

Position paper
« WITHOUT PACKAGING CLAIM »
January 2023

Context

The claims "no packaging", "zero packaging" are now added to the usual claims "unnecessary packaging", "over-packaging", "too much packaging": there's no shortage of expressions for those who base their purpose on the desired disappearance of packaging, whatever the materials used.

Position

Let's start by reiterating that packaging doesn't exist on its own: it serves something (a product) and someone (a user, a consumer). We don't buy empty packaging, we buy packaged products.

The CNE would like to take this opportunity to reiterate that packaging is useful, strictly necessary and, to use today's terminology, essential.

To answer this simple question of "why packaging", let's take the example of human foodstuffs (food and drink), which today use around 2/3 of all packaging in Europe, whether household, industrial or commercial.

In France and Italy, ongoing excavations have uncovered wide-necked earthenware amphorae for salted fish and narrow-necked amphorae for olive oil and wine, used in large quantities from the beginning of our era. For the sedentary populations of these countries, harvesting, fishing and slaughtering at specific times of the year had to be reconciled with daily consumption. **The preservation of foodstuffs in packaging was born.** This was to guarantee good human nutrition against bad weather and predators of all kinds.

In addition to preserving and storing foodstuffs, this packaging also enabled foodstuffs to be **transported** throughout the Roman Empire, which at the time was the only market around the Mediterranean.

The need to preserve, store and transport is therefore not new, and this **physical necessity** will not disappear in the new "digital" world that is emerging. No Internet connection will ever be able to bring unpackaged foodstuffs to consumers.

What we've just seen for food applies to all the other goods that people consume: clothes, medicines, hygiene products, electronics, etc. "In short, as soon as the production of a physical good (whatever it may be) is disconnected from the time and/or place of its consumption, packaging is indispensable.

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¹ L'emballage, ce bel inconnu M Fontaine 2016 (in French)

It should be noted that the CNE does not give any additional qualifier to the packaging at this time. We are only talking here about the functionalities provided by packaging.

Packaging can be reusable several times or non-reusable (single-use). It may be multi-dose or single-dose, refillable or non-refillable.

Packaging can be recyclable or not, made from recycled materials or not, from renewable materials or not.

As with any human activity, the production of consumer products and their packaging is governed by technical and economic rules that historically explain the choice of one solution or another.

Today and in the future, depending on new regulations or new parameters such as environmental impact, packaging is adapting and will continue to adapt.

But whatever it may be - reusable or single-use, refillable or not, multi-dose or single-dose - packaging remains and will remain strictly necessary.

Over and above the regulations that govern packaging design, it can happen that marketers go beyond what is strictly necessary, and this is what has motivated the CNE for all these years to promote **The Right Packaging**.

The French Packaging Council (CNE), founded in 1997, is a forum for the different players in the packaging industry: packaging material manufacturers, packaging, and equipment manufacturers (converters), producers of consumer goods, retailers, approved collection and recovery system and operators, designers, other packaging professionals, local authorities, consumer and environmental organisations.

The CNE, a recognised non-profit organisation, works for the Right Packaging and its main mission is to develop and disseminate better practices in designing, using, and marketing products packaging.

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