



**MEHRWEG
VERBAND**
DEUTSCHLAND

Reusable packaging in Germany – Overview of trends and developments

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What is reusable packaging (Mehrweg)?

According to our Packaging Act, “**reusable packaging**” is characterized by

- being reused multiple times for the same purpose
- having sufficient logistics allowing return and reuse
- having an appropriate incentive system (e.g. deposits) to encourage returns



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© RAL gGmbH



Where do we come from?

Since 2017: > 30 startups

- To go / take away
- Food
- Personal care
- eCommerce



© Tobias Bielenstein

19th century: Beer



© The Coca Cola Company

1929: Coca Cola



© G. Kupetz

1969: „Perlenflasche“



© Walther Faltsysteme

1978:
Reusable transport
crates

1928:
Cookie jars



© L. Ernst

1952:
First standardized glass
bottle for mineral waters



© GDB

1972:
Juices (VdF)



© VdF

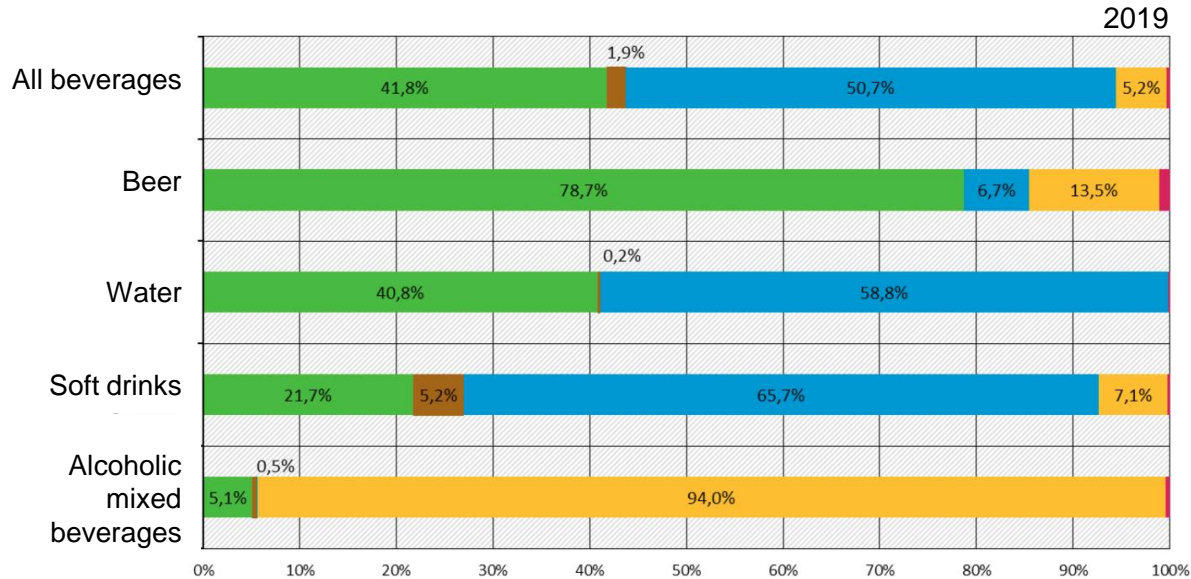
1987:
Landliebe



© Landliebe / Friesland Campina



What is the status quo?



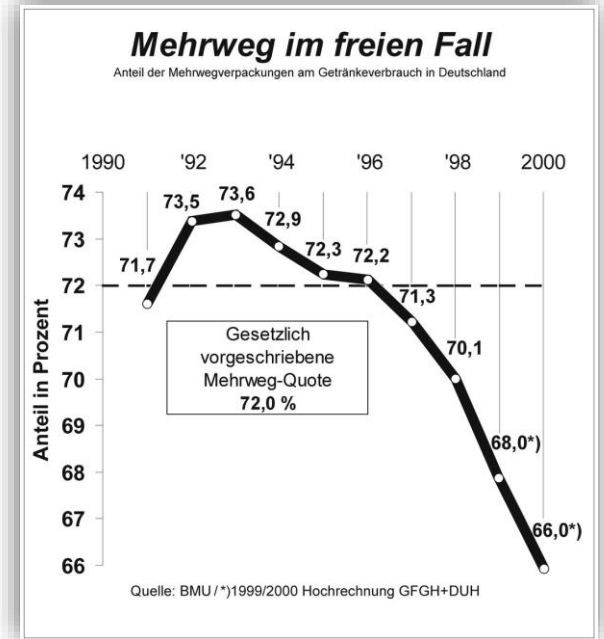
Reusable packaging

Beverage carton, tubular bag

Single-use plastic bottles

Cans

Other single-use packaging



Source: (1) Umweltbundesamt, Bundesweite Erhebung von Daten zum Verbrauch von Getränken in Mehrweggetränkeverpackungen, 2019
 (2) Deutsche Umwelthilfe (<https://www.presseportal.de/pm/22521/201014>)



Germany – a frontrunner in terms of legislation?

2003: Introduction of deposit return schemes for single-use beverage packaging, to stimulate reusable packaging

2019: 70 % quota for reusable packaging in the beverage sector (**Packaging Act §1**)

07/2022: Reusable packaging must be registered at LUCID, the national packaging register

01/2023: “Obligation to offer reusable packaging alternatives” (**Packaging Act §33, 34**)

2022: Report nrs of reusable packaging put on the market, pool size, nrs of cycles, etc. (**Environmental Statistics Act § 5a**)

- Investigation of additional measures if 3 years after commencement of the new Packaging Act, the 70% quota is still not fulfilled (Entschließung BT-Drs. 18/11781)
- ReFo-Plan project 3720343050 about reusable packaging systems to reduce packaging waste



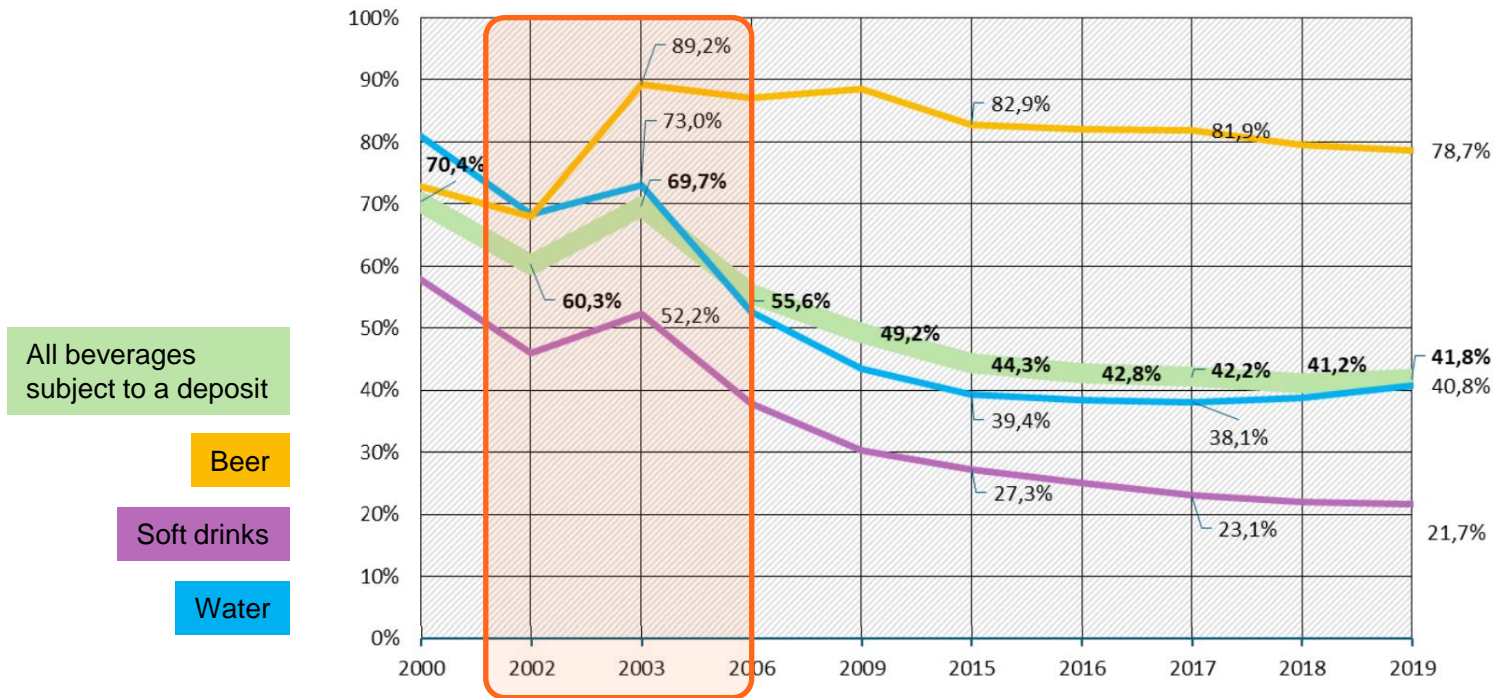
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Deposit on single-use bottles only had a temporary impact on reusable packaging quotas



Market developments

To-Go/Take-Away



© Finke/DUH



Solutions differ in formats, material, application areas, return incentive, business model, ownership, services, track&trace, region of use, etc.



Prepackaged FMCG products

Expansion of existing reusable packaging systems (esp. **MMP**)



© own photos

- Previously, only dairy products
- 4 glass formats, two colours (white, brown)
- > 150 food producers
- > 1000 products
- transition from an open, unmanaged pool system towards a managed pool system



© Regondo, PFABO, circujar, SEA ME, circulation, Mehrwert



- Packaging as a service
- In some cases, first building of own brand (as a proof of concept) before opening the system to others
- Building on existing infrastructure where possible (e.g. use of existing transport crates, adaptation to reverse vending machines)

eCommerce

Shipping packaging



© heycircle, rhynopaq, memo



Online groceries



© alpakas, Glasbote



Key factors to make reusable packaging...

easy

- New business models “pay per use” and “packaging as a service”
- Return process has to be easy (embedded in existing routines & immediate reimbursement of deposit) - or no deposit at all
- “return anywhere”
- One digital interface for users (e.g. retail) using multiple reusable packaging systems

scalable

- Diversification in return options
- Use of existing reverse logistics and cleaning infrastructure & new service providers
- Compatibility of various systems, e.g. in track&trace technology → digital infrastructure
- Standardization to reduce complexity and increase compatibility

competitive

- Joint utilization of reverse logistics and cleaning infrastructure reduces costs → digital infrastructure required
- Track & Trace allows to identify where systems can be optimized
- Inclusion of externalities in EPR fees (for single-use packaging)



To make reusable packaging easy, scalable and competitive, it requires collaboration!



A broad community of actors to collaborate on making reusable packaging easy, scalable and competitive (to single-use packaging) through projects e.g. on sustainability assessment, reverse logistics and cleaning infrastructure, digital infrastructure, political work, awareness raising and competency building, and enabling collaboration on European level.



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