

## MeetingPack 2026 presents the packaging of the future in Valencia, aligned with European regulations

**Valencia, 24 April 2026.** The way we shop is about to change. With the entry into force of the European Regulation on Packaging and Packaging Waste (PPWR), everyday actions such as picking up a tray of packaged fruit or buying ready-to-eat food in single use plastic containers will give way to more sustainable alternatives in European supermarkets.

In this context, AIMPLAS and AINIA have held MeetingPack 2026 in Valencia, the leading event on barrier materials and packaging, where the sector has showcased what this new model will look like through innovative solutions aligned with the PPWR.

The conference focused on real alternatives that are already market ready: recyclable, compostable and reusable packaging, as well as solutions developed using post-consumer material, which will make it possible to replace many of the current options. Their application has been demonstrated in trays, tubs and bottles.

The new European regulation will bring about a visible transformation in consumers' everyday lives. Among other measures, single use plastic packaging for fruit and vegetables under 1.5 kg will be restricted, deposit return systems will be promoted, and the use of reusable solutions for ready-to-eat products will be encouraged. In this scenario, MeetingPack has shown that the sector is already working on viable alternatives that maintain key packaging functions—such as food protection and shelf life—while reducing environmental impact.

### From the laboratory to the shelf: market ready solutions

One of the key messages of the congress was that the transition is already underway. Faced with the phase out of many current solutions, such as single use plastic trays or unnecessary packaging, the sector is developing proposals based on recyclable monomaterial structures, recycled and compostable materials, natural based sources and reusable systems that make it possible to adapt to the new regulation.

The opening of the congress highlighted the scale of the challenge facing the sector. The Managing Director of AINIA, Cristina Del Campo, stressed that the new European regulatory framework is redefining the rules of the game and requires progress towards circular models "where recyclability, reuse and waste reduction are central pillars, without compromising key aspects such as food safety or product shelf life."

Along the same lines, the Director of AIMPLAS, José Antonio Costa, underlined that "events such as MeetingPack aim to provide clarity in an environment of uncertainty and help companies make decisions in the face of a change of model that is already imminent."

For his part, Felipe Carrasco Torres, Regional Secretary for Industry, Trade and Consumer Affairs, stated that MeetingPack 2026 is being held at a time of deep industrial transition that is forcing a rethink of how to produce, how to innovate and how to compete. "In this scenario," he added, "the role of technology centres is key, not only as strategic partners but also as a bridge between scientific research and the industrial market."

Felipe Carrasco reaffirmed the commitment of the Regional Ministry of Industry, through Ivace+i, to the 11 technology centres of the Valencian Community, and highlighted that in 2025 the Valencian Institute for Competitiveness and Innovation allocated nearly €14 million to AINIA and AIMPLAS for research projects, representing just over 30% of their income.

Likewise, the Director General of FIAB, Mauricio García de Quevedo, opened the programme with the keynote "Feeding the future: sustainable packaging for a responsible industry", in which he defended the need for companies to "integrate sustainability into their business strategy" in response to regulatory pressure and new recycling and reuse targets.

## **Materials and processes already shaping the future**

The first technical session, focused on innovative materials and processes to produce sustainable packaging and moderated by Eduardo Gómez, Global Technical Director of SM RESINAS, brought together several experts from the sector who presented concrete advances in this field.

Clelia Cazzola (ITP TPL) presented new extrusion technologies to develop lighter, high-performance films, noting that “redesigning flexible packaging is no longer an option, but a necessity driven by regulation, market demands and environmental responsibility.”

For his part, Fabio Barca (Mitsubishi Chemical Group) addressed recyclability and performance in the preservation of frozen food, pointing out that “the use of barrier materials makes it possible to extend food shelf life, reduce waste—both food and packaging—and facilitate recycling, in line with circular economy strategies.”

Meanwhile, Pere Becerra (COMEXI) presented efficient industrial solutions for the application of barrier coatings and explained how in line machinery works. However, he emphasized that investment in this type of equipment is high and therefore recommended that companies start by making use of the equipment they already have.

## **Second day**

The congress concluded with the sessions held on 22 April, including the presentation by Juan Tomás, Packaging Researcher at AIMPLAS, who addressed new business models based on the reuse of plastic packaging to respond to sector specific legislation such as the PPWR or the Digital Product Passport. He also presented the research being carried out within the framework of the Reloop and BuddiePack projects as examples of solutions oriented towards circularity and regulatory compliance.

For her part, Leonor Pascual, Project Manager in Packaging Technologies at AINIA, together with Óscar Rico, Director of Quality Assurance and Sustainability at the cosmetics company Germaine de Capuccini, presented a successful case of collaborative innovation. The project incorporates 15% packaging waste from the company itself back into the manufacturing process, thereby demonstrating both consumer safety and product functionality.

## **A forum for debate with value chain leaders**

The event featured the strategic vision of key players leading the sector’s transformation. Throughout the sessions, success stories and regulatory challenges were analyzed with contributions from organizations and companies such as Ecoembes, Repsol Materials, Mahou San Miguel and TotalEnergies Corbion, among others. The consensus highlighted that public private collaboration and investment in R&D are the only drivers capable of turning the requirements of the new European Packaging Regulation into a competitive advantage for national industry.

## **Recognizing excellence: MeetingPack 2026 Awards**

During the event, the winners of the MeetingPack 2026 Awards were announced, following a vote by attendees for their favorite entries. The winners revealed during the gala dinner were the monomaterial proposal ReKeepEat, presented by Grupo Latero, and Cryovac, by Sealed Air, for professional foodservice solutions, in the rigid and flexible packaging categories respectively.

Finalists in the flexible category included ITP’s lidding film and Lecta’s recyclable high barrier paper, while in the rigid category finalists were an innovative dairy system developed by Faerch Group and a barrier film by Leygatech.

These awards once again demonstrated that the industry is not only innovating in the laboratory but already has scalable solutions ready for industrial implementation.

This seventh edition of MeetingPack closes with a highly positive balance, both in terms of attendance and the quality of professional exchanges. The event attracted hundreds of professionals, international delegations and leaders from across the value chain to Valencia, generating a significant impact on the city and reaffirming it as a leading hub of technological knowledge in Europe.

The strong response from industry shows that sustainability is now at the core of business strategy. With the close of this edition, AINIA and AIMPLAS reaffirm their commitment to continue promoting technology

transfer, ensuring that the packaging of the future is, above all, an ally of the circular economy. The success of this edition was made possible thanks to the support of a strong network of partners. MeetingPack 2026 was sponsored by Enplater Group, Repsol, SM Resinas, Guztec Polymers, APA, TotalEnergies Corbion, Morchem, Leygatech and Lecta as Gold sponsors; supported by Ecoembes, Fakolith, Mondi, Comexi and Mitsubishi Chemical Europe and TOPAS as Silver sponsors; and with the collaboration of TPL, Grupalia 4.0, Faerch, Quimóvil and Novamont as Bronze sponsors.

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