

Environmental and waste legislation and The circular economy



Background

In line with society's growing awareness of environmental issues, we have seen a sharp increase in legislative standards governing the environment, packaging and the circular economy over recent years. This trend will continue to gain traction against the backdrop of the impact the environment and the circular economy on climate change, thanks in no small part to a range of EU policy initiatives, such as measures expected to arise from the EU Circular Economy Action Plan (CEAP) over the next few years.

Other important policies include the EU directives on reducing the impact of disposable plastics on the environment (2019/904/EU), on waste (2008/98/EC) and on waste electrical and electronic equipment (2012/19/EU), along with their respective revisions and updates. Directives tend to be transposed into the national legislation by means of amendments to the existing legal framework, such as the Circular Economy Act (KrWG), the Packaging Act (VerpackG) and the Electrical and Elec-



Our approach

The REWE Group takes its corporate responsibility seriously and has pursued a comprehensive sustainability strategy for many years, which of course also incorporates aspects of the circular economy. By 2030, we want all our own-brand packaging to be more environmentally friendly: by avoiding its use wherever possible, by reducing the amount where packaging is still required, and by improving the environmental impact of the packing material used. We are keen to lead the way in this area if the legal parameters give us freedom and set out appropriate standards. The food retail industry is frequently taken to task by initiatives to reduce waste and help the environment due to its vast scale, with thousands of retailers across the country welcoming millions of customers each day, and the fact that it initially supplied many products to customers, without retailers bearing direct responsibility or having appropriate regulations to adequately address the underlying political problem. It is therefore difficult to understand why retailers are left to foot the bill for removing litter and pollution from public areas that result from unlawful behaviour by some members of the public. And simply increasing the number of collection points, such as those for electrical appliances, will do little or nothing to improve recycling rates – but it does leave the food retail industry to pay for specialist collection and disposal services.

Our view on the appropriate way forward

- **Take a pan-European approach:** The REWE Group operates in a number of European countries. There should be a consistent approach across all member states for implementing EU directives on environmental and waste legislation. This will increase the acceptance of the measures and ensure they are implemented throughout the EU.
- **Involve industry stakeholders:** Regulation should be implemented in an ambitious but achievable manner. The early involvement of stakeholders and the integration of their expert knowledge will ultimately ensure that the policy is successful and the environmental and resource protection goals are achieved.
- **A fair distribution of duties and responsibilities:** Society as a whole is responsible for better environmental protection and compliance with waste-disposal regulations. It is a responsibility shared equally by members of the public and businesses, both bricks-and-mortar and the growing online sector.

Your Public Affairs contact on this topic



Sebastian Lange
Lead Berlin Office

+49 151 55 12 3076

About REWE Group

The cooperatively organized REWE Group is one of the leading trade and tourism groups in Germany and Europe. In 2020, the company generated a total external turnover of around 75 billion euros. Founded in 1927, REWE Group operates with 380,000 employees in 21 European countries.

The sales lines include REWE, REWE CENTER and BILLA as well as BILLA PLUS and ADEG supermarkets and consumer stores, the discounter PENNY, IKI, the drugstores BIPA and the toom Baumarkt DIY stores. The company also operates convenience stores REWE To Go and the e-commerce activities REWE Lieferservice and Zooroyal. The Lekkerland Group comprises the wholesale activities of the business group in the area of on-the-go consumption. Travel and tourism under the umbrella of DER Touristik Group includes the tour operators DERTOUR, Jahn Reisen, ITS, Meiers Weltreisen, Travelix, Kuoni, Helvetic Tours, ITS Coop Travel, Billa Reisen, Koning Aap, Apollo, Exim Tours and Fischer as well as more than 2,300 travel agencies (e.g. DERTOUR, DERPART, Kuoni, Exim, Fischer and cooperation partners), the hotel brands Sentido, Aldiana, Calimera, Cooee, and the online travel portal Prijsvrij Vakanties.