



New EU packaging rules: European Parliament's Environment Committee vote fails to acknowledge structural realities in the spirits sector

Brussels, 24 October 2023 - Today's vote on the new PPWR (Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation) fails to exempt spirits from re-use obligations, a surprise move that would put well-established sustainability practices at risk and undermine brand identity and competitiveness, particularly of SME producers. In addition, the adopted provisions on packaging minimization would further threaten the sector's iconic bottle diversity.

Following today's vote by the European Parliament's Environment Committee on the new PPWR (Rapporteur: Frédérique Ries MEP [Renew/Belgium]), spiritsEUROPE is greatly concerned that the structural realities of the sector have not been adequately taken into account. Ahead of the upcoming vote in Plenary, the sector calls for further amendments to ensure the continued exemption from mandatory re-use targets and improve the protection of iconic designs.

"The European Commission, in its Impact Assessment and legislative proposal, has made it clear why exempting spirits from mandatory re-use targets is the most sensible and most sustainable approach. We are very surprised to see the Parliament deviate from that line. Compared to other alcoholic beverages, spirits typically move in significantly lower volumes, at much slower speed, and over longer distances, hence mandated re-use is not the tool of choice from a sustainability point of view", said Sarah Melina Siebel, Director Internal Market and Sustainability at spiritsEUROPE.

Ulrich Adam, Director General of spiritsEUROPE commented: *"Contrary to popular belief, bottle diversity as we know it today cannot be maintained under a mandated re-use system. Such a scheme will kill off designs but won't help to decarbonize the EU. In other words, we are facing an unretrievable loss of bottle diversity and craftsmanship in spirits, which will also negatively impact the 60% of bottles that go into export."*

In addition, the sector remains deeply concerned that Intellectual Property rights for packaging are insufficiently protected in the text adopted by the Committee. Under the ENVI provisions, bottles for spirits drinks will de-facto be standardised and creative designs and iconic shapes would gradually disappear.

"Speaking of designs, we appreciate the ENVI Committee's attempt to safeguard design in the future. However, current wording won't ensure that. In the Plenary, it will be important to make sure that Intellectual Property rights, not just design rights, are adequately protected from mandatory minimisation requirements," Adam added.

ENDS



Note to editors

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- spiritsEUROPE is the representative body for the spirits industry at European level comprising 31 associations and 11 international companies: www.spirits.eu.
- [Sustainable from #Farm2Glass](#) – The spirit sector at the heart of a sustainable food system
- Spirits closing the loop: <https://youtu.be/lubuk6ZPeAs?si=w5sfzCY1ArF7cvA3>