

Is less really more? Why a balanced approach to packaging minimisation is key to preserving crucial packaging functionalities



A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO MINIMISATION MEASURES IS NECESSARY TO PRESERVE PACKAGING FUNCTIONALITIES

The minimisation of the weight and volume of the packaging is thus one of the many solutions for Brands to improve the eco-design of their packaging and support the achievement of the EU targets. At the same time, maintaining a holistic view of the packaging functionalities, including the presentation of the packaged product, remains indispensable for improved packaging design.

Unqualified packaging minimisation that prescribes limits for the weight and volume of the packaging and does not allow for reasonable packaging differentiation can by contrast bring about negative consequences to businesses and consumers, from facilitating the trade of illicit goods, to breaking the relationship of trust between consumers and businesses, to stifling creativity and competitiveness.

BRANDS' SUSTAINABILITY COMMITMENTS

Brands have long been investing into optimised packaging solutions for their iconic products, through **eco-design** and more conscious resource use, including the use of recycled or bio-based content material, reuse solutions, compatibility with existing recycling infrastructure and material reduction (e.g., through the minimisation of the weight and volume of the packaging). Through their commitment to continuing researching for ever-optimal packaging solutions and production processes, branded consumer goods manufacturers acknowledge the urgency of implementing packaging solutions that meet both the environment's and consumer's needs.

BRANDS' EXAMPLES OF PRODUCT PRESENTATION THROUGH ICONIC PACKAGING



RUINART

Product subject to trade mark



ABSOLUT[®]

Product subject to registered mark



BEEFEATER

Iconic shape inspired by the London bricks and designed to facilitate the pouring of gin



Navigating the retail environment

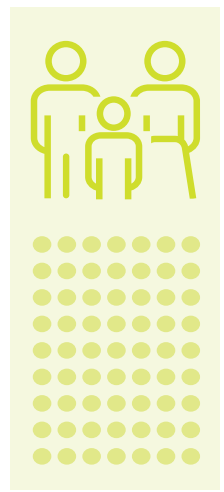
– The branding of the packaging acts as an important **memory cue for consumers**, enabling confident swift purchase choice in today's cluttered retail environment: The average UK supermarket carries around 45,000 SKUs and the average shopper buys around 50 items in 50 minutes¹. **To facilitate purchase choice, the presentation of products through branded packaging remains essential.**

It looks like the real deal...but... –

The unqualified minimisation of packaging cannot come at the expense of consumer **safety** in its broad sense. Protection against counterfeits depends also on packaging differentiation, which helps distinguish safe products from illicit goods. In the EU, global trade in counterfeits and pirated products was estimated at EUR 119 billion, corresponding to 5.8% of EU imports². **Counterfeiters wishing to replace safe, legitimate products or packaging with illicit ones have an easier task the more standardised packaging becomes.**

Being on the safe side –

Packaging plays an important role in protecting consumers' health, for instance through the anti-tamper foil in yoghurt pots or tamper-proof cosmetic bottles. Safety is also ensured by robust packaging, with appropriate wall thickness to protect the integrity of the packaged product. **Imposing unjustified weight and volume minimisation requirements would put consumers' safety at risk.**



Packaging is a product's badge of honour –

Packaging vouches for the Brand's **identity and equity**, reflecting the uniqueness of a product (e.g., a specific shape of a bottle of perfume, a chocolate jar, or a bottle of spirits). **Upholding packaging differentiation is essential to support the immediate identification of the Brand by the consumer.**

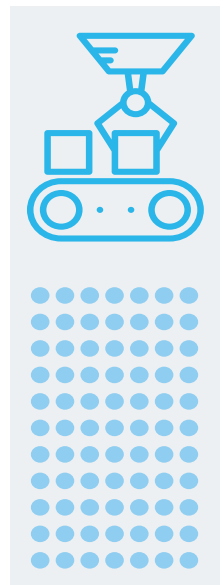
Variegated packaging also incentivises competitiveness among FMCG manufacturers, supporting brand recognition and differentiation. **Standardised packaging would stifle the ability to communicate unique features and/or brand values to consumers.**

Leading with innovation and creativity –

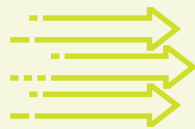
There's a world behind packaging: **Creativity** fosters **innovation** in packaging design, unleashing the designer's *know-how* that is leveraged by Brands to transform consumer preferences. At the same time, **innovation brings about – and should continue to advance – more sustainable packaging solutions, which would be at risk if unbalanced limits to weight and volume were imposed.**

Know your (IP) rights! –

As packaging design reflects the Brand identity and equity, the tradition and cultural heritage, it is often protected under **IP rights** including, but not limited to, trade marks, registered designs and protected Geographical Indications. **The continuity of the EU's role as an upholder of IP rights protection depends on the unfaltering support towards EU's IPR-intensive industries³, including branded consumer goods manufacturers' freedom to design artwork and packaging that is often guaranteed by IP rights in the EU.**



AIM'S CALL TO ACTION



EU policymakers' support to Europe's **innovative entrepreneurship**, creative abilities and **IP rights protection** is crucial to enable **differentiation**, diversity and safety in design.

Proposed amendments on the introduction of maximum limits to packaging weight and volume would **risk standardising packaging, hindering consumers' purchase experience and long-established trust towards safe and bespoke branded consumer goods.**

AIM Brands call on the EU policymakers to ensure a **balanced approach** in the definition of minimisation requirements, taking into account both sustainability targets and other key Union's objectives.

About AIM

AIM (Association des Industries de Marque) is the European Brands Association, which represents manufacturers of branded consumer goods in Europe on key issues that affect their ability to design, distribute and market their brands.

AIM comprises 2500 businesses ranging from SMEs to multinationals, directly or indirectly through its corporate and national association members. Our members are united in their purpose to build strong, evocative brands, placing the consumer at the heart of everything they do.

AIM's mission is to create for brands an environment of fair and vigorous competition, fostering innovation and guaranteeing maximum value to consumers now and for generations to come. Building sustainable and trusted brands drives the investment, creativity and innovation needed to meet and exceed consumer expectations.

EU Transparency register ID no.: 1074382679-01

www.aim.be

1. Unwrapped. The hidden power of packaging. British Brands Group.

2. EUIPO/OECD. Global Trade in Fakes 2021

3. EU's IPR-intensive industries represent 75% of trade within the EU, generate almost 4 in 10 jobs in the Member States and had a contribution of EU GDP 47.1% in 2022, worth EUR 6.4 trillion.