

Environmental omnibus must simplify packaging rules now

Brussels, 23/09/2026 – “The implementation of the Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation (PPWR) is creating confusion, legal uncertainty, and disproportionate burden for small businesses. Entrepreneurs ask for practical solutions now. Parliament and Member States should approve the suspension of the obligation to appoint authorised representatives in each Member State”, stated SMEunited President Davide Galli.

“SMEunited stands by the objectives of PPWR. However, the implementation of the Regulation is failing to deliver the simplification that was promised”, Mr Galli said. “Since the first obligations became applicable on 12 August 2026, SMEs have faced lack of legal certainty, continued fragmentation, and insufficiently clear guidance. Many SMEs now face additional complexity and costs when selling across borders”, he added.

The implementation of the PPWR suffers from weak governance. Implementing acts have not been issued in time and simplification measures proposed under the Environmental Omnibus are not yet approved by the co-legislators.

“SMEs cannot wait years for solutions. While the upcoming Circular Economy Act could address certain issues, entrepreneurs ask for clarity today. The European Commission, Parliament and Member States must prioritise short-term measures to provide relief for SMEs. Suspending the requirement to appoint authorised representatives in every Member State is the first action they should take”, Mr Galli stressed.

Given the difficulties surrounding the implementation, we insist on a sufficiently long grace period, consistent with the ‘advice first, sanction later’ approach”, Mr Galli added.

SMEunited calls on policymakers to adopt a pragmatic approach, speed up the Environmental Omnibus, and ensure that enforcement remains proportionate throughout the transition period. “SMEs want to comply with the rules. What they require is a framework that is clear, proportionate, and workable in practice. The priority now must be to provide immediate relief where possible”, Mr Galli concluded.

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EDITORS' NOTES: SMEunited is the association of Crafts and SMEs in Europe with 65 member organisations from over 30 European countries. SMEunited represents national cross-sectoral Craft and SME federations and European SME branch organisations. SMEunited is a recognised employers' organisation and European Social Partner. SMEunited was formerly known as UEAPME.

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