

PRESS RELEASE

GLASS PACKAGING CLOSED LOOP RECYCLING UP TO 74% IN THE EU

Brussels, 2 November 2016

According to the latest industry data ⁽¹⁾ – published today by the European Container Glass Federation (FEVE) – the average glass recycling rate in the EU28 zone has reached the 74% threshold for the first time. This means that over 11.6 million tons were collected throughout the European Union in 2014 or 3.5% more than in the previous year. The majority of that goes back into making new packaging: glass stands alone as the most closed loop recycled food and drink packaging in the EU and in the world.

However, some 26% of glass bottles and jars are still today lost in landfills in Europe, and year to year comparison of national data reveals a multi-faceted landscape. Countries such as Sweden, Belgium, Germany or Slovenia continue to outperform. Other good performing countries like Austria or Denmark have instead recorded a slight decrease in recycling despite a positive consumption trend. In the Czech Republic, Finland or The Netherlands the downward trend was on par with shrinking consumption. In Spain or Bulgaria, glass recycling is steadily increasing but there is a quite important gap to fill. The gap is even more important in Romania, Cyprus, Slovak Republic or Greece.

Data show the situation varies from country to country and confirm the need for targeted investments in infrastructure and communication to citizens, not only in countries where there are important gaps to fill, but also to maintain the high standards of the traditionally good performing countries - says Adeline Farrelly, FEVE Secretary General - Glass is today the simplest and safest packaging recycling stream because glass is inert and keeps its inherent properties no matter how many times it's recycled. If properly collected, it can be infinitely recycled in a closed loop.

The industry is calling for a supporting legislative environment that acknowledges the superior status of materials that can be infinitely recycled without loss of properties and can remain safe for human health and the environment. Such materials permanently keep their qualities. Glass packaging is such a permanent material ⁽²⁾ and shares this characteristic with other materials like metals.

“The EU waste legislation currently under review in the EU Circular Economy Package should incentivize permanent materials that can be infinitely recycled without losing their properties”, says Adeline Farrelly. “As an industry, we would like to have more recycled glass, provided that it is of high quality and is economically viable. We believe that acknowledging the superior status of permanent materials in, for example EPR schemes, will incentivize the market to use permanent materials that can deliver real closed loop recycling.”

- (1) - See FEVE Recycling Statistics published on the FEVE website www.feve.org
- (2) - See Study “ *Permanent Materials in the framework of the Circular Economy concept: review of existing literature and definitions, and classification of glass as a Permanent Material*”, Stazione Sperimentale del Vetro, June 2016 - <http://feve.org/glass-is-permanent-material>

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About Glass

Made of natural minerals abundant in nature - sand, soda-ash and limestone - glass is a 100% recyclable material, manufactured in a one step process under one roof. Some ninety per cent of collected glass bottles and jars are used over and over again to produce new glass bottles in the closed loop system. Each time a bottle or jar is recycled into new containers, energy and raw materials are saved and less CO₂ is emitted. By recycling glass, in 2014 in the EU: over 12 million tons of raw materials were saved. Over 7 million tons of CO₂ were avoided equal to taking 4 million cars off the road. A saving of 2,5% energy for each 10% of glass recycled in the furnace. Recycling one bottle equals to light a compact florescent bulb for 7 Hours 8 Minutes.

About FEVE

FEVE is the Federation of European manufacturers of glass containers and machine-made glass tableware. Its members produce over 20 million tons of glass per year. The association has some 60 corporate members belonging to approximately 20 independent corporate groups. Manufacturing plants are located across 23 European States and include global blue chip and major companies working for the world’s biggest consumer brands. See more on www.feve.org

About the Container Glass Industry

The European container glass industry provides a wide range of glass packaging products for food and beverages as well as flacons for perfumery, cosmetics and pharmacy to their European and world customers. With its 160 manufacturing plants distributed all over Europe, it is an important contributor to Europe's real economy and provides employment to about 50,000 people, while creating a large number of job opportunities along the total supply chain. See more on www.feve.org

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