

Recycled food packaging – Compliance from an authority's perspective

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Plastics are used in many consumer products and have become an integral part of our everyday lives. The same applies to food contact material (FCM) made from plastic. They ensure the supply of food in industrialized countries - any time and in high quality. But in recent years, sustainability has also become an increasingly important issue for packaging industry. The European Green Deal and chemical strategy for sustainability also affects food packaging. But how can plastic packaging become more sustainable? The new Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation (PPWR) forces companies to rethink the use and the composition of packaging over the next years. New materials from renewable sources, compostable packaging and higher (mandatory) recycling rates are intended to strengthen sustainability. In the field of pharmaceutical and food packaging made from plastic, extractables and leachables (E&L) as well as not intentional added substances (NIAS) are a known problem. They can have a negative impact on the safety of pharmaceuticals and food, for which reason high demands are placed on the composition of the used materials. Due to safety concerns, Polyethylene terephthalate (PET) is currently the only recycled material permitted to produce food contact materials. But the PPWR affects all plastic materials! How can manufacturers for food contact materials use other recycled material than PET and ensure, that no harmful substances end up in food? In order to meet the requirements of the PPWR, a lot of research still needs to be done to find suitable recycled- and sustainable materials for food packaging.