

Determining the recyclability of packaging has gotten easier and more practice-based

Osnabrück, 3 September 2021

- **The 2021 edition of the minimum standard for determining the recyclability of packaging was published as planned on 1 September 2021.**
- **This third edition spells things out more clearly and is even easier to use. Individual evidence about the actual recovery of new packaging solutions is now illustrated with easy-to-follow examples.**

The Zentrale Stelle Verpackungsregister (Central Agency Packaging Register – ZSVR) has published the 2021 edition of the minimum standard for determining the recyclability of packaging (pursuant to section 21 (3) VerpackG (Packaging Act)) in consultation with the German Environment Agency. The basic structure for evaluating the recyclability of an article of packaging using three standard criteria has proved to be a good approach according to feedback from companies. The contents of the third edition of the minimum standard have been brought into sharper focus in line with the basic structure. Clear examples are set out to make it easier to apply the minimum standard so that even users without extensive packaging expertise can use it to assess their packaging without prior experience.

Ms Gunda Rachut, Chair of the ZSVR, commented: *‘The basic work has been done. Applying the minimum standard in practice is simple, user friendly and well established. In terms of the underlying principle of the circular economy, packaging is a valuable resource. However, a circular economy is predicated on design factoring in the next iteration of value creation. The minimum standard points the way forward. Now that the third edition of the minimum standard has been released, it should be clear to every producer what needs to be done.’*

The way that packaging innovations are handled is significantly better, with companies now being allowed to show specific evidence to confirm exactly how their packaging is recovered. This is illustrated using two concrete practice-based examples. All of the related issues can then be incorporated into the design of the packaging, thus fostering innovation. Once recovery capacities have been established, the recyclability of packaging can be classified.

European outlook

The European Commission is planning to publish the amended European Packaging Directive at the end of 2021, setting out enhanced recommendations about all of the issues relating to the waste hierarchy (especially prevention, reuse and recovery).

It underscores the fact that the contents of the minimum standard are more relevant than ever: *'The amended European Packaging Directive will set out basic requirements for all types of packaging. That includes using resources more sparingly, ecological design and requirements for the use of recyclates. Companies that have been incorporating the minimum standard into their packaging design will be better equipped to handle the new requirements being issued by Brussels,' said Rachut.*

About the ZSVR

The ZSVR is headquartered in Osnabrück. The founders are the Bundesvereinigung der Deutschen Ernährungsindustrie (Federation of German Food and Drink Industries – BVE), the Handelsverband Deutschland (German Retail Association – HDE), the IK Industrievereinigung Kunststoffverpackungen (German Plastics Association – IK), and the Markenverband (German Trade Mark Association). Since the Verpackungsgesetz (Packaging Act) entered into force on 1 January 2019, the ZSVR has served as an entrusted body to foster greater transparency and control in packaging recycling. To this end, the ZSVR maintains a register of all industrial and commercial companies under legal obligation, reconciles volumes between producers and systems, and provides for more recycling-friendly design by setting standards. Lawyer Gunda Rachut is the Chair of the Foundation.

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