

SGS explores what new EU packaging rules mean for brands, importers and suppliers

The European Union's first compliance deadline lands this August

BAAR, SWITZERLAND, July 21, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- SGS, the world's leading testing, inspection and certification company, has outlined the key steps businesses need to take as the EU Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation (PPWR) approaches its first major compliance deadline in August 2026. The regulation introduces a comprehensive framework covering how packaging is designed, tested, labeled and managed across its life cycle, with requirements tightening further through 2030.



The EU Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation (PPWR) approaches its first major compliance deadline in August 2026

PPWR applies a broad, functional definition of packaging that extends beyond boxes and wrap to secondary components such as hangtags, labels and fasteners. Responsibility for compliance can also fall more widely than expected. Importers must verify that packaging meets requirements before it reaches the EU market, but any company that influences packaging design, material selection or branding may be considered the manufacturer and take on full compliance responsibility, while the company first placing a product on an EU market carries extended producer responsibility, including registration and financing of packaging waste collection in each Member State.

On chemical compliance, the regulation sets strict limits on heavy metals, including lead, cadmium, mercury and hexavalent chromium, with a combined concentration limit of 100 ppm, and introduces low thresholds for PFAS in food-contact packaging. SGS recommends businesses take a stepwise approach to testing, starting with total fluorine screening before moving to more detailed analysis where needed, and notes that claims should be closely tied to the testing performed rather than broader assertions that may be difficult to substantiate. Companies must

also maintain laboratory test reports, complete technical documentation files and a signed EU Declaration of Conformity.

Labeling and traceability requirements begin in mid-2026, when packaging must carry manufacturer or importer details and a traceability identifier, with harmonized EU-wide recycling pictograms following in 2028. Where appropriate, traceability information may be consolidated on the main packaging and supported by QR codes. On design, packaging must be recyclable in principle from 2026, tightening to a minimum 70 percent recyclability threshold from 2030, below which packaging will be prohibited from the EU market. PPWR also introduces limits on empty space in grouped, transport and e-commerce packaging, requiring businesses to justify design choices as part of their technical documentation.

With deadlines now close, SGS is encouraging businesses to act ahead of time, building complete bills of materials covering all packaging components, carrying out chemical testing, assessing recyclability at the design stage and confirming extended producer responsibility registration in relevant markets, to avoid last-minute redesigns and disruption as enforcement begins.

SGS supports manufacturers and suppliers navigating these requirements with testing, inspection and certification services spanning primary, secondary and transport packaging, including PFAS and food contact testing, recyclability and sustainability assessments and labeling verification, across materials including paper, corrugated, rigid plastics, textiles and glass. These services help businesses reduce compliance risk and translate PPWR requirements into practical, sustainable packaging solutions.

To find out more visit SGS: 'FAQ: [What You Need to Know About the EU Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation](#) (PPWR).'

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