

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002296/26
to the Commission
Krzysztof Śmiszek (S&D), Joanna Scheuring-Wielgus (S&D), Robert Biedroń (S&D)
(4 June 2026)**

Subject: Regulation (EU) 2025/40 on packaging and packaging waste

Regulation (EU) 2025/40 on packaging and packaging waste rightly exempts the packaging of medicinal products from mandatory recycling requirements to ensure the security of medicine supply and patient safety. However, this results in the mass generation of polyvinyl chloride (PVC) waste that is not recycled. Member States cannot implement regulation on their own due to the full harmonisation of the pharmaceutical market in the EU.

Given the general interest, environmental protection and the EU's circular economy objectives, we ask:

1. Is the Commission planning to take legislative action or revise pharmaceutical legislation with a view to a systemic shift away from PVC in medicine packaging towards safe and recyclable alternatives?
2. Does the Commission intend, in cooperation with the European Medicines Agency (EMA), to implement simplified registration procedures for manufacturers switching packaging material to greener solutions?
3. Is EU financial or research support planned for the development of innovative, immediate green packaging technology in the pharmaceutical industry?

Submitted: 4.6.2026

**Answer given by Mr Várhelyi on behalf of the European Commission
(21 August 2026)**

1. The Commission has funded various projects for more sustainable medical packaging ⁽¹⁾. Funding for innovations in this area would be possible in the future under the Commission's proposal for a European Competitiveness Fund. Indeed, packaging of medicinal product is an integral part of the market authorisation of medicines, with patient safety at the core of the authorisation. Therefore, they are exempted from the recyclability and recycled-content obligations under the packaging and packaging waste Regulation ⁽²⁾. The Commission will by 2035 review, whether the exemptions from the recyclability requirements, including those for medicinal products, should be revised.
2. The current EU pharmaceutical legislation ⁽³⁾ already provides mechanisms for the European Medicines Agency to assess post-authorisation changes, according to their nature and potential impact on the medicinal product. The Commission continues to monitor developments in this area and remains attentive to possible approaches that reconcile sustainability objectives with the regulatory requirements applicable to medicinal products.
3. Horizon Europe ⁽⁴⁾ has funded projects addressing sustainability and circularity challenges, including packaging, digital solutions, alternatives to single-use tools and modular construction. DICE ⁽⁵⁾ is bringing these approaches to a high technology readiness level and testing them in real healthcare settings. SolRec2 ⁽⁶⁾ ⁽⁷⁾ developed prototypes and recycling strategies for e-paper labels, pharma blister packs and laminate packaging waste. Support for novel packaging materials, including biobased solutions, has also been provided across sectors, and is proposed under the framework programme for research and innovation Horizon Europe 2028-2034.

⁽¹⁾ A green chemistry approach for the medical device industry | GREEN-MAP Project: <https://cordis.europa.eu/article/id/457775-a-green-chemistry-approach-for-the-medical-device-industry> ; World's first unmanned, fully aseptic multi-functional commercial filling line for the bio-/pharmaceutical industry | H2020: <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/851191/reporting>.

⁽²⁾ Regulation (EU) 2025/40 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 December 2024 on packaging and packaging waste, amending Regulation (EU) 2019/1020 and Directive (EU) 2019/904, and repealing Directive 94/62/EC (Text with EEA relevance), OJ L, 2025/40, 22.1.2025.

⁽³⁾ COM/2023/193 final and COM/2023/192 final.

⁽⁴⁾ https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe_en.

⁽⁵⁾ DICE (101060184); <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/101060184/results>.

⁽⁶⁾ https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-2020_en.

⁽⁷⁾ SolRec2 (101003532); <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/101003532>.