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Food packaging: waste or resource?

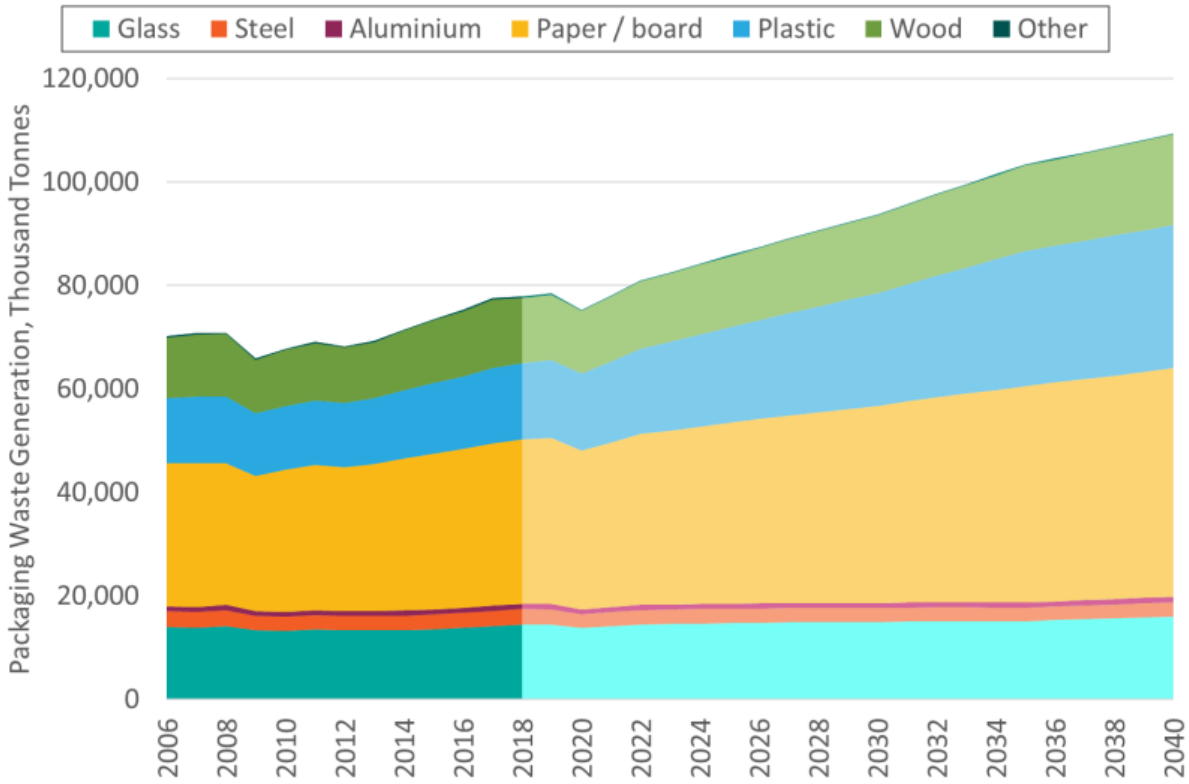
ECESP Circular Talk –
6th September 2023

Food packaging sustainability challenges

- Rapid **growth of on-the-go** and ready to eat segment – specific challenges for packaging design, driving demand for plastic and paper-based
- **Recycled content remains limited** in paper-based and plastic food contact
- Paper-based generally combined with chemical additives or plastics
- **Widespread presence of substances of concern** in food packaging (e.g. PFAS and CMRs in take-away)
- Recycling and **effective sorting in on-the-go settings remains limited**, high costs of littering incurred by public authorities
- **Limited development of reuse systems** or credible solutions to sustainability challenges

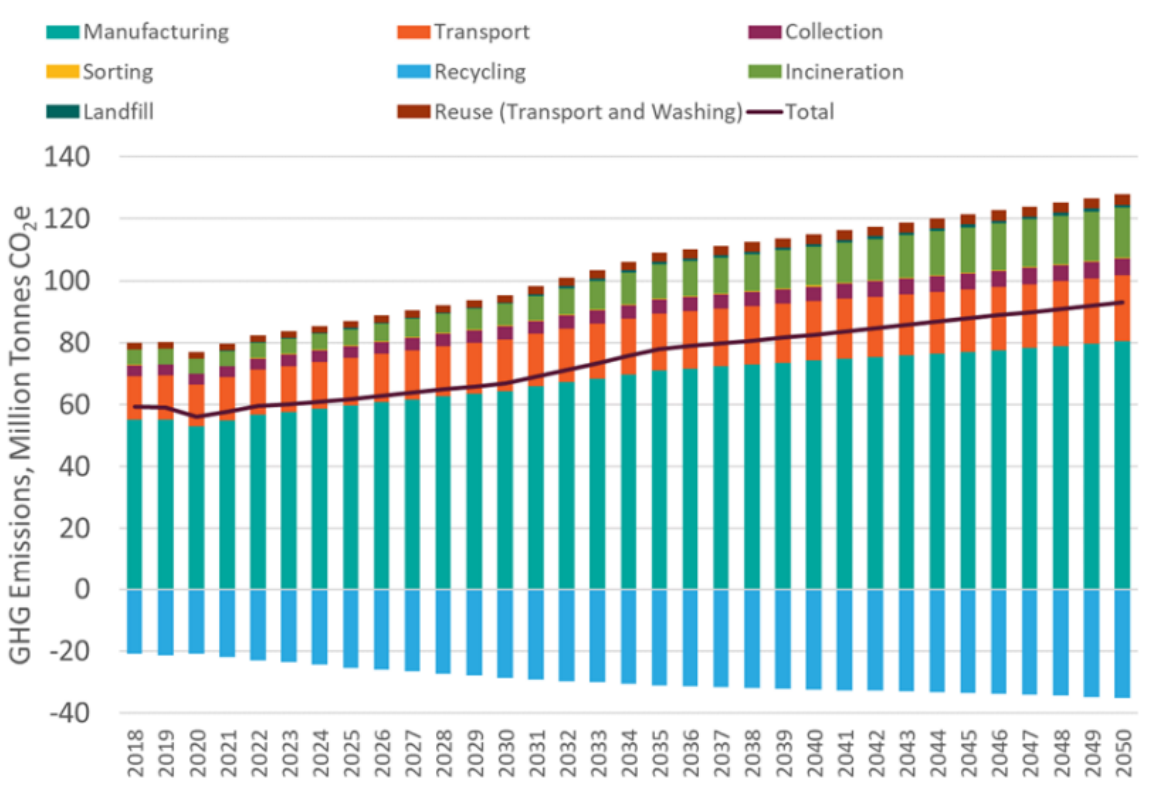
Risk of material substitution – paper straws 2.0

Figure 5-2 Generation of Packaging Waste, Thousand Tonnes



The overall tonnage of waste by packaging type in the latest year of historic data (2018) is shown in Figure 5-3 (next page).

Figure 9 GHG emissions million tonnes CO_2e (Source: Eunomia baseline report)



Misleading campaigns in the sector

Paper-based packaging good for the forests?

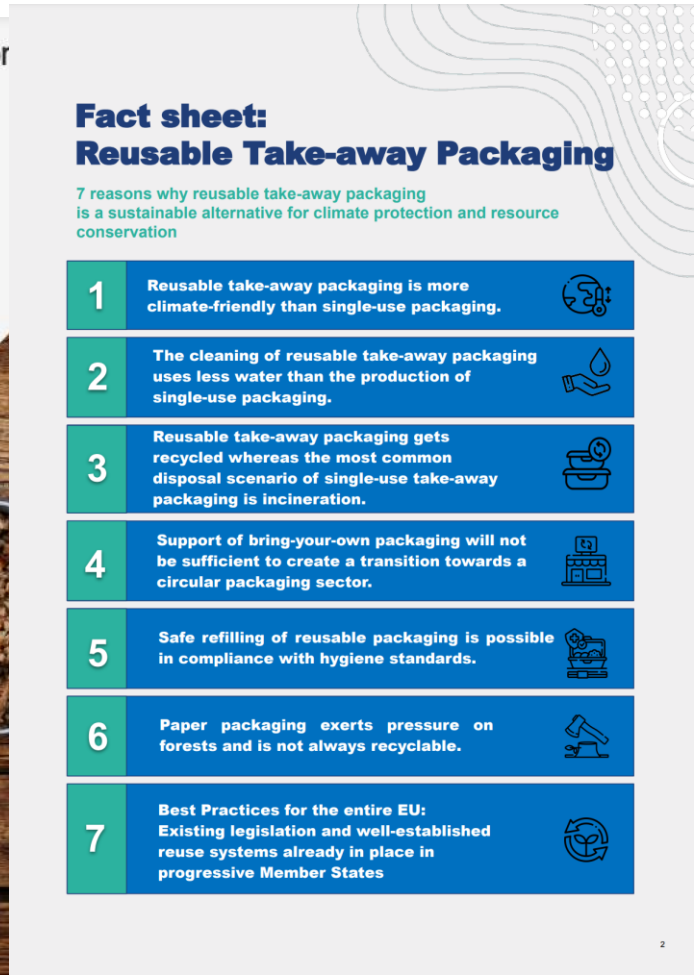
Reusable packaging surrounded by rats?

McDonalds helping our children to read?

PPWR recommendations for food

- Maintain an **ambitious waste prevention targets** to reverse the trend of growing levels of packaging waste and associated impacts (including 2018 baseline)
- Define **credible reuse targets across relevant food and beverage segments** – including food retail, dine-in and take-away for the HORECA sector
- Develop **robust minimum requirements for reuse systems** to ensure they deliver environmental performance
- Address the **gap in food contact legislation to address substances of concern** in food packaging including PFAS and other problematic substances food in paper-based packaging in particular
- Address **packaging led drivers of food waste**, such as multi-packs
- Maintain the role of secondary legislation to **define design for recycling requirements** for major packaging groups
- Ensure **EPR systems support circularity** by supporting recyclability, waste prevention and covering the costs of littered (food) packaging

Relevant resources on food packaging



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Thanks you!

Keep in touch

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The EEB gratefully acknowledges the financial support from the LIFE Programme of the European Union. This communication reflects the organizers' views and does not commit the donors.