The first EU producer report moved to June 2030, and on October 5 the ENVI committee voted to suspend the authorized-representative rule for EU firms until 2035

HIGH Short-term (3–12 months) · Regulatory Agency Actions · **Review**

The Commission's August 2026 FAQ moved the first producer report to national EPR registers from June 1, 2029 to June 1, 2030. On October 5, 2026, the European Parliament's ENVI committee voted 74–0, with 4 abstentions, to suspend the authorized-representative requirement until 2035, limited to EU-established firms. Non-EU companies would still need a representative. The plenary vote is on the October 19–22, 2026 agenda.

REASONING

Three dated steps show the EPR rules are still moving: the FAQ change, the committee vote and the plenary listing. Hogan Lovells links the later reporting date to the missed February 12, 2026 register act, and notes that existing national reporting rules may still apply until that act is adopted. Status is Review because the committee position is not yet law and the plenary result was not confirmed at the time of writing.

PATTERN

March 2026: the Commission's FAQ set the first producer report to national EPR registers for June 1, 2029. August 2026: the updated FAQ moved it to June 1, 2030, without marking the change as new (Hogan Lovells, August 13, 2026). October 5, 2026: ENVI voted 74–0, with 4 abstentions, for the packaging and batteries part of the proposal to suspend the authorized-representative requirement until 2035, limited to EU-established firms (Agence Europe and Packaging Insights, October 6, 2026). October 19–22, 2026: the plenary vote is on the agenda (European Parliamentary Research Service).

IMPLICATION

A converter is usually not the producer, but it can be. Under the FAQ's decisive power test, converters that own the design of their own packaging, or ship unbranded standard boxes, may be the producer for that packaging. Under the committee's position, non-EU plants that ship into the EU would still need an authorized representative in each Member State.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Within 60 days, list the SKUs where you own the design or ship unbranded standard boxes, and the EU countries each one ships to. For each country, check the national register and reporting rules that apply now. After the plenary, confirm the adopted text on the authorized-representative suspension before changing any representative arrangements.

SOURCES & WHAT THEY SIGNAL

- [Hogan Lovells — No time to waste V: European Commission's updates to the PPWR FAQ, August 13, 2026](#) — The move to June 1, 2030, the decisive power test and the link to the missed register act.
- [Agence Europe — MEPs ease rules on extended producer responsibility \(EPR\), October 6, 2026](#) — The 74–0 committee vote and its limit to EU-established firms.
- [Packaging Insights — report on the ENVI committee vote, October 6, 2026](#) — Confirms the vote and that non-EU companies would still need a representative.

- [European Parliamentary Research Service — plenary session, October II 2026](#) — The plenary agenda for October 19–22, 2026.

SIGNAL 4 OF 4

Calls for evidence on counting recycled plastic, including recyclate imported from outside the EU, closed September 16, 2026; adoption is targeted for December 31

MEDIUM Short-term (3–12 months) · Stakeholder & Lobbying Activity · **Review**

The Commission ran calls for evidence on three acts: how recycled content is calculated and verified, sustainability criteria for recycling technologies, and conditions for recyclate imported from outside the EU. The calls closed on September 16, 2026, and adoption is targeted for December 31, 2026. European recycling associations have asked for a preference for EU-made recyclate and for certification of non-EU recycling plants.

REASONING

Three dated events sit in one window: the calls for evidence, the recyclers' position and the close of the calls. The band is Medium because the content of the acts is not known and the recyclers' position may not prevail. The German plastic packaging association expects the calls to delay the requirements by at least several months, so the December 31 target may slip.

PATTERN

August 17, 2026: Packaging Europe reported the Commission's calls for evidence on the three acts, with adoption targeted for December 31, 2026, and the German plastic packaging association's view that this would delay the requirements by at least several months. September 2, 2026: European recycling associations asked the Commission to prefer EU-made recyclate and to require certification of non-EU recycling plants (Argus). September 16, 2026: the calls for evidence closed.

IMPLICATION

The counting rule will decide whether recyclate bought from outside the EU counts toward brand customers' recycled-content targets. If certification of non-EU plants is required, brand customers will ask converters for that certification on every grade that uses imported recyclate.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

By the end of December 2026, map how much recyclate you buy from outside the EU, by grade, and ask each supplier what certification of its recycling plant it can provide.

SOURCES & WHAT THEY SIGNAL

- [Packaging Europe — EU Commission opens call for evidence about PPWR's recycled content targets, August 17, 2026](#) — The three acts, the December 31 target and the expected delay.
- [Argus — Recyclers urge EU to prioritise Europe material in PPWR, September 2, 2026](#) — The recyclers' call for EU preference and certification of non-EU plants.

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