11 December 2024

**Reflection on the role of packaging when disclosing information on unsold consumer products**

Cosmetics Europe developed the paragraph below *in italic* following to a request by DG ENV to provide input on whether packaging should be accounted when disclosing information on discarded unsold consumer products.

*CE strongly recommends that when companies disclose information on the weight of discarded products, they report the gross weight of both the bulk and its packaging as a single aggregated figure. This approach is crucial for several reasons:*

1. *Operational and safety risks: Unpacking operations pose significant handling, safety, and environmental contamination risks, including potential spillage and packaging breakage. Effective product residue management requires specialized technology and equipment, which may not be readily available or affordable for all companies.*
2. *Complex packaging materials: Cosmetics packaging often involves various materials, such as glass, plastic, metal, and paper. Each of these materials requires different disposal methods, complicating the unpackaging process. Complex cleaning should be considered if recycled.*
3. *Verification, documentation, and compliance Issues: The disposal process entails a burdensome documentation requirement, and failures in tracking emptied packaging can increase the risks of counterfeiting.*
4. *High labor costs: The labor costs associated with the unpackaging process are significant, which can add to overall operational expenses. The high resource demands contribute to economic challenges faced by manufacturers and waste treatment operators.*

*Given these complexities, it is impractical for unsold cosmetics to be separated from their packaging during disposal. This recommendation not only simplifies compliance but also aligns with reducing administrative burdens.*

Some members expressed concern that the text above may provide a negative image of the sector especially vis à vis future packaging recyclability obligations under the PPWR. Elements highlighted in particular in point 1 and 2 may be detrimental in that respect. Therefore, it is suggested to simplify the text as follows:

*CE strongly recommends that the European Commission allow companies, when disclosing information on the weight of discarded products, to report the gross weight of both the bulk and its packaging as a single aggregated figure. This approach is crucial for several reasons:*

1. *Disaggregating the weight portions of packaging and product would be an extremely complex and burdensome procedure and companies do not have readily available, nor they collect data using such segregation approach.*
2. *Manufacturers, retailers or other actors in charge of disclosing the information do not have the necessary equipment to proceed with the unpackaging of products before they are handed over to waste treatment operators.*
3. *The latter, on the contrary, have specialised expertise and equipment to manage the packaged product efficientlyand recycle it where possible. When packaging is not incinerated, waste treatment operators can better handle operational challenges (e.g. related to complex packaging) and environmental risks such as spillage and breakage, or residue management.*
4. *Verification, documentation, and compliance issues: the disposal process entails a burdensome documentation requirement, and failures in tracking emptied packaging can increase the risks of counterfeiting.*
5. *High labor costs: The labor costs associated with the unpackaging process are significant, which can add to overall operational expenses. The high resource demands contribute to economic challenges faced by manufacturers and waste treatment operators.*

*Given these complexities, it is impractical for cosmetics companies to separate unsold cosmetics from their packaging during disposal. This recommendation not only simplifies compliance but also aligns with reducing administrative burdens.*