

EU Code of Conduct for Responsible Business and Marketing Practices Contribution submitted by Natural Mineral Waters Europe

Natural Mineral Waters Europe strongly supports the ambitions of the European Green Deal and the Commission's holistic approach towards ensuring sustainable and healthy food systems, under the Farm to Fork Strategy as a necessary condition to achieve the EU's overarching goal of climate neutrality by 2050.

By signing the Code of Conduct for Responsible Business and Marketing Practices, we want to be a strong partner to help Europe meet its ambitions and deliver a green recovery.

Natural Mineral Waters Europe represents more than 550 producers of natural mineral and spring water across Europe, a majority of which are small and medium-sized businesses, located in rural areas, who bring socio-economic value to local communities.

The sector has a long-standing commitment towards sustainable management. Producers have been pioneers in careful water abstraction and environment protection around their sources (in partnerships with farmers and local actors), with clear benefits in terms of biodiversity and water quality. Their sustainable leadership is also illustrated in the many initiatives towards packaging optimization and circularity through collaboration with value chain partners to boost collection and recycling. Not to mention the sector's continued contribution to Europeans' health by providing a natural product to support a healthy diet.

With our signature to the EU Code of Conduct, we commit to act as its ambassador, promoting the endorsement of its aspirational objectives to our membership. We want to go further and facilitate the sustainability journey for our members, in particular the sector's many SMEs represented by our national trade associations. As a result, Natural Mineral Waters Europe is hereby committing to a number of concrete actions in the field of carbon neutrality, biodiversity, resource efficiency and packaging circularity. By providing tools, data, indicators and guidelines to our members in those fields, we will act as a 'mobiliser' and help them meet the targets that we are aspiring to as a sector.

Our commitments focus on environmental sustainability. Due to the specificity of natural mineral waters and its close connection to nature, we believe this is the area where our members' actions can have the biggest positive impact. Most of these commitments are new, with the one exception being the action on deposit refund systems (DRS) which we initiated in 2018 in partnership with our value chain actors.

We will be reporting on those actions on a yearly basis.

We look forward to starting the journey towards increased sustainability under the Code of Conduct for Responsible Business and Marketing Practices and we are excited that several of our members will come forward with ambitious commitments.

NMWE Aspirations and Concrete contributions under the EU Code of Conduct

We hereby pledge to subscribe to the obligations listed in the Code, as well as commit to concrete contributions in the following areas:

1. DECARBONISATION

The sector has already taken many actions to reduce its carbon footprint but wants to go further.

- ***Aspirational target: Drive the sector towards carbon neutrality by 2040 at the latest (or earlier, depending on the findings of a sector's decarbonisation study).***

⇒ **Concrete action:** to undertake a sector's decarbonisation study in 2022 and disseminate results among our members to facilitate and promote relevant actions in this area.

2. BIODIVERSITY

Due to the specificity of natural mineral waters (purity at source), the sector has established credentials in the field of biodiversity preservation. However, relevant tools & indicators are needed so that NMWE members can measure, set targets & progress in an effective way.

- ***Aspirational target: Preserve and improve biodiversity in our areas of operations.***

⇒ **Concrete action:** NMWE will define and test specific biodiversity indicators to be used by natural mineral and spring water producers, esp. SMEs.

3. WATER EFFICIENCY

Despite low water usage in their operations, NMWE members strive to further increase their water efficiency. NMWE will assist them in their efforts through regular monitoring and best practice sharing.

- ***Aspirational target: Demonstrate efficient use of water in our operations and strive for a reduction target in the next five years.***

⇒ **Concrete action:** NMWE to carry out a water usage ratio (WUR) study (every two years) to measure water usage in the sector's operations (factory level), set reduction targets, and report on industry progress at least every two years.

4. PACKAGING CIRCULARITY

The sector is fully committed to sustainable packaging with PET plastic, cans and glass all 100% recyclable and already achieving high recycling rates.

- ***Aspirational targets: Strive towards full circularity for all its packaging (incl. glass, PET and aluminium) by using only recyclable or reusable packaging by 2025 and by incorporating 50% recycled materials in new plastic bottles by 2030 (30% by 2025) ****

⇒ **Concrete action:** NMWE will continue to actively promote well-designed deposit refund systems (DRS) alongside well performing EPRs, in collaboration with the whole value chain.

*Enabler: access to a fair quota of the recycled PET put on the market by producers.

Patricia Fosselard - NMWE Secretary General

Natural Mineral Waters Europe (NMWE) represents almost 550 natural mineral and spring water producers in Europe, most of them small and medium sized companies. NMWE is dedicated to promoting the unique qualities of natural mineral and spring waters as well as the sustainable use of water resources and circular economy.