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## ASPECTS OF SUSTAINABLE PACKAGING TODAY

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**Abstract:** *The last few years have been marked by an increasing demand for sustainable materials and practices. Thus, a series of measures have been implemented, which involve obligations and recommendations for the use of sustainable packaging. These include: re-use and refill targets, return-warranty systems, certain aspects of labelling, certain restrictions on packaging formats, including single-use plastic packaging, targets for reducing packaging waste, aspects of recyclable packaging.*

### • Introduction

- Current consumption behaviors involve a very large use of packaging and implicitly the generation of impressive amounts of waste, becoming a serious concern both at national, European and global level. From individuals to institutions and large corporations, more and more is produced, consumed and thrown away. In today's consumer societies, most single-use products and packaging are thrown away after use.
- According to the Global Waste Index and Eurostat, humanity generates over 2 billion tons of waste per year, and by the end of the decade could exceed 2.5 billion tons annually. Thus, it becomes crucial for each of us to analyze our consumption habits in order to optimize resource consumption. Romania has committed to landfilling only 10% of municipal waste by 2035. The remaining 90% of waste must be recycled or recovered in other forms. Reducing storage can be achieved by collecting recyclables separately. The biggest challenge is to recover biodegradable waste, which accounts for around half of all municipal waste.
- In recent years, initiatives and economic currents have emerged that aim to change the behavior and direction in which humanity is heading that consumes excessively and even compulsively.

### • Material and method

- The research from this article follows as objectives:
  - - describing the major opportunity of circular economy;
  - - identifying the main benefits for business, which come with choosing biodegradable packaging products;
  - - detailing the new concept of eco-design;
  - - aspects about biodegradable packaging.
- In order to achieve the objectives proposed it was used qualitative research method.

### • Results and discussions

- Recycling, pollution reduction and resource management are the three important factors characterizing the principles of sustainable development. Waste production is a significant problem affecting the whole world due to human activities related to economic development and resource consumption.
- The circular economy is a major opportunity and can support the development of new industries and jobs, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and increasing the efficient use of natural resources. The circular economy is a production and consumption model involving sharing, renting, reusing, repairing, renovating and recycling existing materials and products for as long as possible, thereby extending the life cycle of products. In practice, it involves minimizing waste.
- One solution to more efficient waste management is to use biodegradable products. They are made from renewable raw materials, which eliminates the burden of using rapidly depleting non-renewable resources. For example, in the food industry, circular economy principles have been adopted, producing bio, non-toxic and environmentally safe products, such as biodegradable bags, cardboard cups or biodegradable cane trays. The preference for them reflects the positive attitude of consumers towards the environment, sustainability and pollution.

### Conclusions

The current study has focused on the sustainability of packaging materials and where further research on sustainability should go. Packaging materials are also of significant importance in terms of the protection and safety of their contents, as well as the use of natural, biodegradable materials that can fulfil multiple uses. The study also highlights the importance of the advantages and disadvantages of using packaging materials in terms of their durability.