



5th Progress Report

UNESDA COMMITMENTS

**TO THE EU CODE OF
CONDUCT ON RESPONSIBLE
FOOD BUSINESS AND
MARKETING PRACTICES**

July 2026

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	3
--------------	---

Healthy, balanced and sustainable diets for all European consumers	5
(Referring to aspirational objective 1 of the Agri-Food Code)	

SUGAR REDUCTION	NEW PROGRESS DATA AVAILABLE	6
-----------------	-----------------------------	---

MARKETING & ADVERTISING PRACTICES	NEW PROGRESS DATA AVAILABLE	7
-----------------------------------	-----------------------------	---

SCHOOL COMMITMENTS	8
--------------------	---

An optimised circular and resource-efficient food chain	9
(Referring to aspirational objective 4 of the Agri-Food Code)	

COLLECTION	NEW PROGRESS DATA AVAILABLE	10
------------	-----------------------------	----

RECYCLING	NEW PROGRESS DATA AVAILABLE	11
-----------	-----------------------------	----

REUSE	12
-------	----

Additional activities to support our sustainability commitments	13
--	----

INTRODUCTION

Established in 1958, UNESDA Soft Drinks Europe is the Brussels-based EU trade association representing the non-alcoholic beverages sector. Its membership comprises 27 national associations from across Europe and 12 corporate members.

UNESDA members are involved in the production and/or distribution of a wide variety of non-alcoholic beverages including still drinks, carbonated drinks, energy drinks, iced teas, flavoured waters and sports drinks.

Europe's soft drinks sector is rooted in the European economy and society, employing 1.8 million people both directly and indirectly, throughout its €242 billion value chain. With over 500 soft drinks production and bottling plants across Europe, we manufacture more than 97% of our soft drinks on the continent and source over 85% of our ingredients from Europe.

Discover more about our sector's socio-economic impact [here](#).

UNESDA welcomes the **EU Vision for Agriculture and Food**, which recognises the importance of promoting diverse and balanced nutrition, and we look forward to contributing to the annual **Food Dialogues** to address pressing issues such as food reformulation and the collection of data on dietary intake.

UNESDA continues to fully support the EU's ambition to deliver sustainable food and drinks production and consumption. In this context, our industry welcomed the initiative to draw up an EU Code of Conduct for responsible food business and marketing practices (the Agri-Food Code), including actions to create a more sustainable food system and reduce its overall environmental footprint in the EU. **We believe the Agri-Food Code should remain an important pillar of the European Commission's programme.**

UNESDA was among the first signatories of the Agri-Food Code and we are encouraged to see the number of signatories continuously increasing. Collective action from all actors in the food value chain is needed to deliver meaningful and wider impacts.

The Agri-Food Code continues to offer a unique opportunity to accelerate Europe's transition to more sustainable food systems, and our sector has therefore made several commitments to support this transition. Those commitments are linked to the following aspirational objectives identified by the Agri-Food Code:

- Aspirational objective 1: healthy, balanced and sustainable diets for all European consumers
- Aspirational objective 4: an optimised circular and resource-efficient food chain in Europe

With a view to making the “**healthier choice the easy choice**”, UNESDA’s principal focus is to continue its long journey of promoting responsible marketing practices towards children and achieving sugar reduction through different levers (incl. reformulation, offering smaller pack sizes for better portion control and nudging the consumer towards no- and low-calorie soft drinks).

When it comes to the EU’s objective of “**accelerating the transition towards a circular economy**”, our sector is taking numerous actions to achieve full circularity of its beverage packaging, investing in collection, recycling, reuse and refill, and continuously increasing the energy efficiency of its operations. We are committed to building on the **Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation** to further accelerate the transition towards more circular beverage packaging across Europe.

“

Five years after the launch of the Agri-Food Code, the sector demonstrates that voluntary, science-based action delivers measurable progress in supporting healthier consumer choices and advancing packaging circularity across Europe.

Between 2019 and 2025, sustained innovation has resulted in a further 14% reduction in average added sugars, significantly exceeding the 10% commitment. This constitutes clear, verifiable progress that expands consumer choice and evidences the effectiveness of voluntary approaches.

In parallel, progress on packaging circularity continues, with **ongoing increases in the use of recyclable packaging and recycled PET. In 2025, 60.3% of PET used in our bottles was recycled PET**, marking a further step in reducing environmental impact.

These outcomes reflect a sector acting with responsibility and delivering at pace. **Continued progress, however, is contingent on a policy framework that enables and incentivises reformulation and investment**, including addressing barriers such as the 30% energy reduction rule and national soft drinks taxes.

With an enabling policy environment, there is significant potential to accelerate investment, innovation and growth. The sector remains committed to working in partnership with policymakers to advance public health outcomes and environmental sustainability.

Natalia Filipposyants

President of UNESDA and Senior Vice-President and General Manager at PepsiCo International Beverages, Europe



HEALTHY, BALANCED AND SUSTAINABLE DIETS FOR ALL EUROPEAN CONSUMERS

(Referring to aspirational objective 1
of the Agri-Food Code)



For several years, UNESDA and its members have made significant investments in reformulation and new product development to reduce sugar in our soft drinks, as part of our actions to support healthier lifestyles in Europe. **Thanks to our latest actions, we reached a 14% reduction in average added sugars between 2019 and 2025, well exceeding our 2019-2025 sugar reduction target of 10%!**

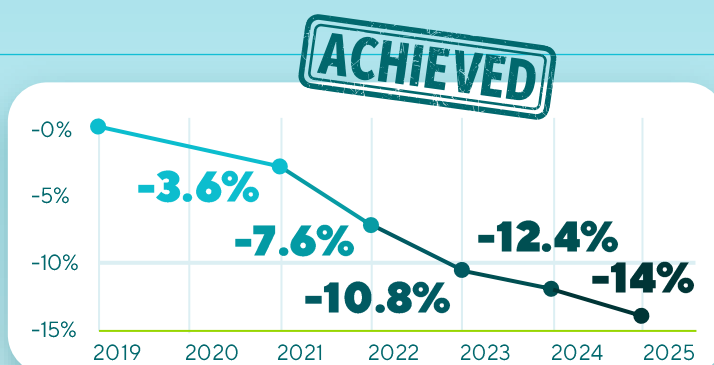
COMMITMENT



UNESDA committed to reducing the average added sugars in our soft drinks by a further 10% between 2019 and 2025 in the EU-27 and the UK. This will represent an overall industry-wide commitment to a reduction of 33% in average added sugars since 2000.

LATEST RESULTS

The sector delivered a 14% reduction in average added sugars in its soft drinks between 2019 and 2025 across Europe, as indicated by data analytics and consulting company GlobalData. This reflects an additional reduction of 1.6 percentage points from 2023 and it also represents an **overall average sugar reduction of 36.3% since 2000**.



As demonstrated by the progress we have made, we accelerated our sugar reduction efforts in 2025. To continue these actions, it is critical that EU public authorities and regulators:

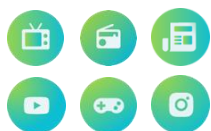
- actively support the **use of low- and no-calorie sweeteners**, based on sound scientific evidence, and recognise their important role in achieving public health objectives, including reducing overweight and obesity. Our actions to make further progress in sugar reduction are largely dependent on our ability to use sweeteners.
- **remove anachronistic and outdated provisions** that are barriers to EU innovation and growth such as the rule which only allows low-calorie sweeteners to be added to food or drinks for which the energy value has been reduced by at least 30%
- ensure that any **potential future EU-level dietary recommendations are evidenced** by updated, robust and comparable food consumption and food composition data.
- use the Food Dialogues to encourage other food and drink sectors to take **additional voluntary initiatives** to reformulate products. These actions are more effective than regulation to encourage healthier dietary habits.

MARKETING
& ADVERTISING
PRACTICES

Over the past 15 years, UNESDA and its members have implemented an effective Responsible Marketing Code of Conduct in full respect of parents' responsibility for what their children eat and drink. Since 2006, we do not advertise or market ANY of our soft drinks to children under 12 years of age, neither on TV, nor in print media or online. We have taken this a step further with our new commitment in 2021, mentioned below, effective on 1 January 2022.

COMMITMENT

UNESDA committed:



NOT TO ADVERTISE
TO CHILDREN
UNDER 13

- **not to advertise and market any of our soft drinks to children under 13 (versus under 12) years across all media.** This includes TV, radio, in print, in cinemas and online, including social media and other online platforms and sites (company-owned websites and video-sharing platforms such as YouTube). It also includes direct marketing, product placement, interactive games, outdoor marketing, mobile marketing and contracted influencers.
- **to lower the audience threshold from 35% to 30%** so that in practice fewer young children will be directly exposed to advertising for any of our soft drinks.

LATEST RESULTS

The 2025 audits were carried out by independent marketing and media consultancy Ebiquity (television) and the European Advertising Standards Alliance (websites, social media and influencers).

UNESDA corporate members have demonstrated high levels of compliance across channels:



We will continue to strengthen and reinforce our responsible marketing and advertising practices to respond to societal expectations and an evolving media landscape. The positive impact of our practices is demonstrated by the fact that daily soft drinks consumption across different age groups (children and adolescents) has decreased across Europe, as indicated in the WHO HBSC surveys. Check out the data [here](#).



Schools are a central setting for children’s learning experiences and have an impact on shaping their level of knowledge and exposure to influences, including related to food and beverages. School policies have therefore the potential to encourage children to develop life-long healthier eating and drinking habits. UNESDA and its members remain committed to our responsible school policy to continue to do our part in creating healthier dietary habits across Europe.

COMMITMENT



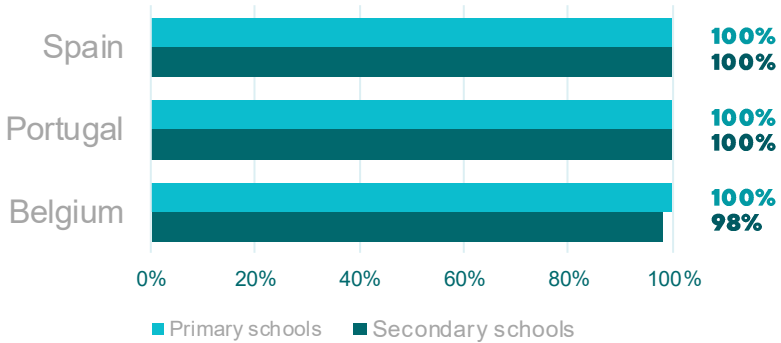
UNESDA is committed:

- **not to sell** any of its soft drinks in **EU primary schools** (through direct distribution) since 2006.
- to **selling only no- and low- calorie soft drinks in EU secondary schools** (through direct distribution) since 2017, reinforcing its 2006 commitment to only use non-branded vending machines.

LATEST RESULTS

No monitoring was undertaken during the reporting period. The next results will be available in 2027. The monitoring of UNESDA’s school commitment is performed in a group of different countries where there is a voluntary school commitment in place. It was previously conducted by third-party auditors BVA-BDRC. The 2020 monitoring was conducted in Germany, Slovakia and Spain. The 2022 monitoring was conducted in Austria, Italy, Slovenia and Sweden. The 2024 monitoring was conducted in Belgium, Portugal and Spain.

The 2024 monitoring of UNESDA’s school commitment was carried out in these three countries and the results show high levels of compliance:



UNESDA and its members will continue to intensify their efforts to ensure that our school commitments are implemented across the EU and to address the non-compliant cases. We have noticed that in some cases our soft drinks are brought in the schools directly by teachers/school staff, and this is therefore out of our sector’s control. We will strengthen our cooperation with schools to address these forms of sales.

We ask EU public authorities and regulators to encourage other food and drink categories to act, because only coordinated efforts from the entire food value chain can bring about wider changes.

AN OPTIMISED CIRCULAR AND RESOURCE- EFFICIENT FOOD CHAIN

(Referring to aspirational objective 4
of the Agri-Food Code)

COLLECTION



Packaging sustainability starts with design for recycling and high collection rates. Efficient and well-designed collection schemes are crucial to ensure that no packaging is wasted. UNESDA has been supporting the establishment of Deposit and Return Systems (DRS) in several European countries as one of the most effective ways to boost collection rates of beverage packaging.

COMMITMENT

WILL ACHIEVE
90%
COLLECTION
RATE BY 2030

UNESDA committed to achieve 90% collection of the sector's PET bottles, glass bottles and aluminium cans by 2030.



PET
BOTTLES



GLASS
BOTTLES



ALUMINIUM
CANS

LATEST RESULTS

Currently, there are 17 EU countries with DRS in place (**2 more than in 2024**), with the Polish (2025) and Portuguese (2026) DRS being the latest additions.


87%
MEDIAN COLLECTION
RATE IN 2025

In 2025, EU DRS achieved a **median collection rate of 87%**, an impressive result given this rate includes the results of several new DRS which did not reach their full potential yet

With the **Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation (PPWR)** now providing a clear framework for mandatory Deposit Return Systems (DRS), we are seeing growing momentum across the EU, with many Member States actively establishing or upgrading their national schemes. In this context, we remain committed to engaging with national authorities and stakeholders to support the rollout of well-designed, high-performing DRS.

RECYCLING



Packaging sustainability is also about ensuring that the materials being collected are recyclable and effectively recycled, preferably in a closed-loop with fair access to recycled content. The soft drinks sector is making huge investments in designing recyclable packaging and using more recycled content.

Despite economic and geopolitical challenges and high rPET prices, we managed once again to considerably accelerate our efforts and further exceed our 2025 recycled content commitment. This progress was supported by improved collection systems and the wider uptake of DRS, enabling better access to food-grade recycled materials.

COMMITMENT

UNESDA is committed to using only packaging that is circular by design and boosting the uptake of recycled PET (rPET).



100%

WILL BE
RECYCLABLE
BY 2025

By 2025:

- Our beverage packaging (plastic, metal, glass) will be 100% recyclable



AT LEAST

50%

OF THE PET USED IN
OUR PLASTIC BOTTLES
WILL BE RECYCLED
PET BY 2025

By 2025:

- At least 50% of the PET used in our plastic bottles will be recycled PET

By 2030:

- Aim for all our PET bottles to be made from 100% recycled and/ or renewable material if technically and economically feasible

LATEST RESULTS



MOST UNESDA
CORPORATE MEMBERS
HAVE ACHIEVED

100%

RECYCLABLE PACKAGING

A majority of UNESDA corporate members have either achieved the objective of **100% recyclability** or **are very close**.

ACHIEVED



60.3%

OF THE PET USED IN OUR
PLASTIC BOTTLES WAS
RECYCLED PET IN 2025

Between 2024 and 2025, **60.3% of the PET used in the manufacturing of our plastic bottles was recycled PET, significantly exceeding our sector's 2025 target of 50% rPET.**

We call for the smooth and timely adoption of the necessary secondary legislation under the **Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation (PPWR)**, in order to provide businesses with clarity on the calculation methodology for recycled content targets.

To be able to continue our circularity efforts successfully, we count on the European Commission to use the upcoming **Circular Economy Act** to support the creation of a well-functioning secondary raw materials market, ensuring fair access to sufficient food-grade feedstock for recycling and addressing the current pricing imbalance between virgin and recycled materials.



REUSE



Packaging sustainability can be achieved through a range of complementary solutions, including recycling, reducing the amount of beverage packaging, reuse and refill.

Various reusable and refill solutions are on the market, but they all have one point in common: they will contribute to reducing the amount of beverage packaging and beverage packaging waste.

COMMITMENT



TO INCREASE THE USE
OF REUSABLE
BEVERAGE SYSTEMS
BY 2030

UNESDA committed to reduce its packaging carbon footprint and increase the use of reusable beverage systems. This means using more reusable beverage systems by 2030 compared to 2020 and studying the best environmental and economic pathways to increase the use of reusable and refillable models.

LATEST RESULTS

To provide insights into the investments and changes required to increase the rate of reuse, UNESDA commissioned an economic study on returnable refillable PET bottles from PwC, which was finalised end of 2021. The study is available [here](#).

UNESDA's corporate members are consistently taking steps to increase their offer of reusable beverage systems in Europe and are already working on how to support compliance with reuse targets set in the Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation.

To ensure a smooth transition to more reusable beverage packaging, UNESDA calls for the urgent adoption of the necessary secondary legislation to properly and effectively implement the reuse targets set in the **EU Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation**. In particular, a better understanding of the functioning of the foreseen exemptions and of how the targets will be calculated is paramount for business predictability.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES TO SUPPORT OUR SUSTAINABILITY COMMITMENTS

- 1 Over the past years, UNESDA has supported the **European PET Bottle Platform (EPBP)**, an industry initiative which provides PET bottle design guidelines for recycling and helps PET bottle users in evaluating packaging solutions and technologies during their R&D phase where adjustments can still be made to mitigate recycling challenges. Recently, UNESDA has increased its efforts in giving greater visibility to the work of the EPBP, and strongly encourages its members to seek EPBP support. As part of these efforts, EPBP has assumed a strategic liaison position at the European Committee for Standardisation (CEN), which strengthens the EPBP's role in driving PET bottle circularity.
- 2 UNESDA is also an **active member of Close The Glass Loop, and the Global Beverage Can Circularity Alliance**. These platforms, which are taking meaningful action in Europe and globally, aim to **drive circularity of glass bottles and aluminium cans**, respectively. They serve as an important lever to foster community engagement and collaboration towards our shared circularity goals.
- 3 With the help of Blonk Consultants, UNESDA developed in 2023 “shadow” **PEF category rules (PEFCR) specific to the soft drinks category** in order to support its members in assessing the environmental footprint of their products in a more harmonised way. To further facilitate the use of those rules, UNESDA also worked with Pilario, a web-solution provider, to create a **user-friendly and tailored platform**, integrating all the key elements of the soft drinks PEFCR, and providing access to all UNESDA members (direct and indirect). This new tool, launched in April 2025, is expected to support UNESDA members in their transition towards more sustainable packaging by streamlining the way they perform LCAs.
- 4 To support the proper implementation of DRS across the EU, UNESDA has joined forces with Natural Mineral Waters Europe (NMWE) to commission a **DRS Playbook**, a tool providing recommendations for the set up of new DRS in the EU based on our sectors' experience with beverage packaging collection.
- 5 UNESDA has joined the **European Alliance for Best-In-Class DRS**, launched by the Reloop Platform in May 2025. This Alliance represents a valuable opportunity to accelerate the implementation of best-in-class DRS across Europe (UK+EU) and expand knowledge about DRS among various stakeholders (governments, industry, NGOs) as a key step toward creating a circular economy for beverage packaging.



UNESDA Soft Drinks Europe

Rue du Trône 14-16
B-1000 Brussels
www.unesda.eu



UNESDA – Soft Drinks Europe



@UNESDA



@UNESDA.bsky.social