

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3429/09
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to the Commission

Subject: Deposit-based recycling system for convenience food packaging

Finland has one of the world's most efficient bottle and drink can recycling systems. Out of the total quantities of bottles and cans covered by the deposit system, 94% were taken back to the shops in 2007. The items which circulated most freely within the system were reusable glass and plastic bottles (97%) and aluminium cans (89%). Disposable plastic bottles had the lowest return rate (82%). The deposit-based recycling system thus encourages consumers to be conscientious about recycling. Regarding the metal drink cans bought in, say, Estonia or on ships plying the Baltic Sea, a much lower proportion is returned, and that is why there are large quantities of such cans littering the environment on, for example, the Åland Islands.

A similar deposit system should be set up to enable other types of food packaging to be recycled in the same way. It would be technically possible for all bottles, drink cans, and plastic convenience food packaging on sale in the EU area to be provided with bar codes whereby a deposit could be charged when a product was purchased and refunded when the consumer brought the packaging to the recycling point, even if the place of return were in another Member State. An effective recycling system would do much to prevent packaging waste being produced and enable raw materials to be used more efficiently.

What form of action will the Commission take with a view to setting up an EU-wide deposit-based recycling system for bottles, drink cans, and plastic food packaging?