

## Italy seeks PPWR exemption for compostable packaging

A proposal sent to the European Commission seeks to allow certain banned single-use packaging items where certified compostable materials are used.

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Italy's Ministry of the Environment and Energy Security (MASE) has submitted to the European Commission, through the TRIS mechanism ([read here](#)), a draft bill to amend Legislative Decree No. 152 of 3 April 2006 and expand the range of certified single-use biodegradable and compostable plastic packaging that may be used, by way of partial derogation from the Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation (PPWR).



Under Article 9, the PPWR requires compostable plastics to be used from 12 February 2028 for certain items, including tea bags, coffee pods and adhesive labels attached to fruit and vegetable products. The Regulation also allows Member States to include lightweight or ultra-lightweight plastic carrier bags in the “positive list”, as is already the case in Italy.

The same Regulation, however, bans the placing on the market from 1 January 2030 of single-use plastic packaging deemed unnecessary, including packaging for pre-packed fresh fruit and vegetables in quantities of less than 1.5kg, packaging for food and beverages filled and consumed on HORECA premises, individual portions of condiments, including preserves, sauces, coffee creamers and sugar, and sachets for cosmetics and hygiene products used in hotels.

Under the MASE proposal, these items would be allowed on the market provided they are “biodegradable and compostable, certified by accredited bodies, in accordance with UNI EN 13432 or equivalent European-recognised standards”.

The products covered by the derogation are listed as follows:

- a) single-use plastic packaging for packing less than 1.5kg of pre-packaged fresh fruit and vegetables;
- b) single-use plastic packaging for food and beverages, filled and intended for consumption in the hospitality, restaurant and catering (HORECA) sector;
- c) single-use plastic packaging used in the HORECA sector containing individual portions of condiments, including preserves, sauces, coffee creamers and sugar, except in the following cases: packaging supplied with ready-to-eat takeaway food intended for immediate consumption without further preparation; and packaging necessary to ensure safety and

hygiene in facilities with individual medical care requirements, such as hospitals, clinics or care homes;

d) single-use flexible packaging for cosmetics and hygiene products used in the hospitality sector, intended exclusively for individual bookings and to be disposed of before the next guest arrives.

The draft bill also introduces penalties for declarations of conformity or other misleading or evasive claims, ranging from €2,500 to €25,000. The fine may be increased to as much as four times the maximum amount if the breach concerns quantities of packaging whose value exceeds 10% of the offender's turnover. A similar rule already applies in Italy to shopping bags that do not comply with compostability criteria.

Image: organic waste

The request for a derogation is based on the specific features of Italy's system for sorting, collecting and managing organic waste, which also covers compostable plastics and is regarded as unique in Europe.

"Italy," the regulatory impact assessment document states, "is in a position to argue that the use of compostable packaging is the most effective tool for minimising contamination of compost by traditional plastics. Since the Italian collection system is based on intensive separate collection of household organic waste, the adoption of certified bioplastics makes it possible to channel certain types of packaging directly to anaerobic digestion and composting plants, turning a potential mixed waste stream into a high-quality agronomic resource."

European Bioplastics welcomed the draft law as a positive and pragmatic step that would provide greater legal certainty and a clearer regulatory framework for the sector at a crucial time, particularly for applications where compostability offers clear functional benefits, such as food-contaminated or hard-to-sort packaging.

The association said the proposal sends an encouraging signal to companies investing in certified compostable solutions, while stressing that clear, workable rules are essential to support innovation, investment and market confidence.

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