

# EUBP calls on legislators to appropriately recognise the role of compostable coffee capsules in the PPWR

**Brussels, 20 November 2023 – A recent study from Wageningen University & Research (WUR) yet again confirms the advantages of compostable coffee capsules over any other type of coffee capsules.**

Last week, WUR<sup>1</sup> released a study which assessed the environmental impact and circularity of coffee capsules made from compostable biobased materials, aluminium, and conventional plastics through multiple end-of-life scenarios, including industrial composting, recycling, incineration, and landfilling.

The results of the study complement the European Commission's own Impact Assessment that accompanied the PPWR proposal last year, according to which compostable coffee capsules significantly increase the capture rate of biowaste, reduce the contamination of compost with non-compostable plastics, and do not lead to increased contamination of other waste streams. European Bioplastics (EUBP) therefore calls on legislators to finally take these benefits of compostable coffee capsules up in their negotiations to conclude the PPWR.

*"It's about time that the findings of multiple studies conducted on and confirming the advantages of compostable coffee capsules find their way into legislation. If the legislators cannot follow the original proposal of the Commission to make all coffee capsules mandatorily compostable, they should at least consider this option for all those made of plastic", Hasso von Pogrell, Managing Director of EUBP, declares.*

According to von Pogrell, conventional, non-compostable plastic coffee capsules provide no environmental benefit whatsoever. Both, the plastic packaging as well as its content, are lost to recyclers and composters, respectively. Instead, most of these capsules will end up in landfills or incineration. *"While composters may be able to sort out capsules made of aluminium, should they accidentally end up in the biowaste bin, they will not be able to distinguish between compostable and non-compostable plastic coffee capsules. However, if*

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.wur.nl/en/research-results/research-institutes/food-biobased-research/show-fbr/compostable-capsules-most-sustainable-option-for-single-serve-coffee-units.htm>

*we want the operators of organic recycling factories to embrace the idea of allowing compostable coffee capsules to enter the biowaste stream, thereby profiting from the nutrients contained in the capsules in form of coffee residues, they will need to be confident that all plastic capsules entering their waste stream are indeed certified compostable and need not be sorted out prior to processing the biowaste”, he argues.*

More than one hundred different types of coffee capsules are already certified ‘industrially compostable’ (in line with European standard EN 134324) according to well-established and independent certification schemes. However, with the exception of a few Member States, such as Italy, compostable coffee capsules aren’t yet accepted in the organic waste bin by waste collection operators in Europe. *“This needs to change, and the only way for this to happen is by embracing the composters and their legitimate concern of non-compostable coffee capsules contaminating their waste streams”* von Pogrell states. *“Legislation that phases out the use of non-compostable plastic coffee capsules is inevitable. Therefore, prior to the plenary vote in the European Parliament on the Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation (PPWR) on 22 November and the discussions on Member States level towards a general approach in the European Council, we call on the European legislators to take this reasoning into account. Without complete support from local and national governments, it won’t be possible to allow the deployment of this circular solution, which can not only contribute to the production of high-quality compost but also reduce the use of other materials considered less sustainable for this type of application”*, he concludes.

More information about the benefits of compostable plastics for single serve coffee capsules can be found in the [full report on the study from Wageningen University and Research](#).

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**About European Bioplastics**

European Bioplastics (EUBP) is the European association representing the interests of the bioplastics industry along the entire value chain. Its members produce, refine and distribute bioplastics i.e. plastics that are biobased, biodegradable, or both. More information is available at [www.european-bioplastics.org](http://www.european-bioplastics.org)

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