PPWR Pushes Fiber Packaging From Compliance to Commercial Scale



6th Functional Fiber-Based Materials & Packaging summit

BARCELONA, SPAIN, September 8, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Europe's Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation (PPWR) is accelerating a fundamental rethink of packaging design, recyclability and material choice, putting fiber-based packaging, PFAS-free barrier coatings, molded fiber and plastic replacement higher on the industry's commercial agenda. Against this changing regulatory landscape, the 6th Functional Fiber-Based Materials & Packaging summit, organized by Centre for Management Technology (CMT) on 30 September–1 October 2026 in Barcelona, will examine how packaging producers, converters, brand owners and technology suppliers are moving from regulatory compliance towards scalable, commercially viable fiber packaging solutions.

The summit brings expertise spanning food-contact and product safety, pulp and renewable fiber materials, and barrier coating technologies plus perspectives from packaging automation, molded-fiber decoration and printing, and natural fiber applications.

At the heart of the agenda is an increasingly urgent question for Europe’s packaging value chain: can fiber-based packaging deliver the performance, scalability and economics needed to compete with plastic?

PPWR is raising the stakes around packaging recyclability, design and market access, while PFAS restrictions and extended producer responsibility requirements are adding pressure to rethink materials and packaging formats. For companies developing fiber alternatives, regulatory compliance alone is not enough. New solutions must also meet demanding requirements for barrier performance, food safety, machinability, shelflife, cost and industrial-scale production.

Themed "From Comply to Compete," the Barcelona summit will connect these regulatory requirements with the practical technology and investment decisions now facing the industry.

The opening discussions will examine how PPWR is translating into packaging strategy. Cristina Lugli of Ecol Studio SpA will address regulatory risks and implications for fiber-based packaging design, recyclability, and market access. Kiril Dimitrov of Nestlé will discuss the alignment of paper packaging commitments with legislation, while Dr. Bernhard Kainz of 4evergreen will focus on turning PPWR requirements into practical approaches for circular paper-based packaging.

The discussions then move to one of the sector's biggest technical challenges: achieving the functionality traditionally provided by plastic and multilayer structures without undermining recyclability.

Dr. Elodie Bugnicourt and Lorena Rodriguez Garrido of Graphic Packaging International Spain will examine barrier selection and packaging circularity, including the relationship between barrier technologies, recyclability performance and EPR fees. Andrea Vittadello of Mérieux NutriSciences Italia – Chelab will address recycling, compostability, PFAS, product residues and material performance.

The commercial race to improve barrier paper will feature prominently. Yoran Konijn of Royal Vaassen Flexible Packaging will discuss ultra-high barrier paper as an alternative to multilayer laminates, while Dr. Gael Depres of Fedrigoni Paper will examine omni-barrier paper incorporating microfibrillated cellulose. Further presentations from Barracuda Technologies and Lactips will explore PFAS-free recyclable papers and coating technologies.

But material performance is only part of the equation. The industry's ability to manufacture new packaging formats reliably and economically at scale will determine how quickly fiber alternatives move beyond pilots and niche applications.

Kemira's Salman Hassanzadeh will address the development and scale-up of renewable barrier coatings. Anna Altner, Founder and CEO of Yangi AB, will examine the wider business case for replacing plastic with fiber, including technical performance, manufacturability, economics, regulatory resilience and brand value.

Molded fiber represents another important growth area. Presentations from Dr. Simeon Stoilov of Hoting Innovations, Param Gandhi of Fibmold and Kyler Lovgren of Palouse Fiber Packaging will explore manufacturing technologies, scale-up and the potential use of agricultural residues, recycled materials and alternative fiber feedstocks.

The search for a broader raw-material base will also extend beyond conventional wood pulp. Martin Schreiner of Cotton Incorporated will examine cotton applications in engineered packaging and composites, while Dr. Peep Pitk of Fibenol will discuss cellulose as a platform material and the wider bio-based material ecosystem needed to support circular fiber packaging.

Taken together, the agenda reflects a shift in the fiber-packaging debate. The question is moving beyond whether paper and fiber can replace selected plastic applications to where they can do so competitively, at scale and within increasingly demanding regulatory and performance parameters.

The conference will bring together paper and board producers, FMCG and brand-owner packaging teams, converters, pulp and fiber suppliers, coating and chemical companies, molded fiber developers, machinery providers, regulatory specialists, sustainability teams and R&D organizations.

The closing discussion, "From Comply to Compete: Where Will Fiber-Based Packaging Find Its Competitive Advantage?", will examine the uncertainties still surrounding PPWR implementation, the next generation of barrier technologies, alternative fibers, manufacturing readiness and brand-owner expectations beyond 2027.

The 6th Functional Fiber-Based Materials & Packaging Conference takes place 30 September–1 October 2026 in Barcelona, Spain and online.

Event information and registration:
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