
EPR or no EPR

That is here the question!

Joachim QUODEN
Managing Director of EXPRA

Rekopol's conference
Warsaw – Poland
May 8th, 2025

Founded in 2013

34 MEMBERS & Partners
all industry-owned, non-profit

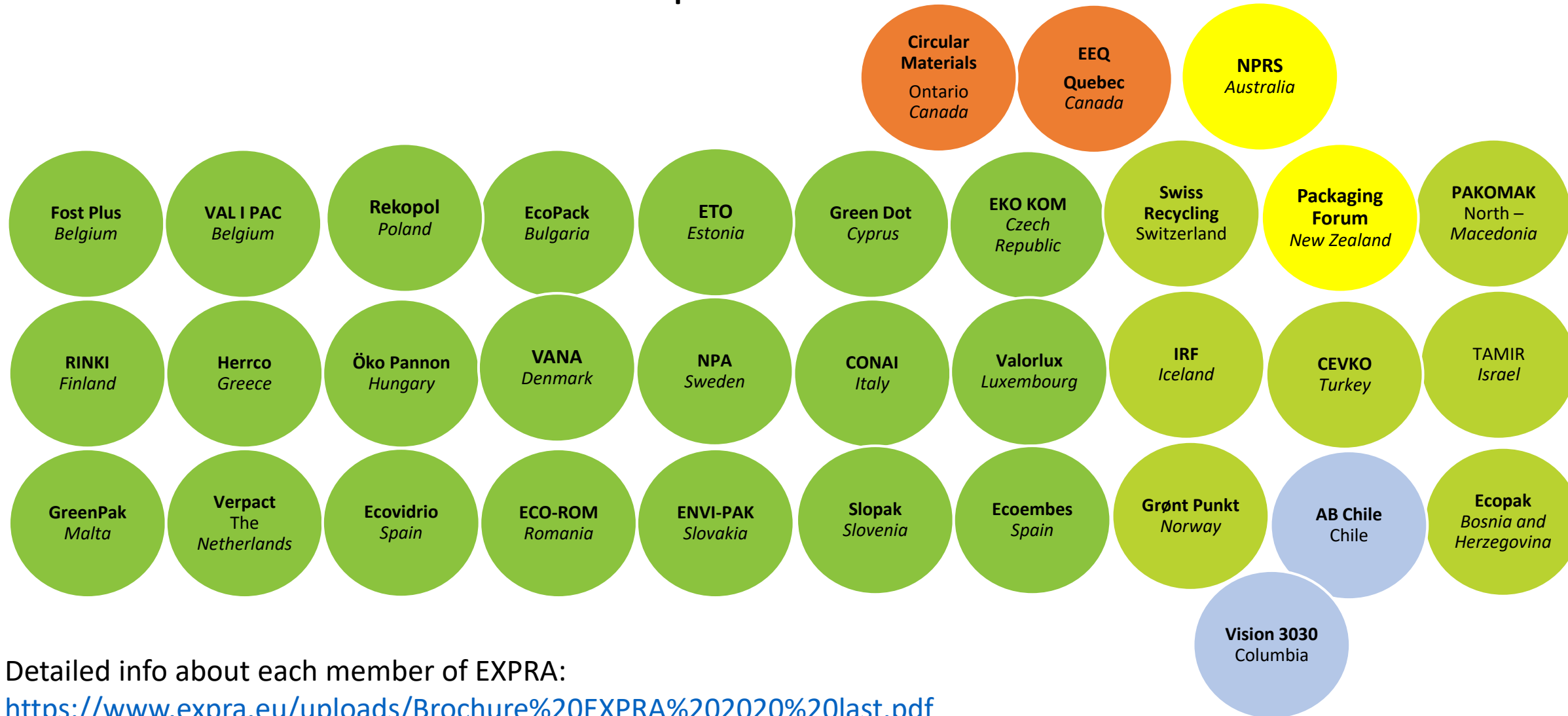
over **HAVE**
30
YEARS of experience and
expertise in the
waste management
field

over **PROVIDE**
250
MILLION
PEOPLE with packaging
collection, sorting
and recycling
infrastructure

of over **ENSURE RECYCLING AND RECOVERY**
22 of packaging every year at
the moment
MILLION TONNES

EXPRA
in a nutshell

Our Members – 34 non-profit Members and Partners



Detailed info about each member of EXPRA:

<https://www.expra.eu/uploads/Brochure%20EXPRA%202020%20last.pdf>

Believing in Cooperation



PACKAGING CHAIN FORUM



Responsibility Alliance



Close the Glass Loop



What is “Extended Producer Responsibility”

- Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) is a resource management tool whereby producers have to take over an **individual responsibility** for the end of life management of their used products/packaging. This can include financial and/or operational responsibility for the collection, sorting and treating these products/packaging for their recycling and recovery.
- This individual responsibility can be partly transferred to a **collective entity**, the so called “Producer Responsibility Organisation” (PRO) run with a producer mandate!
- This PRO should fulfil the obligations of its members in the most efficient and effective way, so usually fulfil inter alia the recycling targets set by the national government or on top, additional targets set by the owners of the PRO.
- The needed (usually external) costs shall be internalized into the product price

Designing EPR / PRO to enable a circular economy for packaging



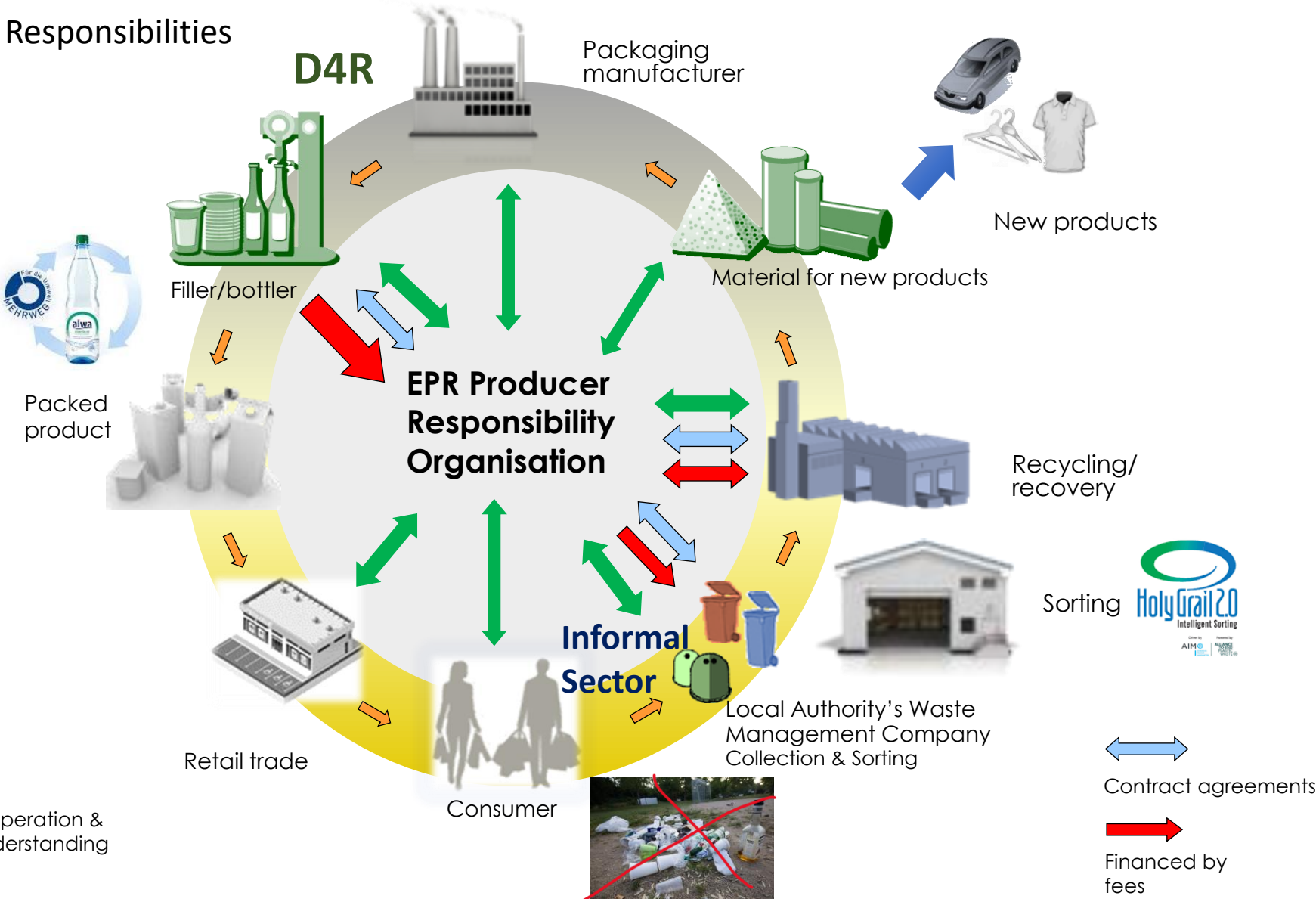
GOVERNMENT

Clear Rules & Responsibilities
Monitoring
Enforcement

Operational
AND financial
responsibility



Strong cooperation & Mutual understanding



Key essence of EPR

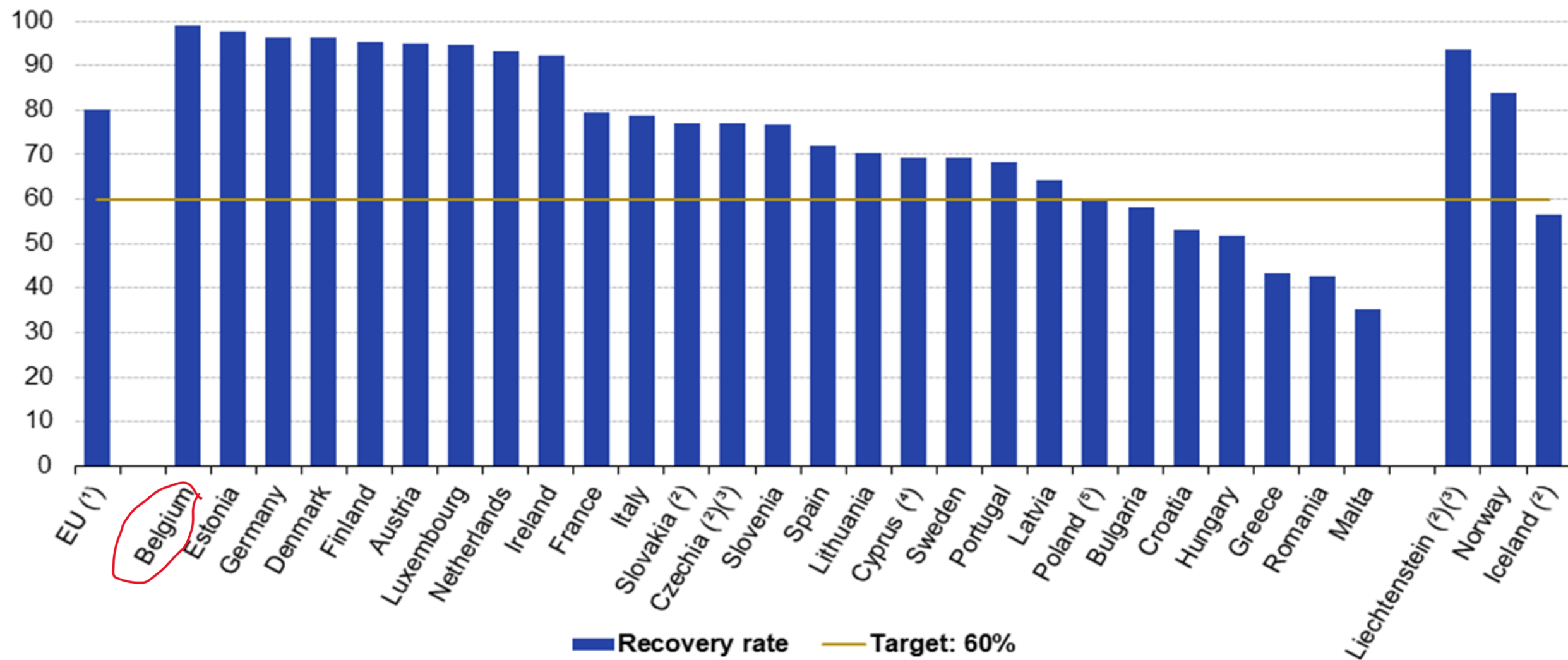
- Obligated companies are paying a fee to a PRO which is **ringfenced** for the purpose only, meaning to keep packaging in the economic circle
- The fee is determined because of **data and knowledge** so that each material is paying for its own economic circle
- Fee modulation is done in a next step once the PRO has enough understanding and data to design the fees more **granular**, for example to differentiate between non recyclable and recyclable packaging of a certain material
- The PRO has the capacity, ability and power to **understand** what each part of the packaging circle is doing and how each part can improve their contribution
- Payments to local authorities and waste management companies are usually connected to **conditions and criteria** to reward those with a good performance and to motivate those lagging behind to catch up but also to help and support them
- New investments are done usually by **tendering** processes and designed to ensure that the country is reaching certain goals and targets in a sustainable way

The Taxation Approach

- A Tax Body is not established to have an **understanding** of the complete value chain and packaging life cycle
- A Tax Body is **not designed** to support each stakeholder to increase its performance
- Municipalities will receive funding **with significant delay**
- The system is **not designed** to increase neither circularity of packaging nor to decrease CO2 emissions; it is “only” designed to collect additional money for municipalities in the best case or to increase funding for the government

Recovery rate of packaging waste, 2022

(%)



⁽¹⁾ Eurostat estimate.

⁽²⁾ Definition differs.

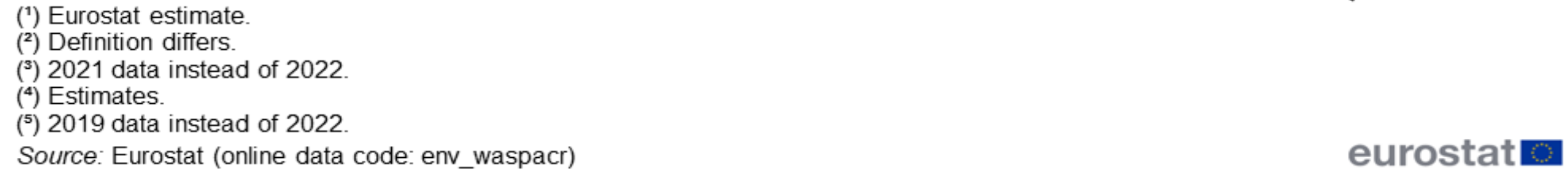
⁽³⁾ 2021 data instead of 2022.

⁽⁴⁾ Estimates.

⁽⁵⁾ 2019 data instead 2022.

Source: Eurostat (online data code: env_waspac)

Coat

eurostat 

A Best Practice: Belgiums EPR Appraoch

Parties responsible for packaging (fillers)

- Take-back obligation (recycling and recovery)
- Reporting obligation

Fostplus



Accreditation

Verification

IRPC

(Interregional Packaging Commission)

(Inter)municipalities

Sorting centers

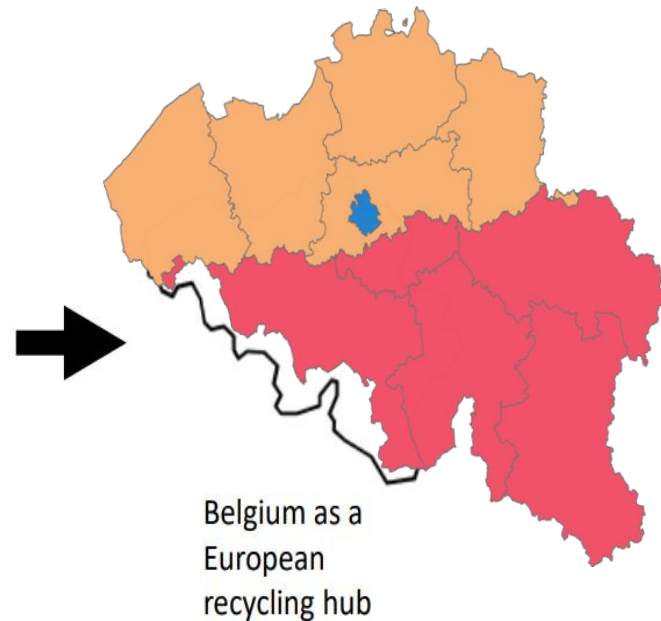
Public & Private Waste management companies

Recyclers

Belgium – Best practices in the management of household packaging (Fost Plus)



The New Blue Bag as a catalyst for the circular economy

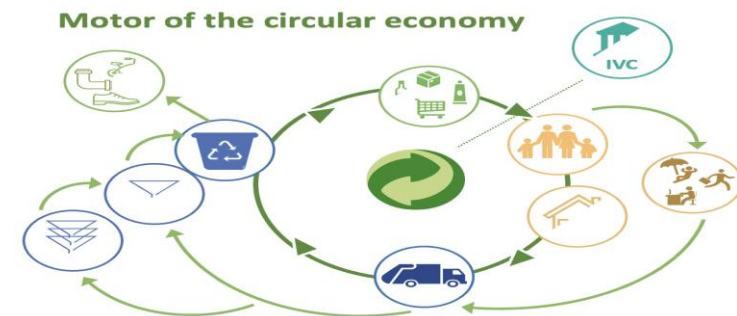


Injection of 1 billion euros in the local circular economy

3 Regions:

- Flanders (6 mio inhabitants)
- Wallonia (4 mio)
- Brussels (1 mio)

Regions are competent for waste management,
but have created a joint legislation for packaging waste:
“Interregional Cooperation Agreement”



Belgium – Best practices in the management of household packaging (Fost Plus)

Deep sorting in evolution : from 8 to 14 and now 16 materials



A practical example for fee modulation: Belgium

Materials	Category	Rate (EUR/kg) excl. VAT
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RECYCLED

General

Glass

Bottles, flasks and jars in glass. This does not apply to packaging in pyrex, crystal or natural opal glass that contains more than 600 ppm fluorine

001

0,0960

Paper-cardboard

Packaging elements in paper-cardboard which either consist of at least 85% paper fibre * or are assessed as recyclable according to the CEPI protocol

002

0,1503

Steel (≥ 50%)

All packaging elements that contain at least 50% steel*

003

0,1117

Aluminium ≥ 50µm (≥ 50% Alu)

All packaging elements that contain at least 50% aluminium in weight and have a thickness greater than or equal to 50 µm

004

0,0481

Aluminium < 50µm (≥ 50% Alu)

Packaging made of aluminium thinner than 50 µm containing at least 50% aluminium

013

0,0481

Beverage cartons

Any packaging element in laminated cardboard – with or without a cap – that consists of cardboard/aluminium/plastic or cardboard/plastic, with a minimum of 50% paper fibre.* This is usually used to package liquids, mainly dairy products and fruit juices

008

0,8180

Cork

Packaging elements made of cork

016-02

0,5855

Rigid plastics

PET – Bottles and flasks - Transparent colourless

Colourless bottles and flasks in transparent PET with at least 95% PET*

005-01

0,2718

PET – Bottles and flasks - Transparent blue

Blue bottles and flasks in transparent PET with at least 95% PET*

005-02

0,7252

PET – Bottles and flasks - Transparent – other than colourless and blue

Bottles and flasks in transparent PET, with another colour than colourless or blue with at least 95% PET*

005-03
(of 011-04)

1,0527

PET – Bottles and flasks – Opaque

Bottles and flasks in non-transparent PET with at least 95% PET*

011-06

1,3893

EXCL. VAT

PET (mono) – Hard packaging elements other than bottles and flasks - Transparent

Hard packaging elements, other than bottles and flasks, which consist of transparent thermoformed mono APET, like trays and cups

Note: this category does not apply for cups & trays in multilayer transparent PET for which 011-05 applies or PET opaque thermoformed PET for which the category 011-08 applies

011-05-A

1,1244

PET (multi) – Hard packaging elements other than bottles and flasks - Transparent

Hard packaging elements, other than bottles and flasks, which consist of transparent thermoformed multilayer PET, like trays and cups, consisting of APET/PE, APET/PE-EVOH-PE or APET-EVOH-APET

Note: this category does not apply for cups & trays in transparent mono APET for which 011-05-A applies or PET opaque thermoformed PET for which the category 011-08 applies

011-05

1,1244

PET – Hard packaging elements other than bottles and flasks - Opaque

Hard packaging elements, other than bottles and flasks, which consist of non-transparent thermoformed PET, like trays and cups with at least 95% mono APET or 95% APET/PE* or cPET

011-08

1,7609

PP – Bottles, flasks and other rigid packaging

Hard packaging elements, including bottles, flasks and caps with at least 95% PP*

011-01

0,8049

PS & XPS – Hard packaging, except for EPS (Expanded polystyrene, styrofoam)

Hard packaging elements containing at least 95% PS or 95% XPS (Extruded polystyrene foamed trays)*

Note: This category does not apply to EPS (styrofoam), for which the category '014-01 EPS (styrofoam)' applies

011-02

0,9195

EPS (expanded polystyrene, styrofoam)

Hard packaging elements consisting of at least 95% of EPS (styrofoam)*

014-01

0,5855

PE – Bottles, flasks and other hard packaging

Hard packaging elements in PE including bottles, flasks and caps, trays, cups etc. with at least 95% PE*

011-03
(of 007)

0,5150

Flexible Plastics

PE – Films

Flexible packaging elements with at least 95% of PE*

011-07

1,2844

PP – Films

Flexible packaging elements with at least 95% PP*

011-09-A

1,9546

Other plastic films

Other flexible packaging elements consisting of at least 95% plastic (e.g. mixed

011-09

1,9546

A practical example: Belgium

Materials	Category	Rate (EUR/kg) excl. VAT
VALORISED		
Compostable and biodegradable plastic packaging Hard and flexible packaging elements which consist of compostable and biodegradable plastics like e.g. PLA, PHA, PBS, PBAT	014-02	3,9092
Other plastic packaging – whether or not composite – where plastic accounts for the greatest weight Hard and flexible packaging elements that do not fall under the previous material categories. These include e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • laminated plastic packaging with an aluminium film (= aluminium laminates); • soft and rigid packaging elements made of PVC, PVdC, PETG, PET GAG; • flexible CPET materials 	014-03	3,9092
Composite materials in which paper-cardboard accounts for the greatest weight Composite packaging in which paper-cardboard accounts for the greatest weight (total paper fibre < 85%) or are not assessed as recyclable according to the CEPI protocol.	012	3,9092
Wood Packaging made of wood	016-01	3,9092
Other valorised Other valorised packaging made of textile, rubber, ...	016-03	3,9092
NON-VALORISED		
Composite packaging in which glass accounts for the greatest weight Composite packaging in which glass accounts for the greatest weight, e.g. packaging in pyrex, crystal or opal glass that contains more than 600 ppm fluorine	017	3,9092
Composite packaging in which steel accounts for the greatest weight Composite packaging in which steel accounts for the greatest weight	018	3,9092
Pottery, ceramics, porcelain, ... Packaging made of pottery, ceramics, porcelain, ...	019	3,9092
HAZARDOUS HOUSEHOLD WASTE		
Household packaging that must be sorted as HHW after use Cf application rules p. 5	—	1,0839
OBSTRUCTIVE PACKAGING		
Household packaging that obstruct the collection, sorting or recycling Cf application rules p. 6	—	3,9092

Ensuring to provide
**sufficient & reliable
funding to municipalities**
for a convenient
household collection
system while motivating
obliged companies to
move to fully recyclable
packaging with strong
financial incentives

EPR as a solution – Golden Rules

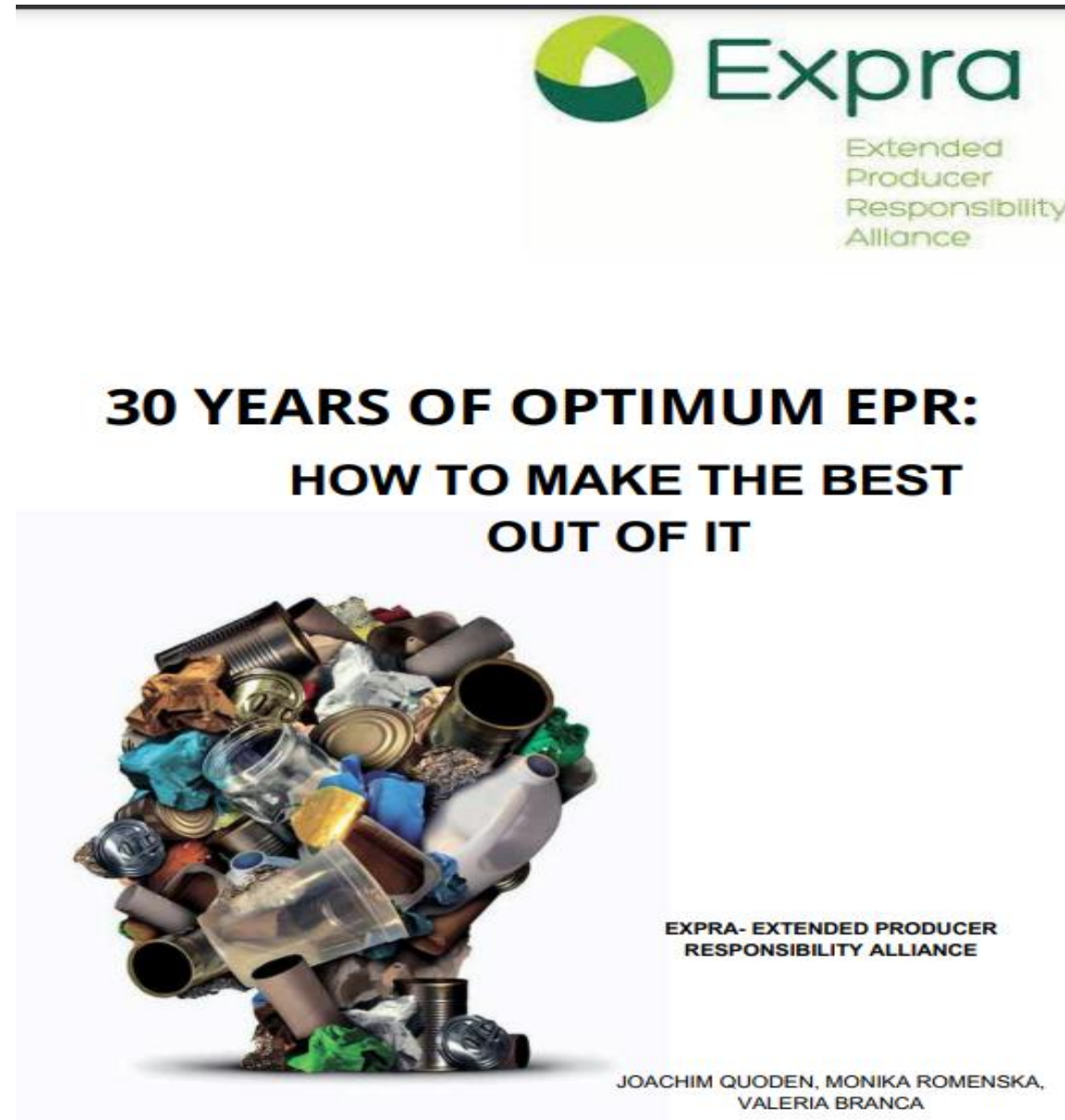
Key principles that EPR should follow:

- a) A clear separation of roles and responsibilities of all relevant actors involved;
- b) Ownership of the EPR limited to the **obliged companies** and packaging value chain; **no conflict of interests**
- c) Not-for-profit set-up; **Service of General Economic Interest**
- d) Measurable waste management targets;
- e) Reporting obligations of all actors of the packaging life cycle;
- f) Equal treatment of **producers** of products regardless of their origin or size;
- g) Information to and education of **consumers**; able to take an informed decision
- h) Strong transparency on money and material flows;**
- i) Full cost coverage, to reflect the end-of-life costs of its products;
- j) **Cost efficiency**, if third parties receive funding scope and performance has to be defined clearly; tender procedure
- k) **Fee modulation**, reflecting the **net costs** of a packaging, taking into consideration the packaging' **recyclability** in a second step;
- l) **Monitoring and enforcement by government and authorities especially also for online sales and market places**
- m) Structured discussion and input procedure with the **other stakeholders** (Stakeholder Dialogue Platform for example)



Most of these proposals are already in Art 8a WFD – Minimum requirements for EPR but have not been really implemented

> 26 Best practices identified



<https://expra.eu/2024/09/18/expra-summarized-the-over-30-years-of-extended-producer-responsibility-implementation-and-best-practices-in-a-new-document-30-years-of-epr-how-to-make-the-best-out-of-it/>

26 Best practices identified

- **Clear Allocation of Responsibilities:** clearly defining the roles of various stakeholders, including governments, producers, retailers, municipalities and waste management sectors, to avoid conflicts of interest, overlaps respective open responsibilities.
- **Stakeholders Involvement:** involving all affected stakeholders in the development and ongoing improvement of the EPR policy to ensure acceptability, credibility and effectiveness.
- **Effective PRO Governance and Transparency:** PROs should be owned by obligated industry players, with a broad representation of companies to make decisions and guide management to avoid a conflict of interests and to oversee and steer the performance of the PRO.
- **Non profit/ Profit not for distribution status:** all fees collected from obliged industry should be used for the tasks of the PRO and invested into the EPR system.
- **Transparent Determination of Fees and Compliance Contribution:** setting EPR fees reflecting the net costs of a respective packaging material through a transparent process, involving producers and/or sectoral representation, reflecting the net costs of managing each material taking also into account income from selling the sorted materials while avoiding cross subsidies.
- **Using Fee eco modulation:** supporting the change to only recyclable packaging in a second step of the development of EPR fees as soon as data and expertise on the net costs of the various sub materials are available.
- **Monitoring, Evaluation and Enforcement:** governments must enforce EPR regulations and obligations, monitor individual or collective compliance, and apply sanctions for non-compliance to maintain the effectiveness of the system.
- **Preventing what is not necessary:** supporting companies to evaluate which parts of their packaging are necessary and where alternative solutions for example like re-use or refill are available is an important part of the work of an optimum PRO.
- **Improving the design for recycling and sustainability of packaging:** supporting companies to understand the needs and conditions of the end of life treatment of a respective packaging ensures that all packaging on the market are recyclable.
- **Influencing and steering the end of life treatment of packaging waste,** for example, by holding the ownership of packaging waste to be able to chose the optimum sorting plant, to design the appropriate fractions to be sorted as well the best located and equipped recycler.
- **Running smart call for tenders:** if the PRO is able to chose the collection and/or sorting and/ or recycling partner it should organize call for tenders which ensure that the best partner from an economic but also environmental point of view is chosen.
- **Ensuring a level playing field,** especially in case of competing PROs, the government has to ensure a monitoring and enforcement infrastructure, best by a special independent entity, to oversee the competing PROs and tackle free riding companies.
- **Tackling free riding also on online sales:** as companies selling their packaged goods from outside the EU directly to the private consumer often do not fulfil their EPR obligations and governments having difficulties to enforce outside their respective country, market places and fulfilment houses should be made responsible as fall back option.
- **Ambitious and Clever Policy Targets:** setting clear, ambitious, and smart targets for increased recycling and improved environmental performance of products.
- **Nationwide Collection and "Out of Home" Strategies:** ensuring accessible and convenient separate collection services nationwide, including strategies for collecting packaging waste arising outside homes wherever packaged goods are consumed.

- **Developing and implementing local and federal communication campaigns** to motivate inhabitants to sort their packaging and to sort it in the right way
- **Developing and running education initiatives and campaigns** with tailor made approaches for kindergarden, primary and secondary schools and other specific groups and situations
- **Developing and implementing anti-litter strategies and activities as well as environmental friendly behaviours:** despite all efforts some packaging are still ending up in the environment so that a PRO should run respective litter prevention programs as well as support clean up initiatives.
- **Including Commercial and Industrial Packaging within EPR:** (C&I) packaging, usually representing half of the packaging put on the market, having different stakeholders and packaging composition has to be treated differently from household packaging.
- **Enabling investments for a state-of-the-art infrastructure and facilitating innovation:** a Producer Responsibility Organization (PRO) should consistently seek ways to enhance the existing infrastructure, promoting new technologies to make the system constantly more efficient.
- **Evaluating, understanding and improving the carbon emission effects** of collection, sorting and recycling of packaging waste, inter alia to avoid a conflict between circularity and carbon neutrality
- **Integrating EPR & DRS:** whereas EPR is able to offer a solution for all packaging, DRS systems are limited to beverage packaging so that double infrastructure should be avoided but holistic and aligned solutions be developed, including new approaches like a digital DRS using existing collection infrastructure or selective collection through reward systems
- **EPR is not a stand-alone policy principle:** combining EPR with other measures, such as Pay-As-You-Throw, landfill bans, and separate collection of other waste streams like bio-waste, for better results.
- **Integration of the Informal Sector:** in Countries with informal waste management systems, incorporating the informal sector into EPR implementation to avoid social conflicts and leverage their expertise.
- **Control vertical integration not to damage the whole EPR system:** waste management companies or recyclers running a PRO on top might have conflict of interests which the government will have to manage using the available anti trust tools.
- **Compensation of the necessary and efficient costs for the use of (municipal) infrastructure and operations** with the aim of guaranteeing an efficient and effective collection and management of household packaging waste without paying luxury approaches.

CO2 emission savings

Savings in CO2 eq emissions due to recycling and recovery of packaging waste is equal to 0,7%-1% of carbon footprint of EU-27

Eurostat estimates that the total carbon footprint of EU-27 was equal to 6.8 tonnes of CO2 per person in 2019.

https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Greenhouse_gas_emission_statistics_-_carbon_footprints

The CO2 eq saving per inhabitant achieved by recycling and using packaging waste is comparable to the average production of CO2 emissions of each passenger car over the distance 400-600 km

Average emissions from new passenger cars registered in Europe in 2020 - 107.5 gCO2/km

<https://www.eea.europa.eu/ims/co2-performance-of-new-passenger>

Still great potential when increasing collection, sorting and recycling, especially for plastics!

Technological improvements possible

New recycling processes

Producer Responsibility Alliance

an estimated
SAVING
minimum
45
KG
of CO₂ per inhabitant per year

Scenarios in the EXPRA Study	Savings of CO2 eq	
	kg/i nh	mil. t/year
Scenario 1	70, 2	16,3
Scenario 2	65,6	15,2
Scenario 3	56,4	13,1
Scenario 4* - the lowest assumption 80% of Sc. 3	45,1	10,4

A photograph of three people standing together and smiling. On the left is a woman with long dark hair wearing a floral patterned top and a blue lanyard. In the center is a man with short grey hair wearing a dark blazer over a light shirt and a blue lanyard. On the right is a woman with dark hair wearing a grey blazer over a dark top and a blue lanyard. They are all wearing lanyards with 'Coopra' logos. The background is a blue wall with some geometric shapes.

THANK YOU!
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Profession:

10/92 – 01/93

Independent Lawyer since 1995

02/93 – 06/06

German Ministry of Environment, EPR department

10/00 – 02/13

German Green Dot scheme **DSD**, i.e. Syndicus + Head of International Affairs

01/18 – 12/21

Secretary General respective Managing Director of **PRO EUROPE**

10/13 - 01/25

Member of the **EC Expert Group** on Circular Economy Financing

01/00 – ...

Chair / Co-chair of **ISWA** WG Governance & Legal Issues & Member of ISWA STC

04/13 -

Member of the **OECD** expert group on EPR

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Member of the **Product Stewardship Institute** Advisory Panel (Boston, US)

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