

# EU CODE OF CONDUCT ON RESPONSIBLE FOOD BUSINESS AND MARKETING PRACTICES

*A common aspirational  
path towards achieving  
sustainable food systems*



First yearly  
progress  
report  
from



**Natural  
Mineral  
Waters  
Europe**

Natural Mineral  
& Spring Waters

Name in full + acronym:	Natural Mineral Waters Europe aisbl - NMWE
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N° in the transparency register:*	562370525222-50
Date of signature of the Code:	5 July 2021
Step of the food chain represented (ex: primary production, production, processing, trade, retail, ...):	<b>Production</b>
Who do you represent? (e.g. number of members, companies, SMEs):	<b>24 national associations, over 500 natural mineral and spring water producers, essentially SMEs.</b>

# A CODE OF CONDUCT FOR SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS PRACTICES – PAVING THE WAY FOR SUSTAINABLE EUROPEAN FOOD SYSTEMS

By signing the Code of Conduct for Responsible Business and Marketing Practices, Natural Mineral Waters Europe (NMWE) has started its journey to become an **active partner** to our members for achieving the **EU's Green Deal objectives**.

Since July 2021, we have been **actively promoting** to our members the Code of Conduct and NMWE's aspirations in the field of **decarbonisation, biodiversity, water efficiency and packaging circularity**. We have also started to **implement the concrete actions** we committed to as NMWE under those four pillars. Similarly, **three** of our **direct company members** have also **signed the Code**, reinforcing NMWE's action.

By carrying out those concrete actions, we aim to operate as a **catalyst to drive change** and **support producers** of natural mineral and spring waters, who are essentially SMEs, in meeting the sector's aspirations.

Today, we are excited to publish **our first annual report on NMWE's commitments** to increase sustainability under the Code of Conduct.

## 1. Decarbonisation



### **Aspirational target:**

*to drive the sector towards carbon neutrality by 2040 at the latest.*

### **Concrete action:**

*to undertake a sector-specific decarbonisation study in 2022 and disseminate the results among our members to promote and facilitate their relevant actions in this area.*

### **Progress:**

*the sector's decarbonization study started in March 2022 and is expected to be completed by December 2022. NMWE's intention for 2023, following the finalisation of our decarbonization roadmap study, is to create a user-friendly digital tool, allowing NMWE members to calculate their own emissions and to perform simulations (i.e. carbon footprint tool).*

*The consultant who will undertake the study and develop the tool is CO<sup>2</sup>Logic.*

## 2. Biodiversity



### **Aspirational target:**

to help preserve and improve biodiversity in our members' areas of operations.

### **Concrete action:**

to define and test specific biodiversity indicators for natural mineral and spring water producers.

### **Progress:**

NMWE made contact with renowned biodiversity experts (IUCN, BirdLife International) and has started working with IUCN towards defining specific bio-indicators for the sector. The work is expected to be finalized by December 2022.

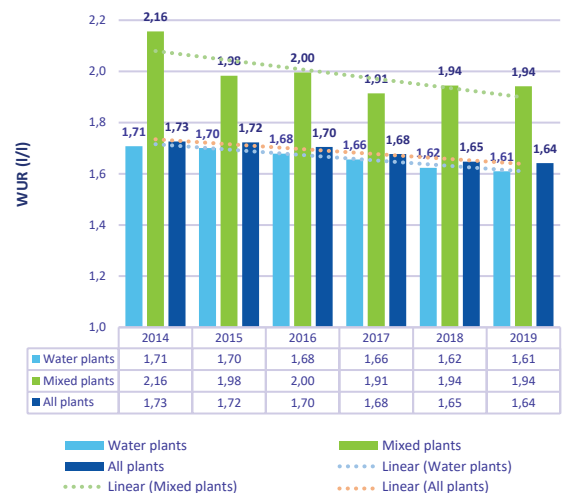
## 3. Water efficiency

### **Aspirational target:**

to 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 at factory level, set reduction targets, and report on industry progress every two years.



### **Progress:**

NMWE finalized its 2014-2019 Water Use Ratio study in 2021. The results show that the Water Use Ratio (WUR) of the natural mineral and spring water factories declined and reached 1.61 l/l (i.e. 1.61 litre to produce 1 litre of natural mineral water) in 2019. This corresponds to an overall WUR decrease of 14.1% compared to 1.71 l/l in 2014. The WUR study and its summary are available upon request.

## 4. Packaging circularity



### **Aspirational target:**

*to 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 Extended Producer Responsibility schemes (EPRs), in collaboration with the whole value chain.*

### **Progress:**

*NMWE is determined to achieve full circularity for its packaging. Circularity starts with design and continues with collection, refill or recycling and then recycled content incorporation. For PET bottles, we commissioned a study from Eunomia with our value chain partners on the state of PET market in Europe. Results show that the level of collection needs to be significantly improved and that DRS is a good avenue for many EU Member States. NMWE has been actively promoting the deployment of such collection systems for natural mineral and spring waters since 2019 with the most recent action being the development of minimum requirements for setting up new DRS together with other stakeholders. As far as glass is concerned, we have joined FEVE's "Close the Glass loop" initiative whose goal is to address structural challenges in the glass collection & recycling value chain to get to 90% glass collection for recycling by 2030.*

# Promotion of the Code

Natural Mineral Waters Europe actively promoted the EU's Code of Conduct for Sustainable Marketing and Business Practices. A variety of external and internal dissemination actions have been undertaken since July 2021.

## 1. External promotion

NMWE ran a two-week digital campaign on social media (Twitter, LinkedIn, Google Ads) to promote the Code of Conduct and our associations' aspirations. This campaign was supported by a substantial financial investment on NMWE's part. We also used the opportunity to echo and multiply the messages of other contributors to the Code, such as the European Commission's and Food Drink Europe's.

NMWE also disseminated news items on the Code on their website and spoke to several Brussels-based journalists to educate on the Code and on our association's commitments.

Last but not least, NMWE took the opportunity of numerous external public events, congresses, public debates, etc. to promote the EU Code of Conduct and its commitments to a wide audience.

## 2. Internal dissemination – promotion to NMWE members

NMWE involved its entire membership in the development process of the Code in 2021, with a view to ensuring alignment and support.

Once our submission was finalized and published, we also promoted the Code and NMWE's ambitions at all our internal meetings, from experts Committees and Task Forces to Board and General Assembly. There is therefore a solid knowledge of the Code and its objectives across the membership.

Furthermore, NMWE staff reported on the Code during several events organized by its national associations, such as ANEABE's XLIV Ordinary Annual General Meeting (Spain), KIG PR's Autumn Conference, Krynica-Zdrój, October 2021 (Poland), the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia's Strategic Forum of the Slovenian Beverage Sector, Portoroz, October 2021 (Slovenia), SEFYMEN's Environment Committee, Athens, April, (Greece), etc.

## 3. Specific awareness actions – packaging circularity

In line with its aspirations on packaging circularity, and its specific commitment on the promotion of efficient separate collection systems and DRS in particular, NMWE spoke in several public events, such as:

Petcore Europe's online event "Ending plastic waste: Is there a sustainable packaging solution?" September 2021, PRE's Plastic Recyclers Show in Amsterdam, November 2021, (Netherlands), CursDeGuvernare's online event "Recycling economy - the gaps that Romania needs to recover", January 2022, PRIA's online Environment Conference on Bulgarian and Romanian Deposit Refund Systems, April 2022.

Also, in April 2022, we sponsored a well-attended virtual Euractiv debate titled "Circularity of bottles: Contributing to the EU Green Deal".

# Conclusions

We are satisfied that since signing the Code, we have made some good advances towards achieving our commitments. We are looking forward to advancing further, together with our members and our partners along the value chain.