

PRESS RELEASE

FIRST GUIDE TO HELP CORPORATE DECISION-MAKING ABOUT PACKAGING IS PUBLISHED

Brussels, 9 July 2009 – A Western Europe without packaging would lead to a 15-fold rise in food waste, argue EUROPEN and ECR Europe. This telling anecdote is contained in *Packaging in the Sustainability Agenda: A Guide for Corporate Decision Makers*, their newly released guide designed to help senior executives take decisions that optimize the contribution their company's packaging policies make to sustainability.

EUROPEN, The European Organization for Packaging and the Environment, and ECR Europe, the group that promotes collaboration across the supply chain to serve consumers better, faster and at less cost, wrote the guide to combat widespread mistakes made when evaluating the role of packaging.

As the project co-chairs Sonia Raja and Lars Lundquist put it; the key issue is that packaging is usually viewed as a stand-alone product. "This ignores its function, which is to protect, distribute, and display wares. A package that fails to do this well will lead to greater wastage, thus imposing a heavy burden on the environment, irrespective of its composition."

The central problem is that the role of packaging in the product supply chain is often too complex to be easily grasped. This raises the risk that one part of that chain takes a decision that may seem right, but will in fact have a detrimental impact somewhere else up or down the line. Collectively, such decisions significantly reduce overall efficiency while raising costs, and can also lead to more waste. The sum total of these isolated decisions therefore reduces the contribution packaging can make to sustainable development.

Packaging must meet a multitude of functional objectives while minimizing its impact on the environment. Eurostat data released earlier this year showed that significant progress has already been made. While GDP grew by 40% from 1998 to 2006, the amount of packaging placed on the EU market only increased by 11%. "The easiest gains have largely been made", said Julian Carroll, the Managing Director of EUROPEN. "The challenge to continue improving the performance of packaging is becoming more complex. And that means that corporate decision-makers increasingly need to become involved."

"It makes no sense to talk about 'sustainable packaging'. The useful discussion is about the positive role of packaging in the sustainability programmes of companies. An ongoing effort to seek more sustainable ways of manufacturing and distributing wares is required", Ms Raja and Mr Lundquist said.

Packaging in the Sustainability Agenda: A Guide for Corporate Decision Makers is designed to help decision-makers do just that. Understanding the role of packaging, that crucial but underappreciated component of modern economies, in this search will help everyone along the supply chain better meet their sustainability objectives.

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Packaging in the Sustainability Agenda: A Guide for Corporate Decision Makers is available to download from EUROOPEN (www.europen.be) and ECR Europe (www.ecr-net.org).

About EUROOPEN

EUROOPEN--The European Organization for Packaging and the Environment--is an industry and trade organization open to any company with an economic interest in packaging and packaged products. Members of EUROOPEN are identified as companies which support a united trade and industry organization, dedicated to satisfactorily resolving the environmental challenges facing the packaging chain in an active and co-operative manner without favouring any specific packaging material or system.

About ECR Europe

ECR Europe is a voluntary and collaborative retailer-manufacturer platform with a mission to "fulfil consumer wishes better, faster and at less cost". It is a non-profit organisation which aims to help retailers and manufacturers in the consumer goods industry to drive supply chain efficiencies and deliver business growth and consumer value.

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