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## PRO EUROPE Members



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## Editorial

Dear readers,

I am pleased to welcome you to the autumn edition of our PRO EUROPE newsletter. As always, we have received great contributions from our members and in the national news section you will learn about a number of inspiring initiatives.

Over the last three months, PRO EUROPE has continued to take an active part in on-going initiatives at an EU level of interest to our members; for example, by contributing to the Commission's consultation asking for stakeholder's opinions on options to reduce the use of plastic bags in Europe. In the following pages, you will find information on some of PRO EUROPE's recent activities as well as updates of interest in the EU Policy developments section.

I hope you will find the content interesting and I will warmly welcome any feedback you may have.

Kind regards,

Joachim Quoden  
Managing Director of PRO EUROPE

## At a glance...

Update on PRO EUROPE involvement in EU stakeholder platforms

PRO EUROPE is continuing its active involvement in the work of the European Food Sustainable Consumption and Production Roundtable (SCP RT) and the Retail Forum for Sustainability (RF) (...)  
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Sociedade Ponto Verde organises photography competition to celebrate its 15th anniversary

Sociedade Ponto Verde is organising a photography competition in order to collect people's views on recycling packaging waste to commemorate its 15th anniversary (...)

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Commission publishes Resource Efficiency Roadmap

The European Commission published its Roadmap to a Resource Efficient Europe on 20 September. The roadmap aims to tackle resource depletion and to establish long-term responses to maintain the competitiveness of companies (...)

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The importance of the informal sector in the recovery of used packaging worldwide

In developing countries, about 1 percent of the urban population, at least 15 million people, survive by salvaging recyclables from waste.<sup>1</sup> These informal workers collect used packaging and other waste from a variety of sources (...)

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## IN FOCUS

### PRO EUROPE publishes position paper on plastic carrier bags and participates in the Commission's consultation

Plastic bags are becoming more prominent in the environmental debate and are increasingly gaining traction at EU, national and local levels with various political initiatives taken as a result. In the light of the increased interest on the issue, PRO EUROPE issued a position paper on plastic carrier bags in late August.

PRO EUROPE's standpoint is that a ban on plastic bags should be the last resort. The paper refers to such a measure as *“radical and market intrusive”* and not in line with the EU's Packaging and Packaging Waste Directive, which allows all packaging that fulfils the essential requirements to be used. Regarding levies, it makes clear that *“a levy on plastic bags may reduce their consumption in the short term but has proven to be unsustainable in the long run”*. Ireland, which introduced a levy in 2002, is an example of this. After an initial sharp drop in plastic bag use for the first years, a slight increase started which pushed the government to increase the levy in 2007. Also, the income from the levy is far from always used for environmental purposes.

Instead, it is a firm belief of PRO EUROPE that when it comes to achieving environmental improvements, efforts should include voluntary agreements with industry, in particular if combined with consumer awareness campaigns. Such agreements have for example resulted in significant impacts in actual bag use.. The position paper also outlines that producer responsibility systems have proven more efficient than taxation when

it comes to triggering environmental improvements.

Furthermore, the paper calls for caution regarding the increased enthusiasm for biodegradable bags, outlining that *“biodegradable bags do not magically vanish into the environment or the water while the degradable ones are in many cases only fragmentable (meaning that the plastic breaks up but it is still present)”* and stating that such bags *“offer no advantage in terms of waste management over conventional bags”*. A further problem is that they can actually increase the litter problem, as consumers may think that they simply break down and disappear once they have been disposed of. Following this, PRO EUROPE *“call[s] on the Commission to change the definition of biodegradable so that only material that biodegrades in natural conditions is called biodegradable”*. The position paper outlines that focusing on plastic bags is a limited approach, as they do not constitute more than a tiny share of the overall waste stream and littering.

The position paper was covered in an article published in the weekly magazine *European Environment and Packaging Law*.

PRO EUROPE has been further active on the topic by participating in the Commission consultation, which was open between mid May and early August, asking for stakeholder's opinions on options to reduce the use of plastic bags in Europe.

PRO EUROPE'S position paper is available on the [website](#).

### Update on PRO EUROPE involvement in EU stakeholder platforms

PRO EUROPE is continuing its active involvement in the work of the European

Food Sustainable Consumption and Production Roundtable (SCP RT) and the Retail Forum for Sustainability (RF).

*(Continued from page 2)*

PRO EUROPE, one of the founding members of the SCP RT, contributed to the development of the two draft reports entitled 'Communicating environmental performance along the food chain' and 'Continuous Environmental Improvement' which were open for public consultation between mid July / early August to mid / late September. The first report assesses communication means and channels to consumers and other stakeholders, identifying the strengths and challenges of various communication tools. The second report identifies and prioritises environmental challenges along food and drinks chains and, among other things, identifies areas that should be of first concern for continuous environmental improvement. The responses from the consultations are now being taken into consideration in the finalisation of the reports. The final report on 'Communicating environmental performance along the food chain' should be presented at the SCP RT plenary meeting on 8 December while the report on 'Continuous Environmental Improvement' is expected to be finalised early next year.

The SCP RT is also working on the development of an environmental assessment methodology for food and

drink products across Europe and a finalised draft of the Harmonised Framework Methodology should be presented at the December plenary meeting while a public consultation on the methodology will also be launched. The consultation, in turn, will be followed by pilot testing and fine tuning before a final draft will be produced.

PRO EUROPE has also actively contributed to the RF issue paper on packaging optimisation, which is currently being finalised and should be made public by mid October.

The paper follows discussions on the issue at the February and June Retail Forum meetings and will single out challenges for the retail sector in the field of packaging and make recommendations on how they can be addressed. An issue paper on waste minimisation, also discussed during the June meeting, is also currently under preparation. The draft paper was recently discussed during a stakeholder workshop that took place on 20 September, which PRO EUROPE took part in. Food waste is a key issue in the draft paper, and among the issues raised during the workshop was the link to packaging, where packaging is no longer considered as waste but as an opportunity to cut food waste. The paper will be further discussed at the RF in early December and an issue paper should be published early 2012.



## EU POLICY DEVELOPMENTS

### Commission publishes Resource Efficiency Roadmap

The European Commission published its Roadmap to a Resource Efficient Europe on 20 September. The roadmap aims to tackle resource depletion and to establish long-term responses to maintain the competitiveness of companies,

employment and the environment through market-based instruments. The document outlines the main issues to focus upon in order to deliver a resource efficient Europe by 2050, while milestones towards these visions will be set out in due course and aim to be achieved by 2020.

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The Roadmap sets out objectives and indicators including a temporary lead indicator on “resource productivity” to steer and assess progress which will be complemented later on with a “dashboard” of indicators on water, land and greenhouse gas emissions to provide a fuller picture. The lead indicator would be replaced by an improved raw material consumption indicator. The roadmap aims to reach a transformation of the economy by improving and boosting production and changing consumption patterns; treating waste as a resource; supporting research and innovation and phasing out of ineffective and inefficient subsidies. Delivering a resource efficient Europe will require that the stocks of all environmental assets from which the EU benefits or sources its global supplies are secure and managed within their maximum sustainable yields; that residual waste is close to zero and that ecosystems have been restored; that systemic risks to the economy from the environment have

been understood and avoided; and new innovation. The Commission identified the resources and sectors which they believe to be under threat and need to be addressed. Resources include: water, air, resources relating to the ecosystem, land and soils, and marine resources. The key sectors are food and food waste, buildings and construction, mobility and transport.

The roadmap also urges better implementation of waste policy, to combat illegal waste shipments, and to review waste prevention and recycling targets.

Of particular relevance for PRO EUROPE, the Commission ask Member States to assess as of 2012 measures to extend producer responsibility to the full life-cycle of the products they make (including via new business models, through guidance on take-back and recycling schemes and support for repair services) and actions to optimise the resource efficiency of packaging.

The roadmap can be found [here](#).

## European Parliament calls for sustainable EU raw materials strategy, stressing resource efficiency and recycling

On 13 September, the European Parliament (EP) adopted a report calling for a sustainable and future-oriented EU approach to raw materials. The report outlines guidelines from the EP’s point of view on a future Raw Materials Strategy for Europe, stressing access to important raw materials as well as resource efficiency, recycling and the substitution of raw materials as well as well-functioning waste management.

In order to address challenges relating to the secure access of critical raw materials, sustainable raw material supply from EU sources and enhanced resource efficiency, the Commission launched a Raw Materials Initiative in late 2008, followed by a communication in February of this year that reported on progress made and indicated steps for future action.

The EP report was a response to these Commission initiatives.

The Commission’s communication and the Parliament’s report give a good overview of the their current thinking and plans in the field of raw materials. The Commission’s approach is based on three pillars, one named “boosting resource efficiency and promoting recycling”.

The EP report argues that an efficient raw materials strategy can turn challenges into opportunities for the EU and European industry.

It is argued that increasing efficiencies, reuse and energy efficient recycling are among the elements that will be “key to competitiveness”. Waste prevention and reuse, as well as lower consumption levels, are important components to achieve a resource efficiency economy.

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Among the numerous points raised by the EP are: that recycling and reuse can contribute to reducing greenhouse gas emissions; that it is important to invest in

the recycling of raw materials; and that a gradual ban on waste landfill should be introduced in the EU. The EP would also like to see the Commission develop a long-term “European Raw Materials Roadmap to 2050”.

## Commission guidance on key provisions of the revised Waste Framework Directive underway

Guidance to national authorities and businesses on how to interpret important provisions of the revised EU Waste Framework Directive is underway, with a draft document discussed by the Technical Adaptation Committee this summer. The information provided in the draft regards matters such as waste definitions (of e.g. by-products) and waste management options (e.g. prevention, reuse and recycling). The Commission is now to internally discuss a revised draft by the external consultancy BiPRO. The Commission expects that the guidelines, which are not legally binding, will be adopted and made public by the end of the year.

Furthermore, a decision on calculation methods for recycling and recovery rates has been approved by the Commission. The intention is that Member States should use uniform standards for calculating rates to verify whether the targets under the Waste Framework Directive are reached. If the European Parliament, to which the draft decision has been sent, does not raise objections there will be a final adoption of the decision and thereafter publication in the EU Official Journal. The Commission hopes that the latter will take place before the end of the year.

## PRO EUROPE members' news

### Extension of plastic recycling guidelines tested on 5 million French citizens - Target: Double the amount of plastic packaging recycled

In 2010, Eco-Emballages issued a request for proposals to local authorities to extend the sorting guidelines for plastic packaging to accept more than just bottles and containers. **Nearly 80 local authorities** from over one hundred proposals were pre-selected. The pilot cities, spread throughout France, constitute a representative grid of the population and shed light on the diversity of recycling and collection problems.

In parallel, a request for proposals was issued in March 2010 to support the



development of new industrial solutions for the creation of new techniques and processes for recycling the new resins being collected. The majority of this





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tonnage will be recycled in new schemes over the course of the next 3 years: **9 industrial projects** are already in place.

In addition, Eco-Emballages has decided on an upstream course of action concerning the sorting and recycling chain by encouraging companies to reduce their packaging materials at the source and increase the amount of recyclable materials. A request for proposals will be issued this autumn.

Beginning in 2012, **5 million French** citizens will be able to dispose of all plastic household packaging in the recycling bin: yogurt cups, fruit punnets, frozen food bags, etc.

**Ultimately, extending the sorting guidelines opens the possibility of doubling the recycling rate of plastic packaging waste to 40%.**

In the long term this would mean an increase of between 3.5% and 5% in the overall recycling rate for household packaging waste regardless of material.



sociedade  
**ponto verde**



## Sociedade Ponto Verde organises photography competition to celebrate its 15th anniversary

Sociedade Ponto Verde is organising a photography competition in order to collect people's views on recycling packaging waste to commemorate its 15th anniversary in November this year.

The theme is "Lens 2011: a look at packaging recycling" and photographs can be submitted between 29 August and 10 October.

"The success of recycling packaging waste in Portugal has been proven by the annual growth in quantities taken back. It has only been possible thanks to the efforts made by the public in Portugal. The competition is a way of further involving people in recycling by enabling them to put their views across on such an important area to the country's sustainability," said Luís Veiga Martins, Managing Director of Sociedade Ponto

Verde, the company responsible for organising and managing the take-back and recovery of packaging waste in Portugal.

The competition is open to professional and amateur photographers and there is a category for each. Any participant can enter up to five original photographs on [www.objectiva2011.com](http://www.objectiva2011.com), from 29 August onwards.

"Photography plays an increasingly social and cultural role and helps to record societies' history. It is an excellent medium for a project that shows the environmental, economic and social importance of recycling," he added.

The photographs portraying the recycling of packaging made from glass, plastic, metal, paper, cardboard and wood will be assessed on the basis of originality, impact and photographic quality.

They will be judged by a panel consisting of representatives from Sociedade Ponto Verde, Augusto Brázio (Kameraphoto) and Instituto Português de Fotografia. The prizes range from 250 to 2,500 euros in FNAC vouchers plus the possibility of exhibiting the photos at FNAC stores.

Information and enrolments as of 29 August on [www.objectiva2011.com](http://www.objectiva2011.com)



**OBJETIVA 2011**

UM OLHAR SOBRE A RECICLAGEM  
DE EMBALAGENS

## Valpak achieves carbon neutrality

In June this year Valpak's team of sustainable development consultants undertook an exercise to measure all of the company's emissions, from which they were able to construct a plan to reduce their impact and achieve carbon neutrality in line with the ISO 14064 and PAS 2060 guidelines.

PAS 2060 (The Publicly Available Specification 2060) is a national standard which provides a consistent approach for organisations to demonstrate carbon neutrality. It was published by the British Standards Institute in April 2010 and requires an organisation to determine its carbon footprint, in line with recognised methodologies and produce a Carbon Footprint Management Plan describing how they intend to reduce their emissions and achieve carbon neutrality.

Valpak's 2010 carbon footprint calculation included all direct emissions, indirect energy emissions (which related to the consumption of electricity) and other

indirect emissions that occurred as a consequence of Valpak's actions. Using this, they were able to identify key areas of consumption and develop appropriate carbon reduction plans. Valpak's carbon reduction plans are focussed on: business mileage (road), electricity use and site waste from their Materials Recovery Facility (MRF).

As well as working to reduce their carbon footprint, Valpak also offset their emissions by investing in a Verified Carbon Standard (VCS) accredited project to operate sustainable small hydropower stations in rural South West China. These are small hydro power stations generating renewable electricity. More information regarding this project can be found on the VCS website: [www.v-c-s.org](http://www.v-c-s.org)

Valpak will now have discussions with suppliers, staff and sub-contractors to establish what changes can be made to reduce their impacts directly.



## Every kilogram of plastic counts!

**DSD's Environmental Performance Balance for 2010: Total recovery rate at 104 % / Der Grüne Punkt saves energy and contributes substantially to climate protection.**

The recovery rates achieved by the Dual System for used sales packages rose once again in 2010, and continue to run at a very high level. The total recovery rate, at 104 percent, is once again above 100 percent - which means that Der Grüne Punkt - Duales System Deutschland GmbH (DSD) collected and recycled more packages than were actually participating in its dual system.

Last year, fewer packages were registered in the dual system than in 2009, although just as many packages were collected from consumers as in the previous year. This is a disturbing development, since clearly more loopholes have again been

exploited in order to smuggle past the dual system packages that consumers dispose of in the Yellow Sack and the Yellow Bin, and thus to defraud first dealers and consumers.

**Each kilogram of plastic recycled saves 1.3 kilograms of CO<sub>2</sub>**

There's more at stake here though, than merely meeting statutory requirements. Recycling with Der Grüne Punkt is good for the climate, and secures valuable raw materials for the business community. Last year, for example, by recycling used packages DSD saved 49 billion megajoules of primary energy, preventing the emission of 1.3 million tons of carbon dioxide equivalent. Each kilogram of plastic that consumers put in the Yellow Bin or the Yellow Sack instead of throwing it away with the non-recyclables saves 1.3 kilograms of CO<sub>2</sub>. The secondary raw



**Der Grüne Punkt –**  
Duales System Deutschland GmbH

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materials produced from the packages collected are meanwhile selling very well in the industrial sector.

DSD has exceeded all the recovery rates laid down in the German Packaging Ordinance: 93 percent of the registered glass packages were recycled, compared

to the requirements of 75 percent. In the case of packages made from paper, board and cardboard the rate achieved was 112 percent (requirement: 70 percent), for lightweight packages 117 percent (requirement: 60 to 70 percent, depending on the type of material involved).

**Environmental Performance Report 2010**

**Sustainable resource protection with the Green Dot**

Packaging recycling with the Green Dot saves energy and contributes essentially to climate protection:

Source: Duales System Deutschland GmbH (DSD), June 2011

By recycling **2.2 million tons** of used sales packaging in 2010 DSD has avoided **1.3 million tons** of CO<sub>2</sub>-equivalents and saved **49 billion megajoule** of primary energy.



**LATVIJAS  
ZAĻAIS PUNKTS**

## Country-wide campaign to motivate non-sorters

Recent surveys have revealed that approximately half of the Latvian population are waste sorters. To draw in the non-sorters and give extra knowledge and motivation for those who already sort, Latvijas Zaļais punkts (Green Dot Latvia) carried out a country wide campaign which took place from May to August.

As the fee for waste management service is low and saving by sorting is insignificant in terms of money, sorters in Latvia are driven mostly by green thinking. Therefore one of the principal components of the campaign was the motivation to win a monetary prize. Our

rationale was that the prize would stimulate the non-sorters to join in and, once the habit is adopted, they will continue to sort in the future. Additionally, Latvijas Zaļais punkts cared to make every sorter understand their role inside the sorting and recycling chain as well as reminding them about recycling plants working in Latvia, emphasizing that sorting helps the Latvian economy to recover after the crisis.

As the campaign was quite extended in terms of time, Latvijas Zaļais punkts used a variety of unusual communication channels and methods to maintain interest and attract new participants.



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One was to participate in 10 regional festivals with an activity to create a PET bottle “Tree of good intentions”, an installation made by everybody, by adding his/her empty PET bottle to the stem of the “tree”. The second initiative was a “Come and sort!” flashmob which took place during the Riga city festival when large masses of people gather. It was organized thanks to massive usage of social media. Participants of the flashmob, making noise with recyclables, were marching over the bridge of the river Daugava and through Old Riga, meeting surprised faces and the lens of cameras of hundreds of festival goers.

The campaign was organized in close collaboration with local municipalities as they are important messengers with a

significant impact on local society. An important job was also done by waste management organizations directly at sorting sites where sorters that wanted to take part in the lottery were registered and later on draws were held.

Watch the flashmobvideo here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xtz1BszUFGY>



Flashmob participants were marching making noise with recyclables



PET bottle “Tree of good intentions”

## Green dot tariffs fall by 12%

There will be an average 12% drop in Green dot tariffs for 2012 in comparison to 2011. The decrease is due to higher income from the materials.

There have been several sharp hikes in Green Dot tariffs in recent years. There were mainly due to fluctuations in the prices received by Fost Plus for collected and sorted packaging.



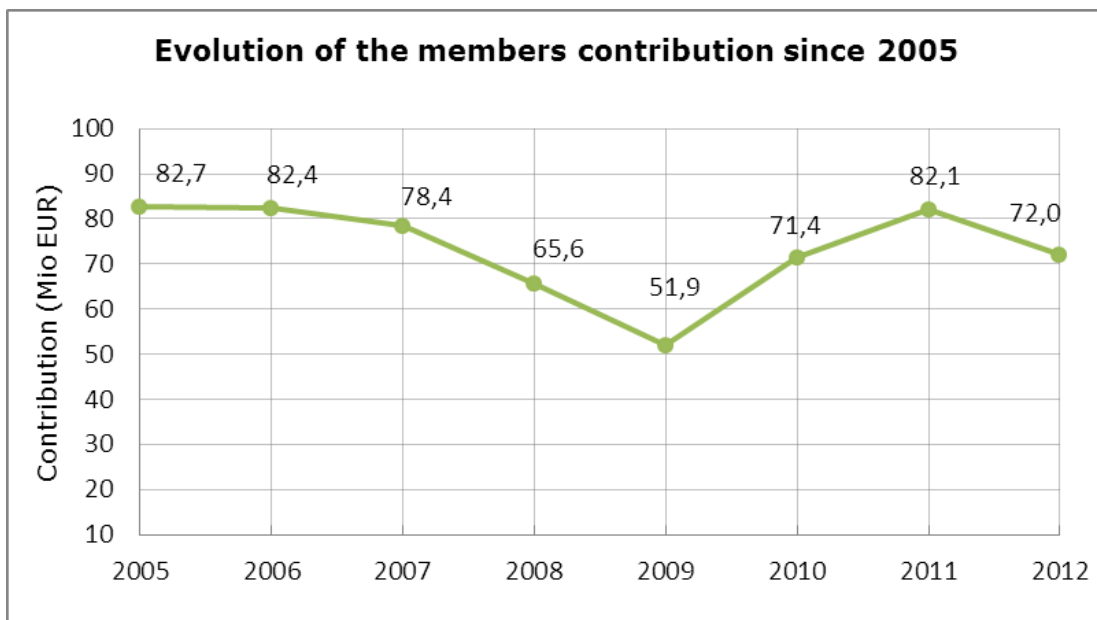
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Prices for materials fell sharply in late 2008, just as the economic crisis broke out. The sudden drop was followed by a tentative recovery in 2009.

In 2010 and 2011, Fost Plus had to raise the Green Dot tariffs twice due to the low

material yields. The increase was partially mitigated through the infusion of available reserves.

After two increases, Fost Plus is now able to announce a tariff drop of 12% for 2012, thanks to the strong recovery in material prices in 2010.



## The North American corner

### The importance of the informal sector in the recovery of used packaging worldwide

In developing countries, about 1 percent of the urban population, at least 15 million people, survive by salvaging recyclables from waste.<sup>1</sup> These informal workers collect used packaging and other waste from a variety of sources, including households, streets and other public places; and municipal open dumps and landfill sites.<sup>2</sup> The informal waste sector is integral to waste collection efforts in many cities, as not only do these workers greatly reduce the burden on local authorities in the provision of waste management services, but most importantly their efforts result in significant environmental benefits. The

nature of their work exposes informal-sector workers to a host of health and safety risks including exposure to the harsh weather, dangerous waste, and transmittable diseases, as well as risk of injuries and even death.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, waste pickers are often at risk of exploitation by opportunistic middlemen, and sometimes receive as low as 5% of the market value of the material they've collected; with the majority of revenue going to middlemen.

As they become increasingly aware of this reality, a number of multi-national consumer packaged goods (CPG) companies have launched pilot projects to

<sup>1</sup> Medina, M, 2008, The recycling sector in developing countries

<sup>2</sup> Medina, M, Year unknown. Waste Picker Cooperatives in Developing Countries

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improve these practices. This is driven, on the one hand, by strategic supply considerations, as companies seek to increase the quantity of recovered materials that re-enter their material supply lines, and on the other, by corporate social responsibility (CSR) concerns and unease with having branded used packaging materials collected by disadvantaged workers. This is not dissimilar to issues related to the end-of-life management of waste electrical and electronic equipment where persistent media reports highlighting the impacts on human health and the environment resulting from improper processing of e-waste in developing countries (e.g. incineration by backyard recyclers to recover valuable metals like gold).

Recent legislative developments in key emerging markets may help accelerate CPG companies' pilot project initiatives and create momentum for their adoption on a wider scale. Brazil's new National Solid Waste Policy for example, explicitly recognizes the importance of waste pickers on a social, economic, and environmental basis, and provides for preferential treatment for waste

management infrastructure funding for those local authorities that contract with organized groups of waste pickers, such as cooperatives, for collection and recycling services. The law further requires local authorities to implement selective collection services - which rely on the source separation of wet (organic) and dry (non-organic) streams - and calls for the closing of the country's open dumps by 2014. Developments such as these are likely to be monitored closely by those CPG companies looking to increase the recovery of their packaging worldwide, while honouring their social responsibility commitments.

In future, the concept of "producer responsibility" may not only be applied in more developed economies.



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A story to share? Please send it to us and we will be happy to give it due consideration for an upcoming issue of the newsletter. Contact us at [info@pro-europe.info](mailto:info@pro-europe.info)

<sup>3</sup> Wiego, Inclusive cities [http://www.inclusivecities.org/pdfs/WIEGO\\_Waste\\_Collectors.pdf](http://www.inclusivecities.org/pdfs/WIEGO_Waste_Collectors.pdf)