



Press Release

**Re-use of beverage Packaging in Europe:
A profitable and sustainable choice**

Reusable packaging offers chances for increased resource efficiency and waste prevention in the EU: Participants of the 4th ReUse Conference in Brussels demand a higher level of commitment for reusable packaging systems – Karl Falkenberg and Matthias Groote, representatives of EU institutions, open discussion on trends and contribution of EU-regulations – 3rd European Refillable Award goes to Friedrich Lütvoigt GmbH & Co.KG Mineralbrunnenbetrieb Auburg-Quelle

Brussels, 18 September 2012: The participants of the 4th European ReUse Conference in Brussels ask for stronger commitment for refillable beverage packaging from EU Member States. The ambitious implementation of the five step waste hierarchy and the promotion of reusable systems are important for the aspired transition into a resource efficient recycling society. The European Federation of Associations of Beer and Beverages Wholesalers (CEGROBB), the Association of Small and Independent Breweries in Europe (S.I.B.) and the German Environmental Aid (DUH) organized the European ReUse Conference on Tuesday for the fourth time.

"Refillable beverage packaging illustrates how ecological, economical and social aspects interact. Together they form a sustainable approach for production and consumption. They prevent packaging waste as well as costs for producers. Compared to one-way packaging, valuable raw materials and energy can be saved", said Günther Guder, President of CEGROBB. He pointed out that several new initiatives improving refillable systems have been implemented by individual reuse-oriented beverage producers since the first ReUse Conference in 2007. Additionally he called for political and legislative support in order to promote refillable bottles at a European level.

Karl Falkenberg, Director-General Environment of the European Commission, confirmed that the European Waste Framework Directive gives clear priority for waste prevention as the first step of the waste hierarchy, before recycling or other types of waste recovery. In his keynote speech at the ReUse Conference he said *"Prevention is the high form of waste management. In a resource-scarce environment, dematerialising products and packages makes a lot of sense. Second best option is re-use and this is particularly valuable in the packaging sector. The idea of reusing packaging therefore meets the objective of the European Waste Framework Directive. This is a simple but obvious example how waste can be prevented. Reusable packaging directly contributes to our environmental protection objectives and saves valuable resources."* Thereby, he explicitly highlighted the role of reusable packaging in doing business in accordance with nature.



Matthias Groote MEP, Chair Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety, opened the discussion on the contributions from the EU Parliament supporting reusable systems. *"With regard to increasingly scarce resources and the necessity to save energy we need to act with a sense of a vision. To achieve the objective of a sustainable society we need a behavior modification from one way to reuse products. Concerning this matter there are clear advantages of refillables for the environment, in terms of waste prevention, sustainable use of resources, prevention of littering, and climate protection. Therefore more European countries should follow these good examples. We feel up to support reusable packaging."*

In contrast to products in disposable packaging, those filled in reusable bottles are mostly sold close to where they were produced. As the bottles only need to be transported over short distances, energy can be saved. Thereby, functional reuse systems are keeping many regional jobs in the beverage sector. *"Reusable packaging is a sensible way to save resources and support local products as well as economic structures. Acknowledging this would also honor the contribution to waste prevention of small and medium-sized reuse-oriented businesses in the beverage sector. In Germany the reuse quota for beer remained stable at more than 80 per cent for years – a success that should motivate other EU countries to strengthen or introduce reuse systems"*, said Roland Demleitner, Managing Director of S.I.B.

Time and again beverage producers use different methods to lead consumers and politicians to believe in their packaging as eco-friendly alternatives. The one-way industry is searching eagerly for ways to make single-use packaging socially accepted. Beverage producers just came up with new Bio-Plastic-Bottles. *"In recent times we revealed several bold attempts of companies that tried to deceive their own consumers by advertising yoghurt pots or plastic bags made of bio plastics as non-polluting. But life cycle assessments from bio plastic packaging do not show any advantage for these packaging-novelties. Much more they disclose negative tendencies. Significantly, we did not receive detailed information about life cycle assessments of Bio-Plastic-Bottles until now"*, explained Jürgen Resch, Executive Manager of German Environmental Aid (DUH). Even if non-refillable bottles are optimized, this will not lead to less waste but legitimize a throwaway culture the waste hierarchy tries to prevent.

At the ReUse Conference the European Refillable Award for innovative and eminent performance promoting or further improving eco-friendly reusable systems was awarded for the third time. This year's winner was Friedrich Lütvogt GmbH & Co. KG Mineralbrunnenbetrieb Auburg-Quelle, a German beverage producer. The company was awarded for its innovative bottling line. Dirk Lütvogt and his team developed and installed an exceptionally efficient and therefore sustainable bottling line for refillable bottles. Compared to old filling plants this one saves more than 43% of energy and 60% of fresh water which helps to keep reuse systems competitive.

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