

Italy locks in Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation requirement for organic recycling

The new compostability requirements demonstrate how the Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation (PPWR) can support circular solutions where effective organic recycling systems are in place.

Brussels, 6 August 2026 – European Bioplastics welcomes the Italian decree-law introducing mandatory compostability requirements for selected packaging used for fresh fruit and vegetables, food service and catering, single food portions and hospitality.

In accordance with the PPWR, Italy has made use of the flexibility provided under Article 9(2)(b) to require additional packaging formats to be mandatorily compostable where effective biowaste collection and organic recycling systems are in place.

The Italian measure ensures that the selected applications can instead continue to be designed for organic recycling, provided they are certified compostable and correctly managed during their end-of-life phase. It provides legal certainty while preserving organic recycling as the appropriate circular end-of-life solution for these applications.

For the sector, this changes the regulatory baseline. Certified compostability is no longer merely a voluntary product characteristic for these applications: it becomes a market-access requirement. Packaging manufacturers, converters, brands, retailers and importers will need to ensure that products placed on the Italian market meet the compliant certification, labelling and end-of-life requirements.

“Packaging is not circular because legislation describes it as recyclable. It is circular when it is actually collected and returned to productive use,” said Lorenza Romanese, Secretary General of European Bioplastics. “For highly food-soiled applications, designing packaging that is certifiably organically recyclable delivers a better environmental outcome. Biowaste often has a high moisture content and therefore complicates material recycling or worsens incineration. Italy demonstrates that genuine circularity should make use of the best possible end-of-life pathway: product, collection and treatment must work together.”

The measure does not create a general exemption for single-use packaging. Existing European and national obligations on preventing and reducing packaging continue to apply. Compostability must be used selectively, where the packaging application and the waste-management system justify it. *“Italy shows that the PPWR already contains the flexibility needed to recognise different circular and sustainable solutions. What matters is ensuring that the right material reaches the right collection and recycling system.”* said Julie Pieters, EUBP’s EU Policy Affairs Manager.

Italy provides an important role model of how the PPWR can be implemented in a way that reflects functioning waste-management systems. EUBP looks forward to seeing the experience gained contribute to further PPWR implementation and broader discussions on packaging circularity.

About European Bioplastics

European Bioplastics (EUBP) is the European association representing the interests of the bioplastics industry along the entire value chain. Its members produce, refine and distribute bioplastics i.e. plastics that are biobased, biodegradable, or both. More information is available at www.european-bioplastics.org

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