



IVCIE

Activity
Report
2019

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Message from the Chair and the Director

The new blue bag, extensive monitoring of industrial and commercial waste, simplified electronic submission of prevention plans... These are just a few of the highlights of 2019.

One thing is certain: the circular economy is gaining increasing attention. Think, for example, of eco-modulation of the Fost Plus and Valipac fees and the expanded contents of the new blue bag, which will be sorted into at least 14 fractions. Below you will find an overview of the topics that marked 2019 for the Interregional Packaging Commission (IRPC). We will then take a brief look at what lies ahead in 2020.

The new 2019-2023 accreditation of Fost Plus took effect in 2019. One important aspect of this accreditation was the widespread introduction of the new blue bag. As from 2021, all plastic packaging will be collected right across Belgium. More than three million Belgians could already use the new blue bag by the end of 2019. Effective communication nationwide required a clear sorting message that was as simple and uniform as possible.

The collection of a broader range of PMD also has an impact on the Belgian sorting infrastructure. The new blue bag will be sorted into a minimum of 14 fractions, with the aim of ensuring the highest-quality recycling possible. Sorting will take place entirely in Belgium. Five new sorting plants are to be specially built throughout the country for this purpose.

Fost Plus also submitted to the IRPC a proposed new approach to PMD/P+MD collection from companies and out-of-home collection of PMD/P+MD. Examples include schools, sports centres, festivals or events, railway stations, metro stations and airports. The accredited compliance organisation put forward an action plan to achieve the precise and ambitious objectives for 2023, which are to double PMD collection from businesses and to collect at least 26,000 tonnes of PMD waste generated outside the home.

Another item on the agenda was eco-modulation of the Fost Plus fees. Packaging that hinders selective collection or sorting or that cannot be recycled should in future be subject to a strongly deterrent fee, amounting to at least twice the highest recycling fee.

In 2019 Valipac, the accredited compliance organisation for the management of industrial and commercial packaging waste, continued extensive monitoring of industrial and commercial waste, which it began a year earlier. This is an effective tool for the Belgian Regions, as it provides an overview of the industrial/commercial waste collected by sector, by material and by Region. Annual reporting enables us not only to observe a trend in the sorting and selective collection of industrial/commercial waste, but also to identify potential problems and adjust strategies where necessary.

In 2019 the new prevention plans were also submitted for the period 2019-2022. The simplified submission procedure using electronic forms made it easier for companies to declare their prevention plans, both individually and at sectoral level.

The processing of Belgian packaging waste suddenly received a great deal of media coverage during the past year. The waste was reportedly exported to countries such as Turkey and Malaysia, without any certainty that it was actually being recycled there. According to the reports, a large part of the packaging waste ended up not being recycled and the figures were inaccurate. All kinds of theories were circulating in the media.

Both household and industrial/commercial packaging waste streams are very tightly controlled. This ensures, with absolute certainty, that they are recycled. If there is the slightest doubt about whether packaging waste has actually been recycled, the quantities concerned are excluded from the Belgian results. This has been the policy of the Interregional Packaging Commission and the accredited compliance organisations Fost Plus and Valipac for many years now.

We do, of course, want to help solve the problems that underlie these misconceptions. In many cases, they are false assumptions. Often packaging waste was not involved at all and sometimes the waste was not even Belgian, but foreign waste that was passing through a Belgian port.

In any event, the IRPC is seeking to develop an irrefutable, effective recycling system within Europe and, if possible, within Belgium. In 2020 we will therefore continue to explore how best to encourage recycling of packaging waste in Belgium and Europe.

Finally, on 17 April 2019 the European Commission introduced a fundamental change to the calculation rules for attaining recycling and recovery targets. It therefore seemed appropriate for the IRPC to update the Belgian calculation method. To ensure an efficient transition, we brought in an independent consultancy firm.

Looking ahead to 2020, we await with interest the conclusions of the consultancy firm on the new reporting method, in line with the new European rules. We are also expecting final approval of the revised version of the interregional Cooperation Agreement of 4 November 2008 on the prevention and management of packaging waste, which contains a number of important amendments. For example, the definition of “party responsible for packaging” has been clarified, in response to the growth of e-commerce from abroad.

The new Cooperation Agreement also includes some very ambitious recycling targets. Firstly, the recycling rates to be achieved for each material are considerably higher. And secondly, the targets for beverage packaging and household packaging are also increasing drastically: 90% and 95%, respectively, will have to be collected selectively for recycling.

In the meantime, we hope you enjoy reading our Activity Report.

Danny Wille

Chair

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several loops and a final horizontal stroke.

Marc Adams

Director

A handwritten signature in black ink, featuring a large, stylized 'M' and a long, sweeping horizontal stroke.

1

The operation of the Interregional Packaging Commission (IRPC)

1.1 The tasks of the IRPC

The specific tasks of the IRPC include the following:

1. Monitoring whether companies (parties responsible for packaging, aka "responsible companies") and accredited compliance organisations are fulfilling their reporting and take-back (i.e. recycling and recovery) obligations.
2. Checking the way in which the responsible companies and accredited compliance organisations meet their statutory recycling and recovery targets (expressed as a percentage).
3. Approving or rejecting prevention plans of companies (responsible companies).
4. Granting or refusing accreditation to the organisations responsible for the promotion, coordination and financing of selective collection, recycling and recovery of packaging waste.
5. Assisting and advising the Regional governments, for example by creating consultative forums, providing logistical support or proposing legislative amendments.
6. Conducting or commissioning studies and research into the management and prevention of packaging waste.
7. Processing notifications from carriers transiting Belgium to transport waste that does not originate from Belgium and will not be processed there.

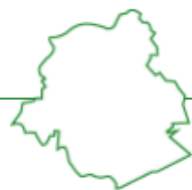
1.2 The composition of the IRPC

The composition of the decision-making body in 2019 was as follows:



Flemish Region

Full members	Alternate members
Ann DE BOECK	Luc GOETEYN
Hugo GEERTS / Victor DRIES ¹	Anneleen DE WACHTER
Danny WILLE (Chair since 05/03/2019)	Roeland BRACKE



Brussels-Capital Region

Full members	Alternate members
Livia SPEZZANI	Valérie VERBRUGGE
Céline SCHAAR	Grégoire CLERFAYT
Olivier BOSTEELS	Janathan BARGIACCHI

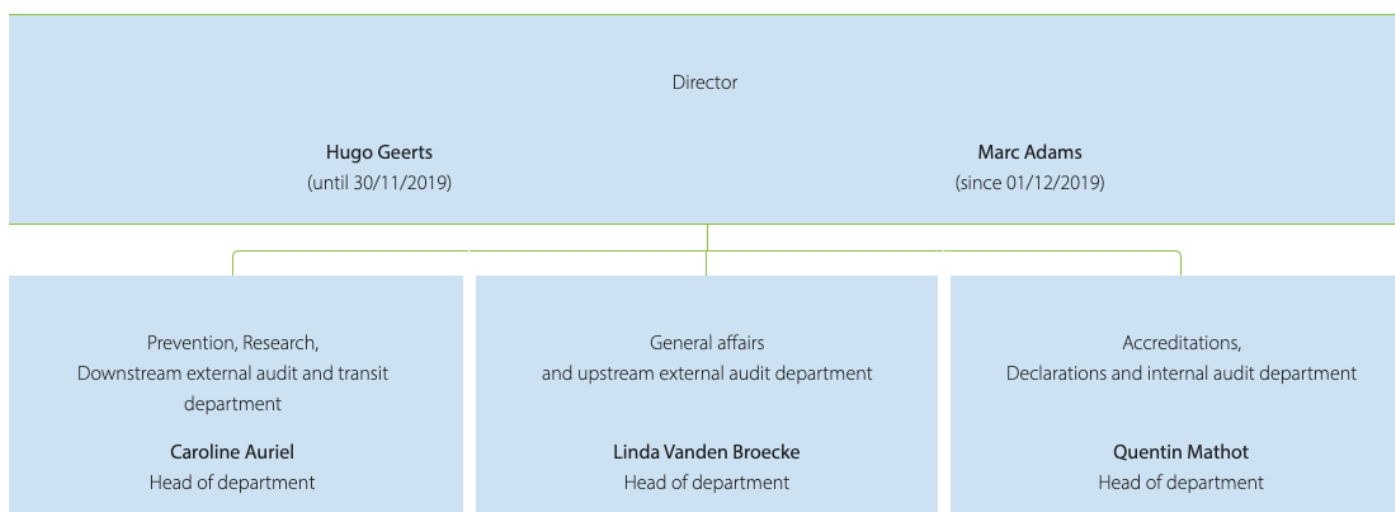


Walloon Region

Full members	Alternate members
Anne DUMONT (Chair until 04/03/2019)	Eloise PIGNON
Joëlle BASTIN	Clément POULAIN
Martine GILLET	Jean-Yves MERCIER

The organisational structure of the Permanent Secretariat in 2019 was as follows:

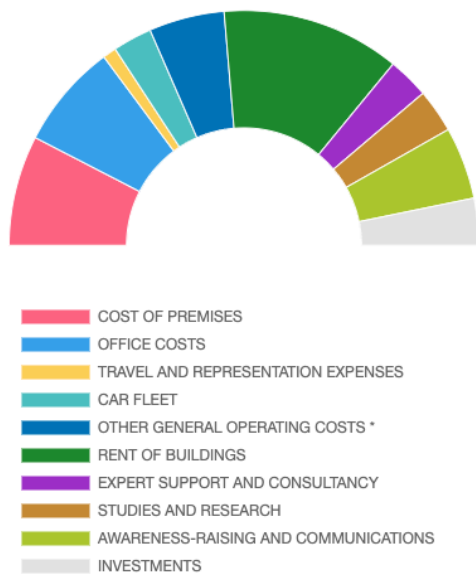
Departments under the director



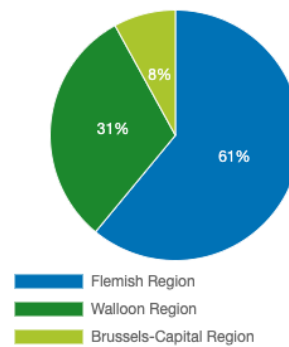
At the end of 2019, the Permanent Secretariat had a total of 18 members of staff, including several part-timers. ^①

1.3. The 2019 budget of the **IRPC**

Budget - Actual expenditure IRPC 2019



Budget allocation key as set out in the Cooperation Agreement



1.4. The Extended Producer Responsibility Interregional Platform (**EPRIP**)

The IRPC acts as secretariat for the Extended Producer Responsibility Interregional Platform, which was created in 2009.

OBJECTIVE

To develop a common understanding on extended producer responsibility (EPR)

STRUCTURE

3 Regions
3 Regional authorities



HOW?

Structural exchange of relevant data



Explore the possibility of introducing a **Cooperation Agreement** on **EPR** (extended producer responsibility)

In order to provide an interregional framework, **supplementing** the Regions' **legislation**.

2

The results of the prevention plans 2019-2022

"The process of communicating and collaborating with the IRPC went smoothly and was an enjoyable experience. The prevention plans offer great added value for focusing all our efforts on achieving more circularity."



Ann Nachtergaele - Environmental Affairs & Energy Director at Fevia – Chair of the Packaging and Packaging Waste Platform

Prevention plans **2019-2022**

✉
725
companies invited

INDIVIDUAL

265
individual plans submitted

✓
235
plans approved

⊘
30
plans rejected, giving reasons

SECTORAL

19

sectoral plans submitted

representing

567

companies ¹



detailed analysis by IRPC with external assistance



100%

of plans approved

The packaging **prevention plans** are a way of **getting companies to think about** the packaging they place on the market. They often contain relatively simple measures that nevertheless have a significant impact, such as the use of reusable pallets.

Individual prevention plans reflect extensive efforts to find waste-saving measures with a positive effect on the environment.

Most of the **sectoral prevention plans** enable significant changes to be made in the short term thanks to sector-specific measures.

Here are some examples of specific measures:

- Use more recycled cardboard for cardboard packaging
- Reduce the thickness of stretch wrap
- Reuse disposable packaging that is still in good condition
- Reduce the use of disposable pallets by using more reusable ones

3 Fost Plus

“The new blue bag will be in use right across Belgium by early 2021. All P+MD bags will be entirely sorted in this country. To really complete the circle, we are also looking to recycle in Belgium.”



Patrick Laevers – Managing Director of Fost Plus

The new blue bag – Key figures



For the IRPC, **expanding the content of the blue bag** was the key aspect of the new accreditation in 2019. We therefore kept a close eye on this issue.

It is very important that P+MD is **sorted in this country**. The IRPC also wants to focus on **recycling** within Belgian borders.

We will sort the new blue bag into at least 14 fractions (including the residues) and want to **achieve the highest-quality recycling possible for each fraction**. Some fractions will have a positive value, i.e. recycling will make money, while others will actually cost money.

In the case of fractions with a **negative value**, we explicitly impose the requirement to recycle in Belgium so that the process can be monitored closely. We will not go as far for fractions with **positive value**, but we do certainly want to encourage domestic recycling.

This is how we show our commitment to local recycling. The packaging waste collected in the new blue bag must be able to be used to make new packaging for the Belgian market.

Working groups set up in 2019

The IRPC has set up working groups, with different stakeholders, on a number of crucial issues in order to help build consensus on policy decisions.



P+MD sorting message

Formulate a clear and simple sorting message for the whole of Belgium about the new plastic packaging that may be placed in the P+MD bag

- intensive consultation
- 4 plenary meetings in 2019

Calculation of reference costs

Collect views and formulate a joint proposal for a calculation method supported by the various parties

- intensive consultation
- 4 plenary meetings in 2019

Eco-modulation of Fost Plus fees

Calculating Green Dot fees will become more complex

- to pass on the actual costs
- and support selective collection

Other stakeholders:



Federations of distributors, importers and producers of packaged goods



Sorting plants and recycling centres



Material Organisations

Strongly deterrent fee for:

- packaging that hinders sorting
- packaging that hinders recycling
- non-recyclable packaging

intensive consultation
2 plenary meetings in 2019

4

Valipac

“The fact that industrial and commercial waste is now monitored means we finally have an accurate picture of the selective collection carried out by companies. This is an important step in the transition towards a more circular economy. In this context, co-responsibility of all stakeholders is another essential prerequisite.”

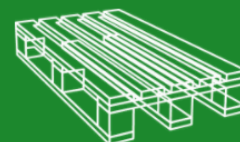


Francis Huysman – Managing Director of Valipac

Monitoring of **industrial and commercial waste**



14 waste streams



We are now halfway through Valipac's accreditation period and are making **good progress**. One area has proved to be more difficult than expected, namely systematically documenting all the recycling channels.

This is because of **China's** decision in 2018 to **close its borders** to plastic waste from Europe, which severely disrupted the international waste trading market and caused a rush on European recycling facilities. Although the trading market recovered somewhat in 2019, the recycling channels are still less stable than they used to be and it now takes more effort to monitor the waste streams. We are confident that we will overcome this obstacle and will have a clear picture of all recycling channels by the end of the accreditation period.

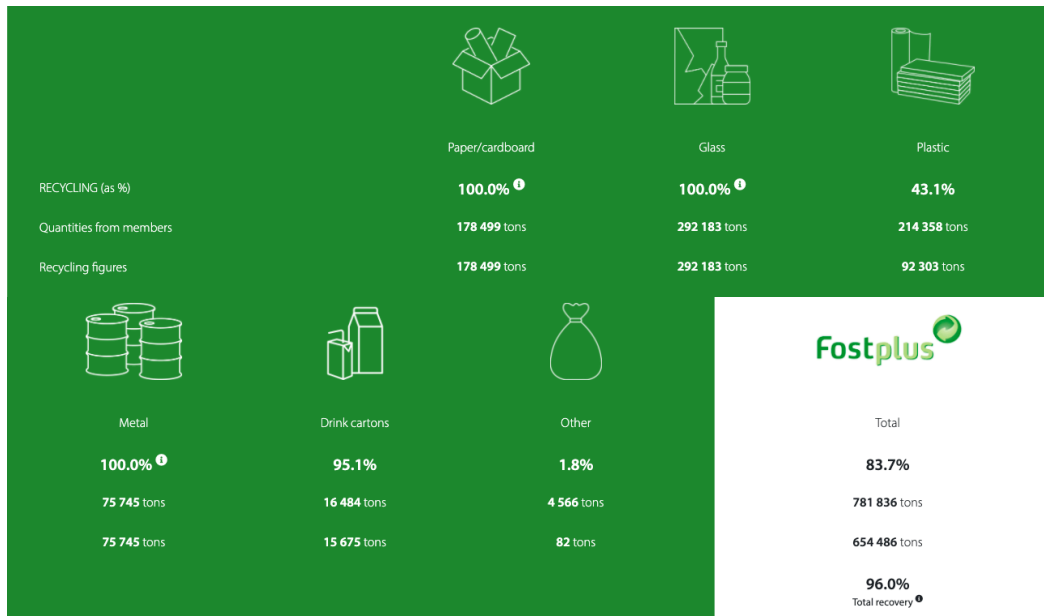
Fortunately, the problem affects only a **small proportion** of industrial and commercial plastic waste: 84.9% of this waste is recycled either within the EU or in a controlled channel outside the EU, where recycling is guaranteed.

The IRPC wants to be **100% certain** that all the quantities included in the figures have **actually been recycled** and, moreover, under **good conditions**. If the recycling proof submitted is not conclusive, then, as a precaution, we do not include these tonnages in the results.

The IRPC believes that the **future of industrial and commercial packaging waste recycling** also lies within **Europe**. We must therefore strive to keep recycling close to home and, if possible, even in Belgium.

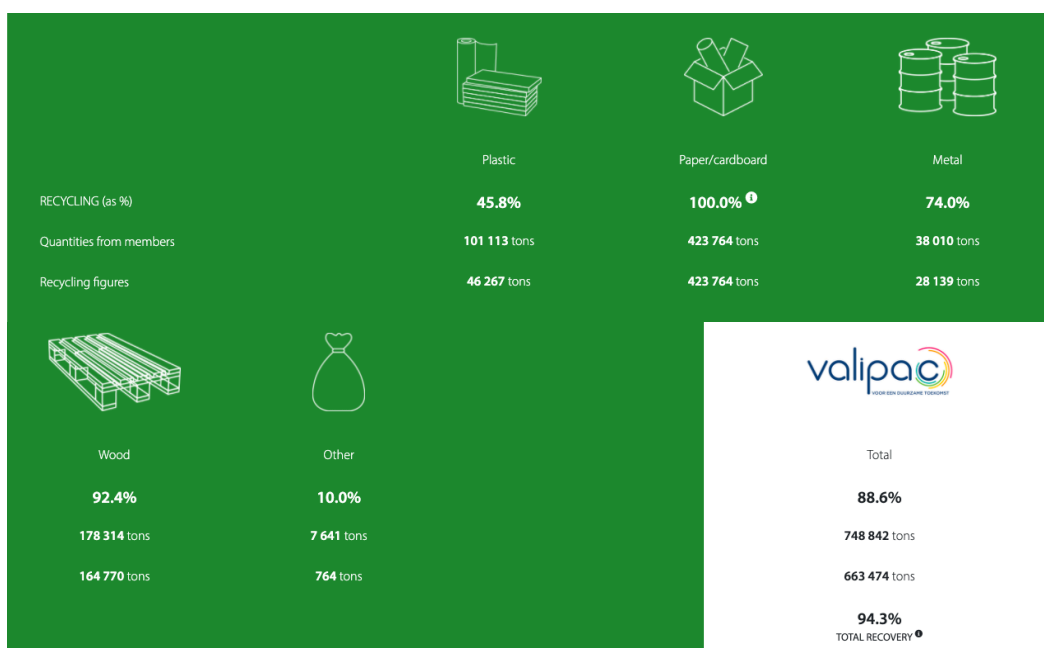
5 Key figures

5.1 Fost Plus results for 2018



The total recycling rate is **83.7%**. The target is **80%**.
The total recovery ² rate is **96%**. The target is **90%**.

5.2 Valipac results



Exceptionally, certain quantities of plastic were excluded from the results in 2018 because their final destination could not be identified. This has been the policy of the Interregional Packaging Commission and the accredited compliance organisation for many years now.

The total recycling rate is **88.6%**. The target is **80%**.
The total recovery ² rate is **94.3%**. The target is **85%**.

5.3 The results of **the individual responsible companies** in 2018

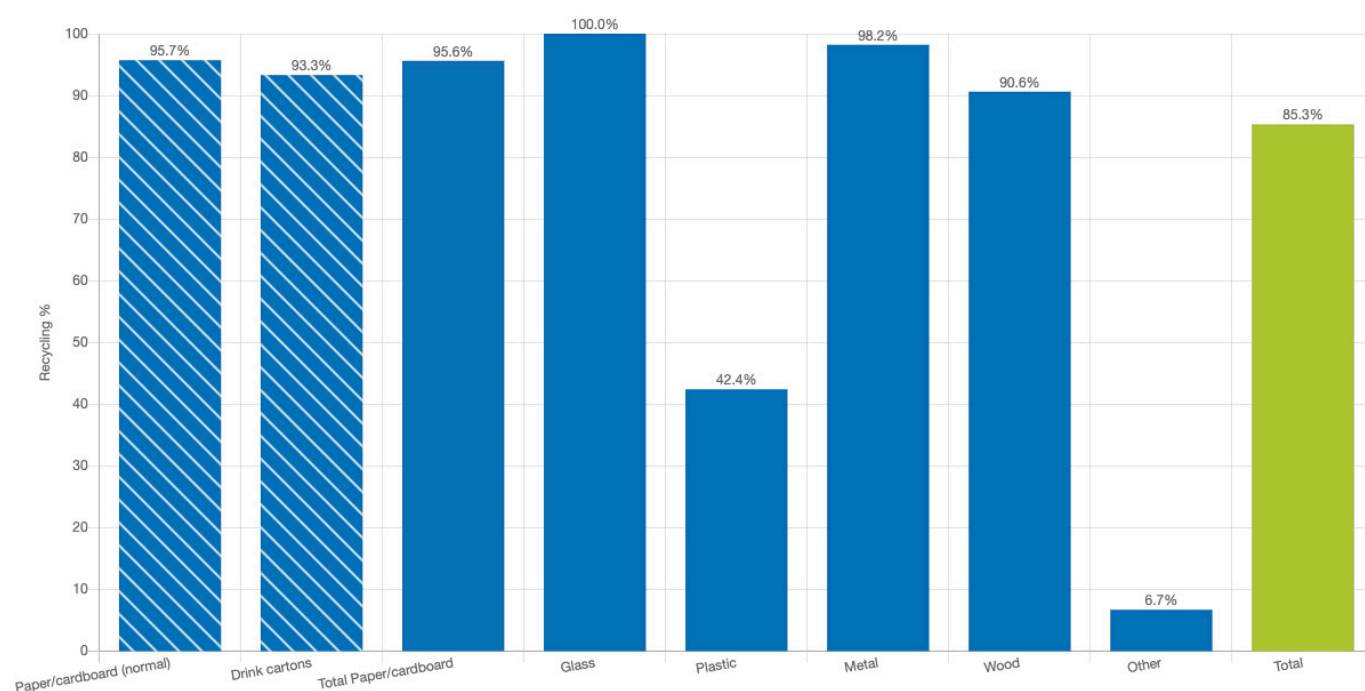
A total of 96 companies stated that they fulfilled the take-back obligation themselves in the 2018 reporting year.



The average recycling rate is **93.7%**.

5.4 The **overall results** for 2018

This section contains the results reported by Belgium to the European Commission (Eurostat) for 2018.

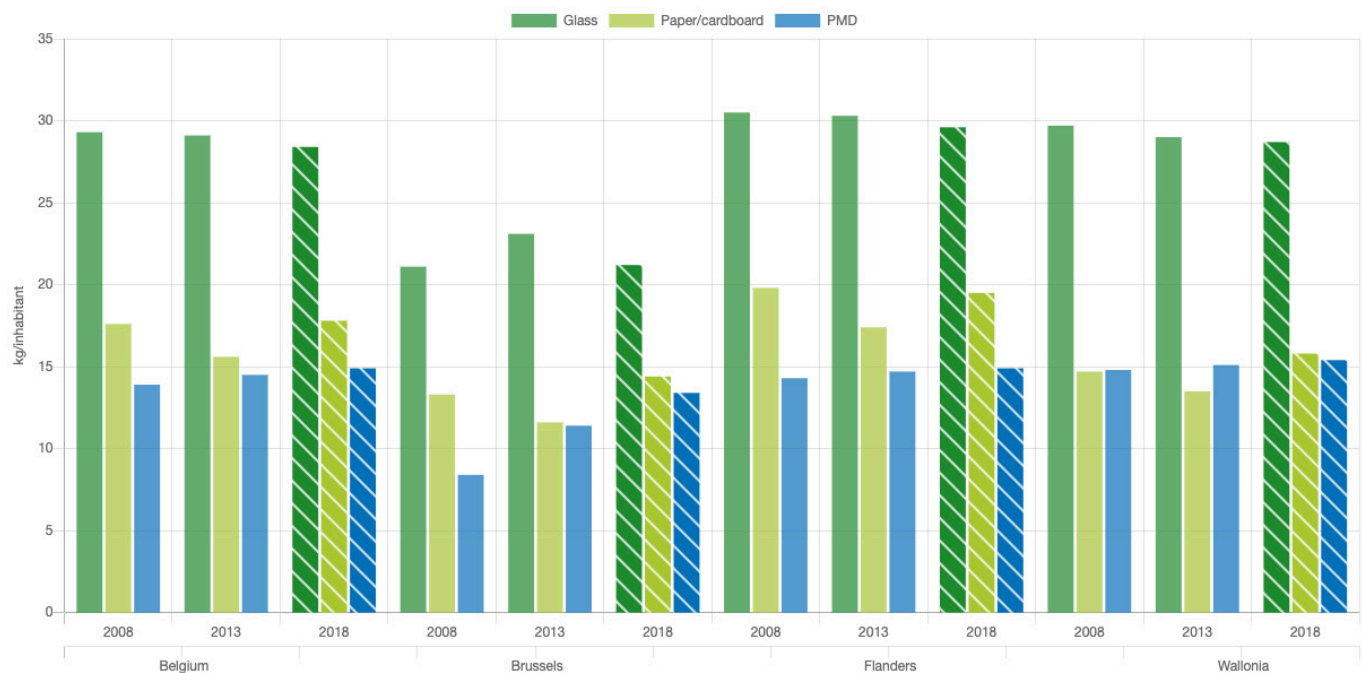


Due to the European Commission's particular calculation method, the overall Belgian figures cannot be directly compared with the results of the accredited compliance organisations and the individual responsible companies.

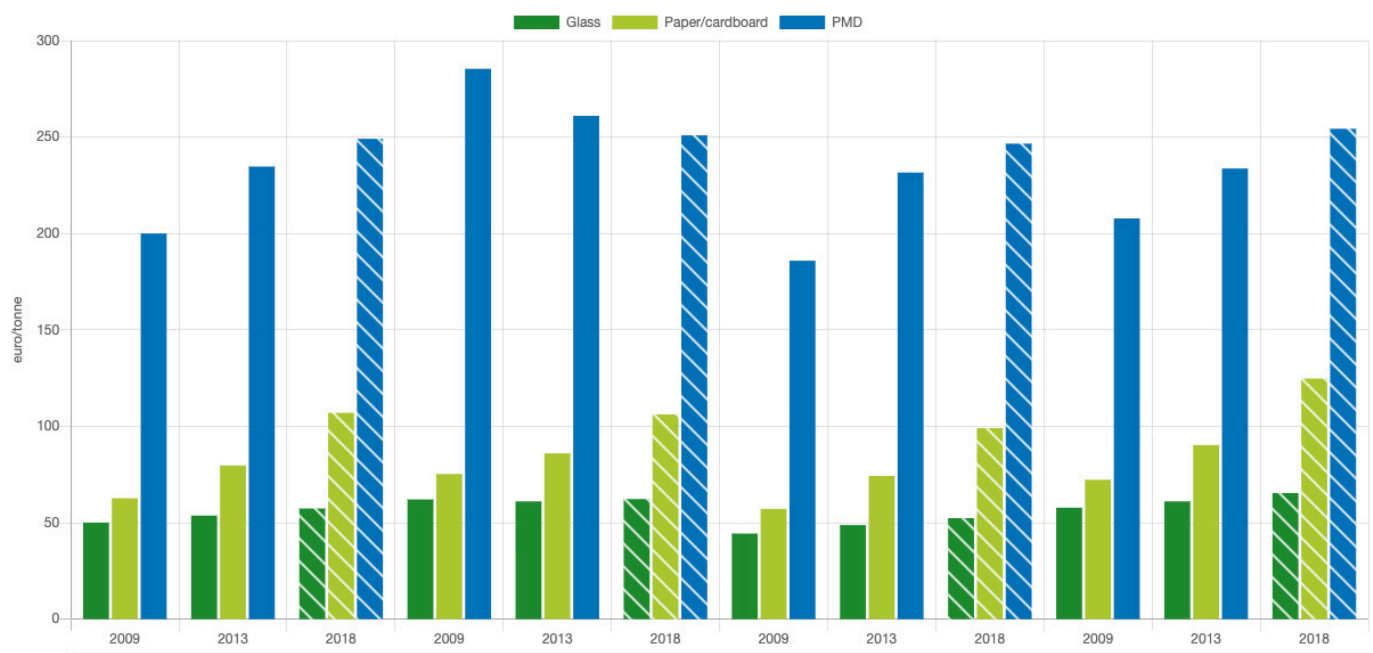
5.5 Collection of household packaging waste in 2018



Trend in the collection results per material, per Region and for Belgium as a whole

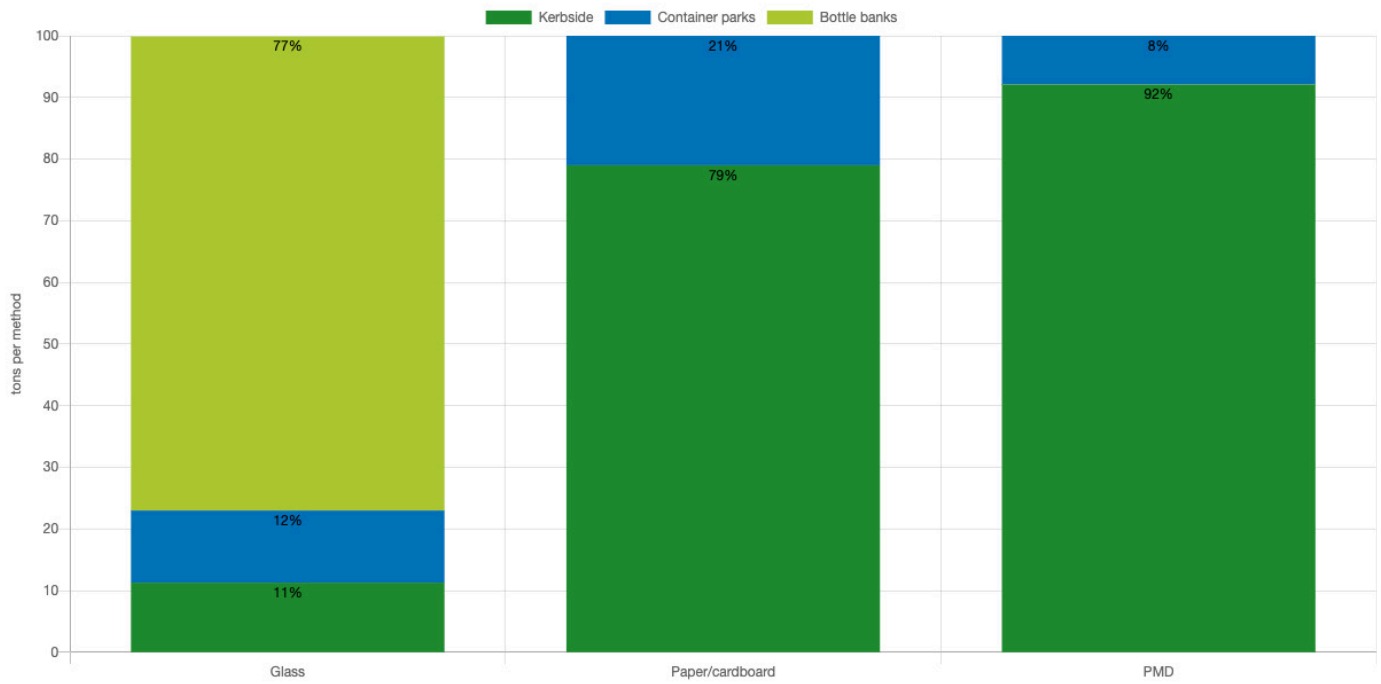


Trend in the collection cost per material, per Region and for Belgium as a whole

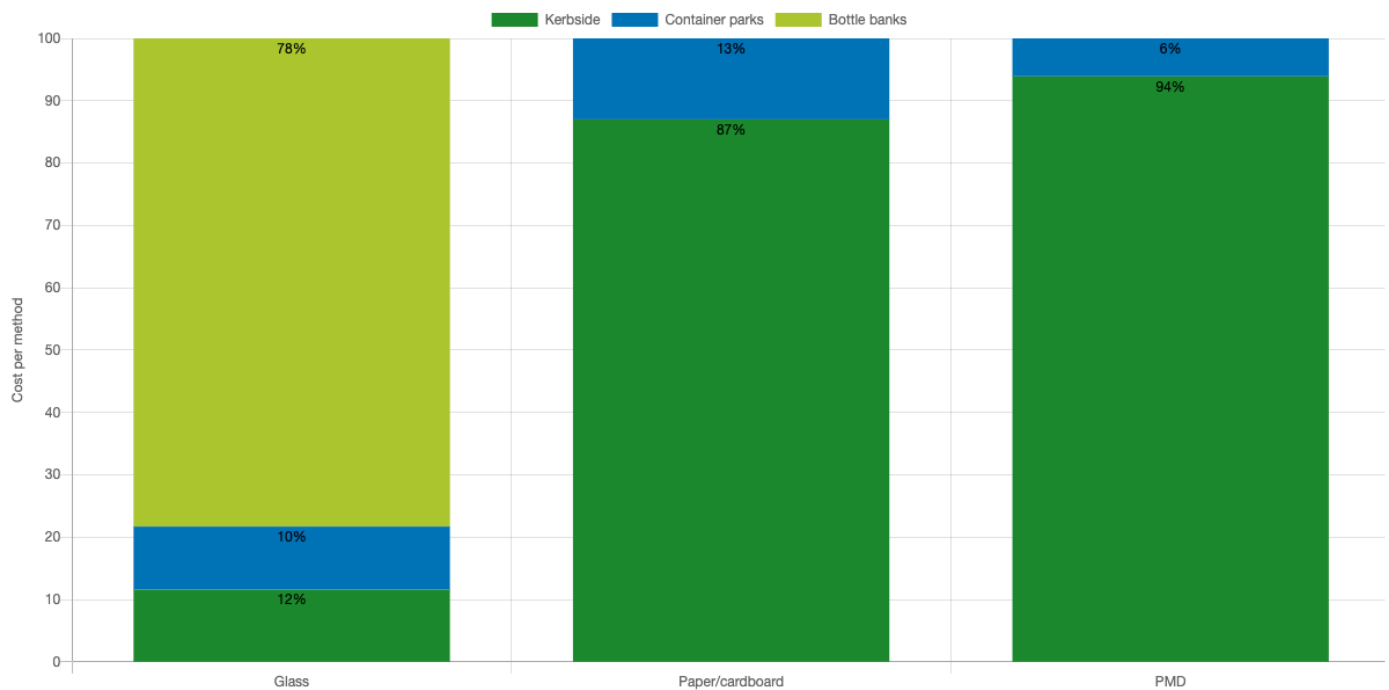




Per fraction, proportion of the result achieved by each collection method (2018)

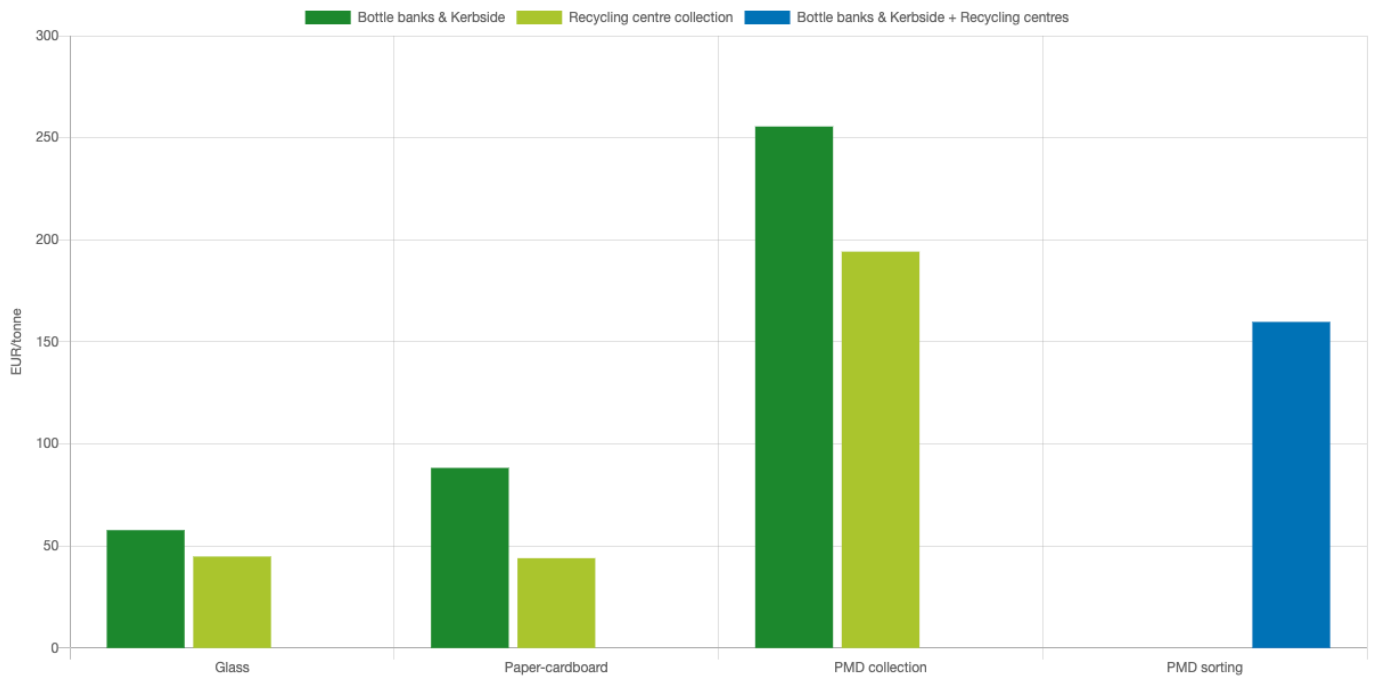


Per fraction, proportion of the cost incurred by each collection method (2018)



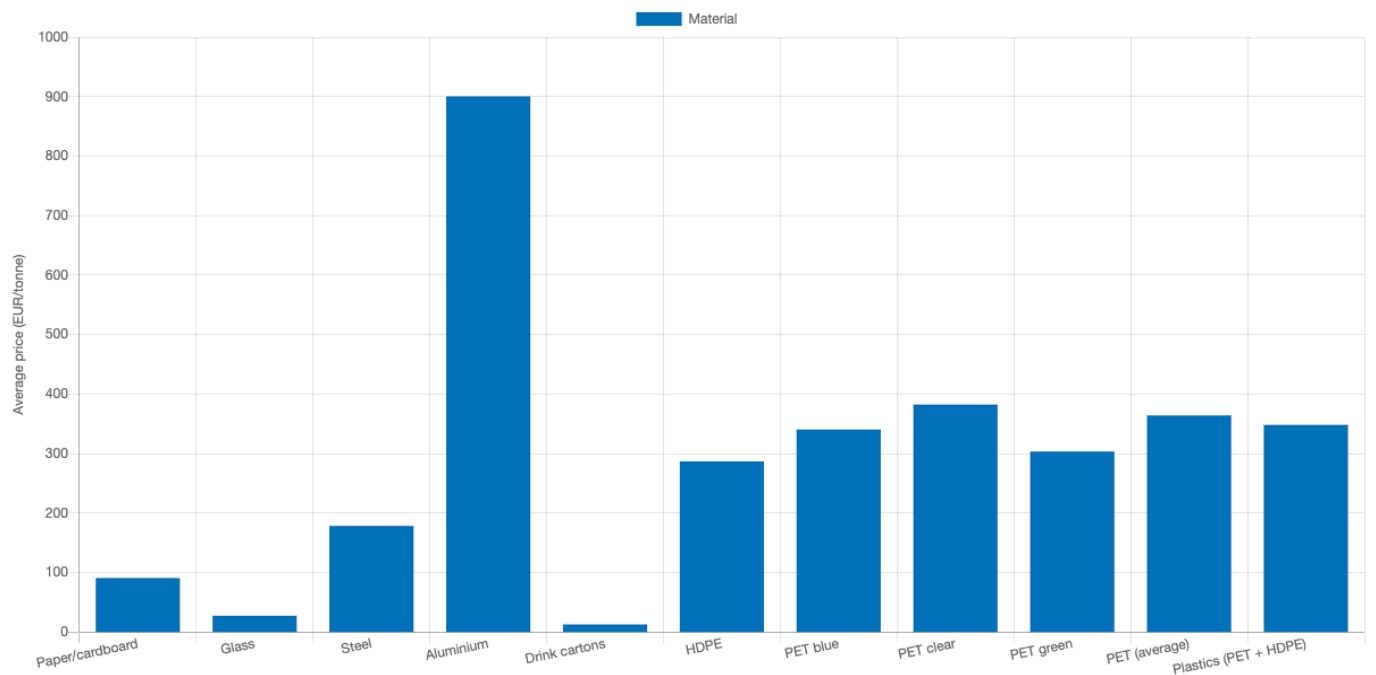
5.6. 2019 reference costs

The IRPC has approved the reference costs for 2019.



You can find a detailed overview of the reference costs and further information about the calculation method in the [technical data sheet](#).

5.7. 2018 reference values



6

Monitoring of reusable packaging in 2018

	Household packaging waste	Industrial/commercial packaging waste
One-way packaging (in tonnes x 1,000)	782	828
Reusable packaging (in tonnes x 1,000)	632	3 069

There is a great deal of reusable packaging on the market. This is mainly reusable industrial and commercial packaging that has great growth potential for the future.

CONCLUSIONS

1/1

There is **almost as much** one-way industrial/commercial packaging on the market as there is one-way household packaging

Exact ratio: 0.81

4/1

There is **almost four times as much** reusable industrial/commercial packaging on the market as there is one-way industrial/commercial packaging

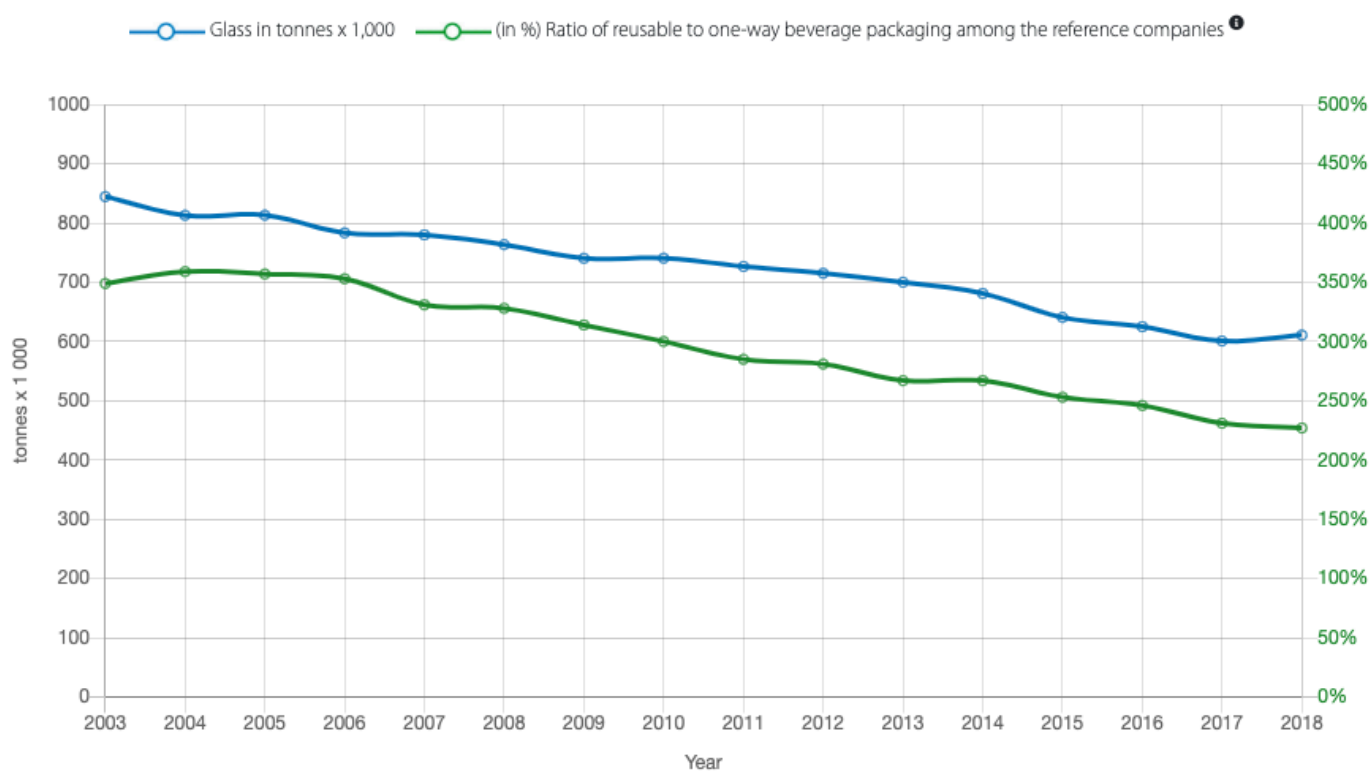
Exact ratio: 3.70

1/1

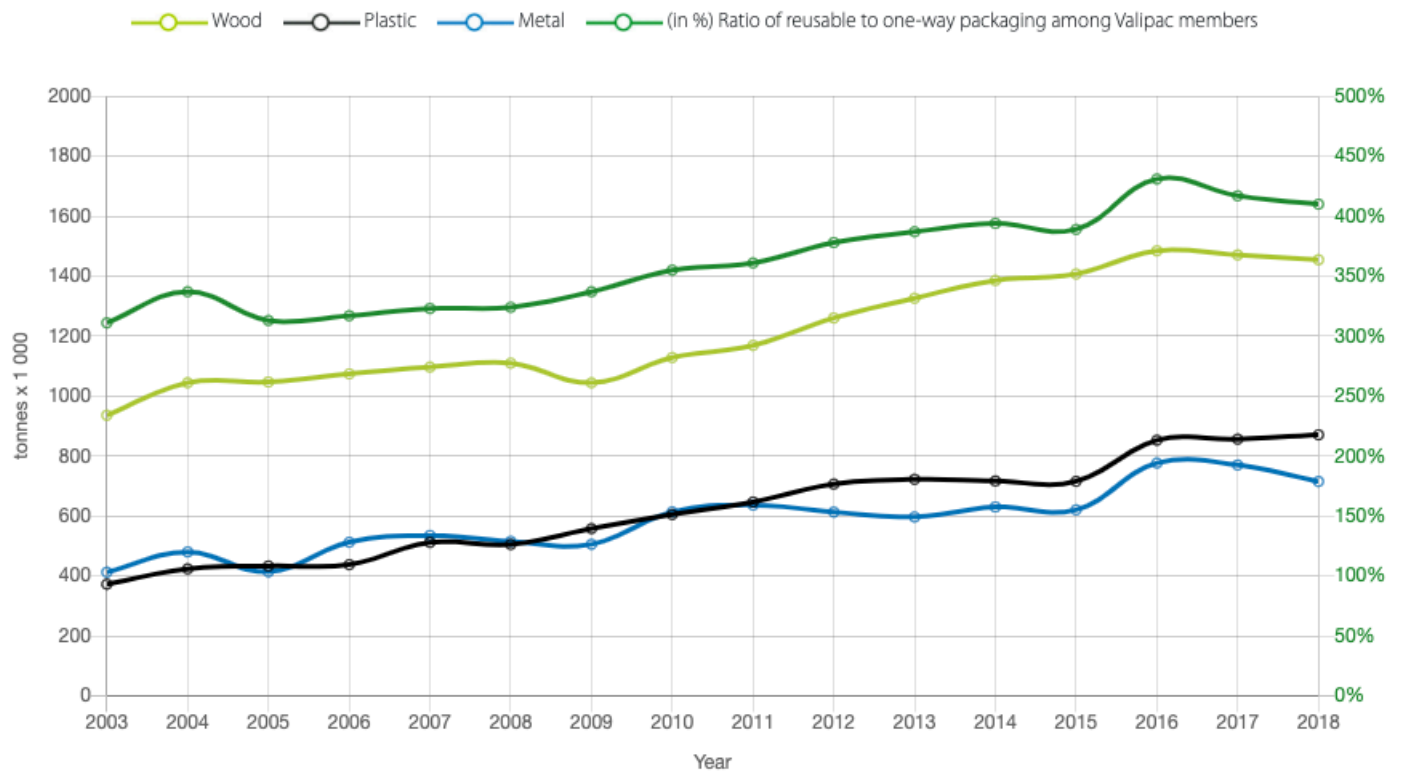
There is **almost as much** one-way industrial/commercial packaging on the market as there is reusable household packaging

Exact ratio: 0.76

6.1 Overall trend in reusable household packaging



6.2 Overall trend in reusable industrial and commercial packaging



7

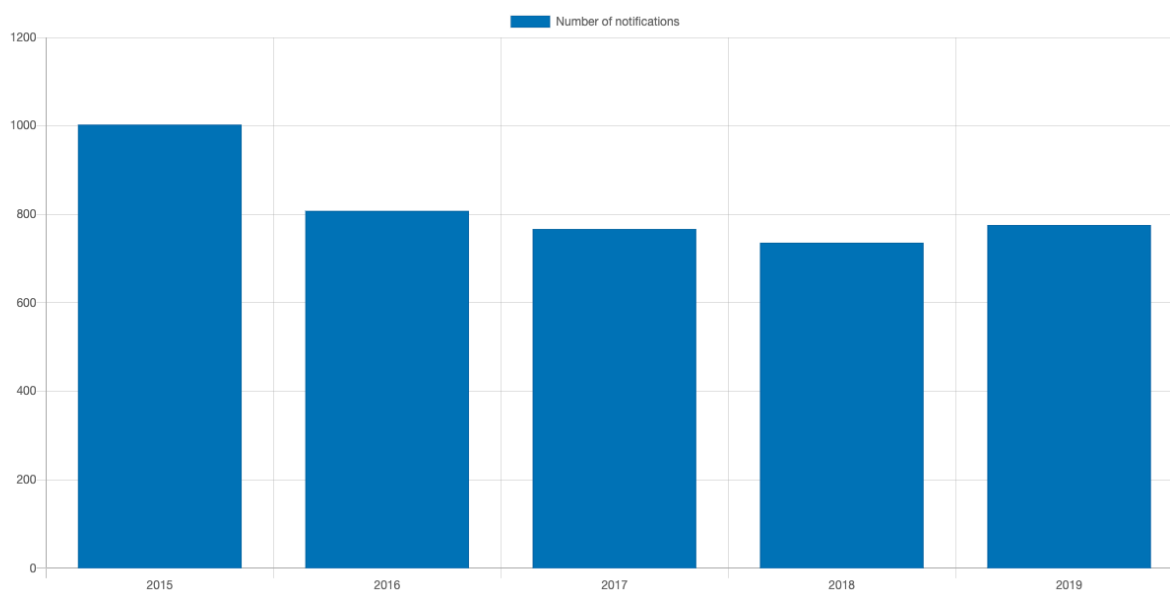
Waste transit

The IRPC processes notifications and shipment declarations of waste that is subject to the notification procedure and that is only in transit through Belgium. The waste in question does not therefore originate from Belgium, and Belgium is not its final destination either.

A notifier submits a **notification** when he wishes to have a quantity of identified waste shipped during a given period of time in the future:

- spread over one or more separate shipments
- via the same shipment routes each time
- from the same point of departure, to the same destination and with the same type of content

As the Belgian transit authority, the IRPC must first approve the notification before the series of shipments may proceed.

Trend in number of **notifications**

The notifier must also declare in advance each individual shipment relating to the notification.

These are known as **pre-notifications**, and include the following:

- which notification the shipment comes under
- when the shipment will take place

The carrier is given the actual transport document pertaining to the shipment.

The notifier sends a copy of it to the IRPC, indicating the planned date of departure.

Trend in number of **shipments registered (pre-notifications)**