

OUR VISION FOR FLEXIBLE PACKAGING IN A SUSTAINABLE EUROPE

The core purpose of packaging is to protect products, which in the case of certain consumer goods is critical for nutrition and health. In future, packaging will continue to provide appropriate protection while further decreasing its environmental footprint and effect on global warming. The packaging waste generated will be reduced to a minimum and its inherent resources will be recovered and recycled, without polluting the natural environment. Flexible packaging solutions, allowing the proper delivery of food, pharmaceuticals, and other essential products with a very limited amount of material used, will play a key role in accomplishing this vision.

OUR ACTIVE ROLE TO ACHIEVE THIS VISION

The European flexible packaging industry fully supports the objective to transform Europe into a more circular and resource efficient economy. The industry is committed to enhancing the contribution of flexible packaging for that purpose.

Designing flexible packaging for full effectiveness and minimum environmental footprint

- The industry is committed to **eco-designing flexible packaging** so that it achieves the **essential functions of packaging** while at the same time delivering the **lowest possible environmental impact** of packed products through their life cycle.
- Flexible packaging needs to continue its essential role in the proper delivery of food, medical and pharmaceutical products, as well as home and personal care goods, for necessary **nutrition, health, hygiene and safety**.
- Flexible packaging must be designed to achieve the appropriate protection of foods as well as **contribute to the minimization of food waste**, which represents a major environmental and economic challenge.
- The industry promotes strongly the use of **Life Cycle Thinking** to assess the overall resource efficiency and environmental impacts of products and packaging solutions. This **holistic approach** helps stakeholders make responsible decisions.
- The industry, in coordination with the European Commission, is currently engaged in a project to develop official Product Environmental Footprint Category Rules (PEFCR) and average Life Cycle Inventory (LCI) datasets. The objective is to model reliable and recognised tools to assess the environmental footprint of products packed with flexible packaging and make them easily available.

Circularity for flexible packaging

- The industry supports the vision of a circular economy where **packaging never becomes waste**. Solutions to collect, sort and recycle flexible packaging do exist and are under continuous development and implementation.
- The flexible packaging industry actively works on **optimising recyclability**. For example, FPE and its members were among those who initiated CEFLEX*, the industry project to enhance the performance of flexible packaging in the circular economy.
- Reaching recyclability for all flexible packaging requires a combination of **redesign and innovation, both in packaging design and reprocessing technologies**.
- It is essential to encourage new technologies for sorting and recycling and to facilitate their implementation in the waste management infrastructures across Europe. A prerequisite is the **proper collection of all (flexible) packaging**.
- The industry supports regulatory measures which promote a circular economy for packaging and facilitate the development of infrastructures for that purpose.
- The industry commits to monitoring closely the progress in recyclability performances of flexible packaging across Europe.

Zero tolerance of leakage and littering into the environment

- The flexible packaging industry considers **marine litter and other leakage into the natural environment as key issues to tackle**.
- Flexible packaging manufacturers implement procedures to efficiently prevent material leakage into the environment during production.
- Preventing flexible packaging from becoming litter is essential. For this, it is crucial to properly collect all packaging waste, implement adequate waste management across Europe along with the elimination of landfilling. In addition, raising awareness and providing better information to end-consumers is key.

Speeding up progress with cooperation

- The industry is committed to working with others to speed up the progress towards more sustainable consumption and production.
- **Collaboration with the entire value chain**, through CEFLEX* and other initiatives, will be strengthened.
- Continued **sharing of good practices within Europe and abroad** will play a key role in accelerating the performance of flexible packaging in the circular economy globally.

* www.ceflex.eu

Flexible Packaging Europe's (FPE) members manufacture all types of flexible packaging. FPE comprises more than 80 small and medium sized companies as well as the major European producers of flexible packaging for all materials. These companies cover more than 85% of the European flexible packaging turnover.