

# NEWSLETTER

## CIRCULAR ECONOMY SHAPES THE FUTURE SKILLS NEEDED IN PLASTIC PACKAGING INDUSTRY

In Finland, the **PackAlliance project's workshop in April 24th** focused on the competency of plastic packaging operators on their way to circular economy and the training needed over the coming ten years.

The workshop leader and Lecturer **Nina Kukkasniemi** (Tampere University of Applied Sciences) said that is a need for discussion and working together on themes like:

- **What are the new materials?**
- **How design and produce in ecological manner?**
- **How can environmental load and resource usage be reduced?**
- **How involve the public for recycling and ecological thinking?**
- **How do we turn the packaging waste into valuable substances and products?**

Legislation around plastics is changing, EU is considering a plastic tax and the green economy program suggests to promote the circular economy restricting disposable items following the 4R rule, i.e. reduce, reuse, recycle and recovery.

Representative of packaging sector have actively participated to the discussion, e.i. **Reijo Kauppi (Pyroll)**, **Antro Säilä, CEO of the Finnish Packaging Association**, **Jarmo Aspelin, Managing Director of the Aspelin Group**, **Special Designer Eija Syrjämäki**, **Sauli Eerola (Muovipoli Oy)**, giving their relevant opinion and advices.




Finland has a good level of raw material skills in the field but its weakness is the lack of pragmatism in education legislation and the teaching methods have to be reformed. The Project Manager, Lecturer **Marita Hiipakka** said that during the project students will also collaborate with businesses and help solve authentic problems for companies.

### **PackAlliance project will create a European hub network, where cooperation can be further enhanced.**

**Twenty participants** from different companies from packing sector participated. They were invited to fill a SWOT analysis scheme in order to identified skills needs for four themes identified in the project: new materials and biomaterials; ecological design and new manufacturing processes; citizen interaction and eco-marketing and plastic packaging waste management and recycling.

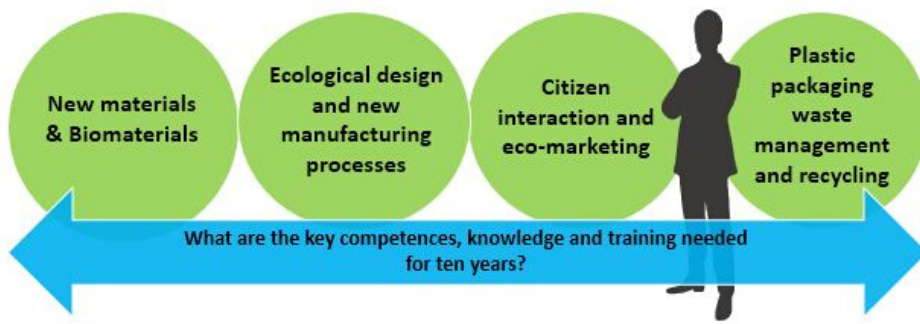
### **Conclusions**

#### **Participants feel that:**

-  there is a strong desire to understand the differences of plastic, their use and recyclability on a global level The group discussed about the drastically reduction in plastics education, over the past few decades.
-  the lack of common terminology among professionals in the field and recommend adopting common and clear instructions on how to recycle packaging and how to communicate it to consumers.
-  Students should be used to innovate new practices: it is clear that the production lines already implemented may limit enthusiasm for moving to policies consistent with sustainability.

**Political decision-making must be involved in order not to make decisions that are harmful to the environment. Exceptions like coronavirus demonstrated that mechanical recycling can be challenging under exceptional circumstances.**

**looking at the future talents, the most important expectation is a holistic understanding of the value chain. Life cycle thinking, collaborative competence and knowledge sharing skills should be in the core of future workforce learnings.**



ACADEMY AND  
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EXPERTISE IN TERMS OF  
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PACKAGING

After Finland workshop, on **June 18th Proplast and Università di Salerno** organized the second one on "Collaboration between Academy and Industry" in collaboration with **Corepla and FTA Europe**.

The goal of the workshop, in online version, was:

- **fostering the collaboration between the Academy and Industry for the development of skills in the perspective of a sustainable and innovative packaging,**
- **creating a network of packaging companies that help generate innovation in sustainability,**
- **identifying the real companies' needs.**

These elements are the basis of the first training course that **PackAlliance** project will be developed as foreseen. Forty-seven representatives from companies packaging sector and academic world attended the event.

After a joint session where we were described our project goals and illustrate the 4 thematic areas, two guest speakers, **Eng. Protopapa, Director of R&D Corepla and Dr. Sante Conselvan, President of FTA Europe**, enriched our meeting.

Using the Mirò platform, the participants divided into 4 groups compiled and discussed about the SWOT analysis of the 4 thematic sessions, relating at the end of the workshop to summarize the key points discussed during the 4 separate sessions.

## CONCLUSIONS

- From the considerations and suggestions expressed by the workshop participants, it emerged that on a global level it is essential to educate transversal figures with specific skills, especially on new materials.
- From training at all levels (from schools, municipalities and institutions) and from the involvement of the consumer to a correct separation, designing in an eco-sustainable way and trying to move towards a mono-material packaging, important benefits can be gained for the whole sector.
- The lack of common guidelines and labelling at European level plays a fundamental role in promoting the development of recycling and awareness of new materials.

These workshops will be followed by **two other workshops** organized by the other project partners (**Spain, 10th July, and Poland**) in order to allow each member country of the project to carry out a first mapping of the needs of the companies in its territory, providing a contribution to the innovation of the training system within the Circular Economy.

For more information



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