

PRESS RELEASE

AMI defines and quantifies Single-Use Plastic Packaging in Europe

AMI, Bristol, 13/09/19 – AMI Consulting has published its authoritative report defining and accounting for a true scale of **single-use plastic packaging** in Europe. This timely and strategic analysis of the present European sustainability strategies navigates through policy measures and packaging regulations to uncover the impact new legislation will have on the packaging industry.

Consumer drive for convenience and mis-management of packaging waste has resulted in the proliferation of single-use plastic packaging, which negatively affects our natural environment. The industry is now facing actions scrutinising its role in a circular economy, calling for **single-use plastic packaging** to be treated as a resource that should be captured and harnessed rather than a waste product flippantly disposed of.

Addressing single-use plastic packaging proliferation is a global matter and Europe is well on the path of leading by example. With one of the largest economic contributions for packaging developments, the European plastics industry is well-positioned to establish best practice and drive the future of packaging towards a more sustainable model. The changing market conditions in Europe will place global players in a strong position to quickly respond to changes in other regions of the world wanting to transition towards more sustainable packaging.

The fragmented legislative landscape, as individual European nations are enforcing their own mitigation measures and plastic strategies, are leaving brand owners, polymer suppliers and converters in a state of flux. The shape of the industry has already begun to change as resin suppliers integrate with recycling companies and look into renewable material options, while brand owners and packaging producers will need to develop solutions to meet requirements and avoid penalties.

The key objective of AMI's sustainability-oriented report is to help the plastic industry navigate through the convoluted regulatory environment with close attention paid to:

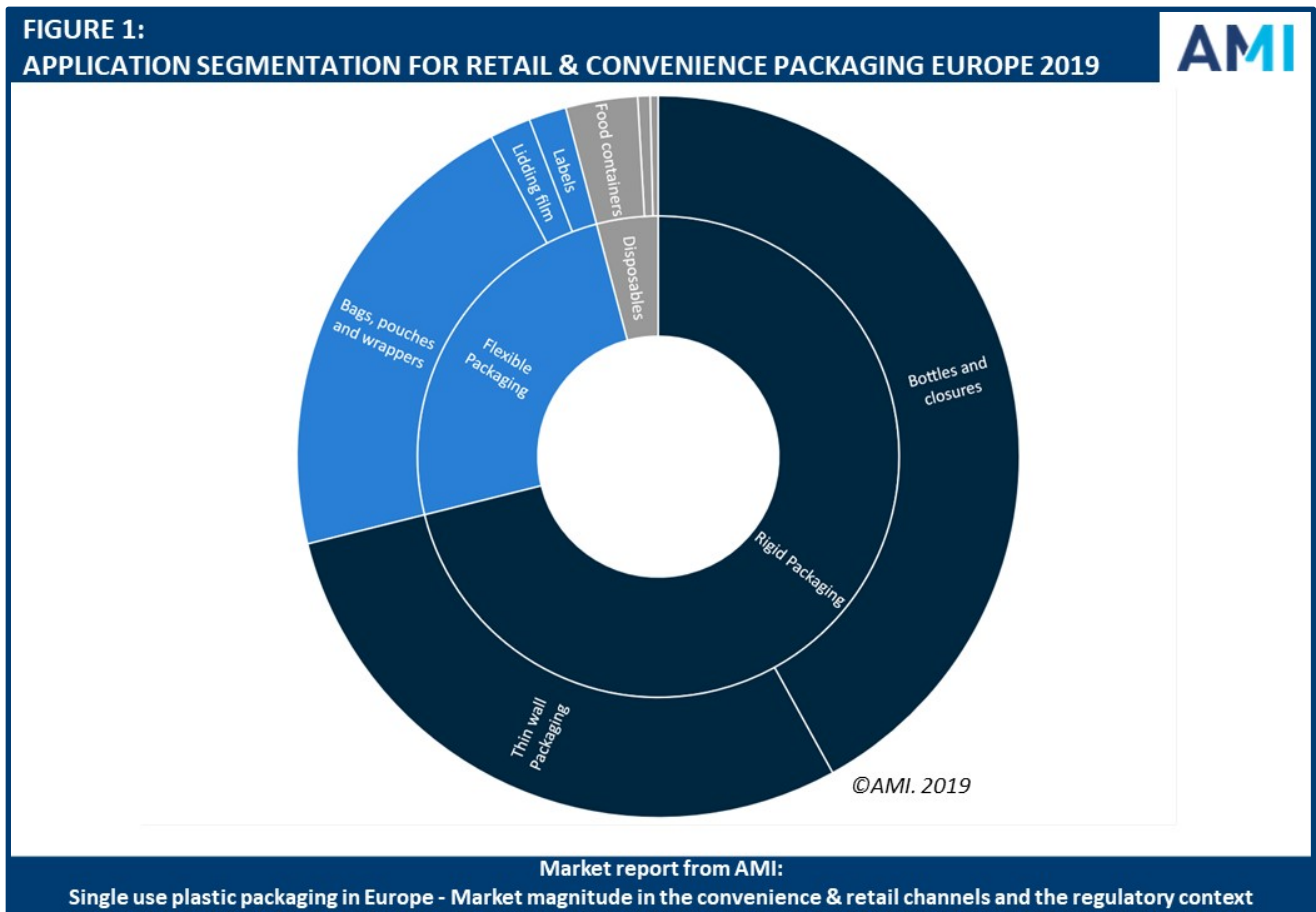
- The European Strategy for Plastics in a Circular Economy (2018)
- Directive on the reduction of the impact of certain plastic product on the environment (SUP Directive, 2019)
- The Packaging and Packaging Waste Directive (2015, amended 2018)
- European Commission's Regulations on Recycled Plastic Materials and Articles intended to come into contact with Food
- The national policies that have been transposed from EU Directives.

Whilst the SUP Directive targets the top ten plastic articles found on European beaches (inclusive of food service containers), it gives little indication of a framework or regulatory instruments to address overconsumption in plastic retail packaging. Despite high media coverage, the term '**single-use plastics**' has not been formally defined by the industry, and hence its market magnitude has not been duly assessed until now.

AMI has determined **single-use plastic packaging** to incorporate the packaging products and food/drink delivery formats targeted by the European Commission’s Single-Use Plastics Directive and structured the analysis to correspond to traditionally defined packaging industry terms. In AMI’s authoritative definition, there are five sub-segments which comprise single-use plastic packaging:

- disposable food containers
- disposable cups and lids
- disposable utensils
- small-sized bottles (including closures)
- and packets and wrappers for immediate consumption.

Single-use plastic packaging accounts for **20%** of polymer converted for convenience and retail plastic packaging in Europe and it pales in comparison to the wider plastic packaging context, which includes both rigid and flexible packaging formats.



The scale of the packaging conversion as well as magnitude of each of the single-use markets are explored in the report alongside critical analysis of the impact of policy measures, suggesting a varying degree of effectiveness. The policy measures specified in the SUP Directive, covering the retail and convenience packaging products include:

- Consumption reduction targets
- Market restriction
- Product design requirements
- Extended producer responsibility

- Separate collection objective
- Awareness rising.

Reduced volume of single-use plastic packaging being placed on the market dictated by **consumption reduction measures** and **market restrictions** may go some way to mitigate leakage to the environment, however the target applications are relatively small in volume terms meaning the effectiveness is limited. Measures that seek to address the circularity of packaging such as **extended producer responsibility**, **product design requirements** and **collection objectives** will have a greater and positive impact.

Critically, the outcome of the SUP Directive will be changes in material segmentation across the packaging industry. A transition towards packaging formats and structures that promote more circular solutions is undoubtable.

In this first of its kind study, undertaken by AMI Consulting, the tools and data are provided to enable companies to formulate coherent, meaningful strategies to proactively manage the market changes being pushed through by the European Commission.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

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In addition to its consultancy work, AMI organises annual conferences and expos including [Plastic: Design for sustainability](#) and [Thin Wall Packaging 2019](#), to be held in Berlin and Dusseldorf on 2-4th December 2019 and 10-11th December 2019.