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# Germany approves a new packaging law to enforce stricter European Union recycling rules

The measure replaces the current Packaging Act, reshaping compliance for beverage producers, retailers and food-service operators

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Germany’s Bundestag has approved new packaging rules that will replace the country’s current packaging law with a new implementation framework aligned with the European Union’s packaging regulation, a change that will affect beverage producers, retailers and food-service operators as the bloc moves toward stricter reuse and recycling standards.

According to information published by the Bundestag, the legislation is designed to adapt German law and other related legal areas to Regulation (EU) 2025/40. The EU packaging regulation entered into force on Feb. 11, 2025, and is generally set to apply across member states from Aug. 12, 2026.

The German government has argued that national rules must be updated because the EU measure brings broad changes to how packaging and packaging waste are managed. Under the plan, the existing Packaging Act would be repealed and replaced by a new Packaging Law Implementation Act.

Berlin says a full rewrite is needed to avoid conflicts between Germany’s previous packaging rules and the directly applicable provisions of the EU regulation. The government also says the national law is meant to create an effective enforcement framework so companies covered by the rules comply with their obligations and Germany can meet the environmental goals set out in Article 1 of the EU regulation.

The Bundestag had first debated the bill on April 24, 2026, before sending it to the Committee on the Environment, Climate Protection, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety. The parliamentary action now clears the way for Germany to put in place its domestic enforcement structure before the EU rules begin to apply in August.

For the drinks industry, the measure could carry practical consequences well beyond legal drafting. Brewers, wineries, spirits companies and soft-drink producers may need to adjust packaging compliance work around recyclability, recycled content and reuse systems. Companies that rely on refillable bottles, pooled containers or takeaway beverage formats could also face changes in operating costs, logistics and reporting requirements as Germany tightens its framework under the EU rules.

The Bundestag material indicates that the overhaul is part of a broader reset of packaging policy rather than a narrow technical amendment. That matters for beverage businesses because packaging is central to distribution, branding and deposit-return systems in Germany, one of Europe’s largest drinks markets.