

PRESS RELEASE

Transparency provided by the LUCID Packaging Register proving effective at all levels

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After just under two years, extensive data and information is now available on the initial impact of the new Verpackungsgesetz (Packaging Act): a considerable increase in recycled packaging, a much larger number of producers that are living up to their producer responsibility, regulations that are being enforced. The minimum standard for determining the recyclability of packaging and the Packaging Register itself are being discussed as model examples at European level. The Verpackungsgesetz and the LUCID Packaging Register have created positive momentum on the market.

Producer responsibility

Almost 200,000 producers are now meeting their obligations under the Verpackungsgesetz, 140,000 more than four years ago. More than 75 percent of all packaging finances the system of yellow bags and yellow bins, contributing to high recycling volumes. The LUCID Packaging Register has achieved a turnaround in this regard. But it would not be possible without enforcement: almost 6,000 administrative offences have been, or are ready to be, reported to enforcement authorities. *"The data shows that producer responsibility for packaging has become a top priority again"*, says Ms Gunda Rachut, Chair of the Stiftung Zentrale Stelle Verpackungsregister (Foundation Central Agency Packaging Register – ZSVR).

Recycling and recycling-friendly design

Progress is also being made with regard to recycling. A total of 5.3 million tonnes in private final consumer packaging has been materially recovered. This translates into a 13 percent increase in the packaging volumes recycled. As far as plastics are concerned, the volume recovered is up by as much as 50 percent. *"The recycling volumes are being driven by two factors: the higher target quotas set out in the the Verpackungsgesetz and the larger volumes participating in systems"*, is how Ms Rachut describes the momentum that the LUCID Packaging Register has created with regard to recycling. These values do not include more than 8,500 tonnes in packaging waste exported for recovery due to the lack of sufficient evidence regarding these recovery activities. *"We perform thorough audits based on our audit guidelines. We are rigorous in our commitment to putting a stop to dubious recycling paths,"* clarifies Ms Rachut.

The new minimum standard for determining the recyclability of packaging makes it even easier to determine whether a packaging design is recycling-friendly. *"We hope that this will now also allow smaller producers to prepare their packaging solutions better for recycling"*, explains Ms Rachut.

Digital strategy

The mammoth programme involved in the establishment of the Packaging Register and its transition to regular operations was completed not only within a very short space of time, but also by a very streamlined team comprising 45 full-time employees. *"This is only possible with a strong digital strategy and agile management, making us fast, efficient and thorough. At the same time, we can boost commitment among our employees. This is an approach that we want and indeed have to systematically build upon in 2021"*, is how Ms Rachut summarises the basis for the project's success. The fact that the ZSVR ranks among the top tiers in digitalisation competitions reinforces this statement. *"But for us, it is not about winning prizes. Protecting the environment is associated with huge challenges. If we want to rise to these challenges and achieve further development in the long run, this can only be achieved with the systematic use of digital technology and working methods"*, is how Ms Rachut explains the background to her strategy.

Conclusion

The Packaging Register is proving effective with its transparent approach. It highlights the positive developments but also flags up the weak points that remain. *"This makes packaging the best documented material flow in Germany. This transparency provides a basis for policymakers to promote smart and sustainable further developments in the waste hierarchy"*, is how Ms Rachut summarises the impact of the first two years and the outlook. *"The Register and the minimum standard have made their way into the European debate about the further development of packaging law. This impact that we have had confirms our approach as a lean government authority, but also as a foundation entrusted with statutory duties."*

About the ZSVR

The Stiftung Zentrale Stelle Verpackungsregister (Foundation Central Agency Packaging Register – ZSVR) is headquartered in Osnabrück. The founders are the Bundesvereinigung der Deutschen Ernährungsindustrie (Federation of German Food and Drink Industries – BVE), the Handelsverband Deutschland (German Retail Association – HDE), the IK Industrievereinigung Kunststoffverpackungen (German Plastics Association – IK), and the Markenverband (German Trade Mark Association). Since the Verpackungsgesetz (Packaging Act) entered into force on 1 January 2019, the ZSVR has served as an entrusted body to foster greater transparency and control in packaging recycling. To this end, it maintains a register of all industrial and commercial parties with producer responsibility and checks the dual systems and packaging recycling so as to promote fair competition among the parties involved. Lawyer Gunda Rachut is the Chair of the Foundation. Further information is available at www.verpackungsregister.org.

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