

Position Paper The excessive use of the word "over-packaging"

August 2020

Contextualization

The French Packaging Council has noticed the repeated use of the word "overpackaging" in negative communications about packaging. These communications aim to constantly show the packaging as a useless item only destined to be waste product, something that we might not see.

The Citizen's Convention on Climate¹ has even made it an objective of the group of Proposals C ("limit overpackaging") in the "To consume" category. Without, however, defining the word.

An attempt at a semantic approach

- The generic term "over-packaging" refers to very different realities: overlapping of packaging for the same product, group packaging for consumer sales units, packaging that seem oversized because it is considered too bulky, too thick, etc.
- There is no official definition for "over-packaging". Wikipedia tries as follows: "*Overpackaging is the unsustainable, but in some cases considered necessary, practice of marketing products with packaging deemed excessive, given the environmental awareness of the market in which they are sold*".

POSITION OF THE FRENCH PACKAGING COUNCIL

1. The CNE advises not to use the word "overpackaging", which has no legal content and can be reductive, unclear, or even misleading.
2. As packaging represents a cost, marketers have been optimizing their packaging constantly for more than 20 years. They have been naturally respecting the essential functions packaging should fulfill. If, however, some packaging is considered excessive or even useless, the French Packaging Council considers that its design must be immediately modified to respect the regulations.
3. To assess whether a package is excessive or not, it is necessary to carefully analyze all the elements of the entire packaging system, in compliance with European law texts about packaging regulations. Each element is analyzed regarding the function it is performing or contributing to perform for the product and/or for the users and consumers. To correct the packaging, this analysis must then show clearly the problem identified, comparing with the functions expected for the packaging.

Created in 1997 as an association, the French Packaging Council is a collaborative platform bringing together the different actors in the packaging value chain: producers of packaging materials, packaging and equipment manufacturers, producers of consumer goods, approved companies and operators of the recovery and re-use sector, designers, other packaging professionals, local authorities, consumer and environmental protection associations.

The French Packaging Council, as a recognized moral authority, works for fair packaging. Its main mission is to develop and spread good practices in the design, the use, and the marketing of product packaging.

Press Contacts:

Bruno Siri - Executive Director

Maryse Bricout – Assistant

Find us on:



¹ <https://www.conventioncitoyennepourleclimat.fr/en/>