

European Green Deal: Putting an end to wasteful packaging: Hopes and fates

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The European Green Deal prioritizes enhancing people's wellbeing by striving for climate neutrality and safeguarding the environment, which benefits citizens, the planet, and the economy. Packaging plays a crucial role within the Green Deal, particularly concerning food production, preservation, and addressing plastic-related challenges tied to five of its 11 priorities: pollution elimination, global green transition, sustainable agriculture, food waste reduction, and nature conservation. Studies show that increased packaging correlates with reduced food waste and enhanced consumer safety, albeit at the expense of increased packaging waste and pollution.

While materials like glass, wood, fiber, paper, metal, and ceramics are well-managed and have low biodiversity impact, the focus of the Green Deal is predominantly on plastics, which dominate food packaging and contribute significantly to ocean pollution. The Green Deal's strategy for plastics and packaging centers on achieving "zero waste" and revising regulations by the end of 2024. Various strategies have been proposed, ranging from the traditional 3R's (Reduce, Recycle, Reuse) to more comprehensive approaches like the 6R's, which include replacing plastics with bioplastics and promoting process innovation. The presentation will illustrate current challenges, outline proposed solutions, and highlight hopes for the future of sustainable packaging practices.

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