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COMPOSTABLE PACKAGING ON MASS EVENTS

EURO 2012 PRESS CONFERENCE

Place: Polish Packaging Research and Development Centre, 11 Konstancińska Street, 02-942 Warsaw, Poland

Time and Date: 24.05.2012 Time: 11⁰⁰

Subject: Logistics of packaging waste during mass events, such as football championships, Olympics, concerts etc.. Promotion of compostable packaging as a sustainable and environment friendly alternative to traditional packaging used in such events. Examples of implementation from Sydney Olympics (2000), Salt Lake City Winter Olympics (2002), Turin Winter Olympics (2006), Beijing Olympics (2008), and plans for 2012 Olympics in London.

Mass events, such as EURO 2012 championships, gather many inhabitants, sport enthusiasts and tourists in a confined and compressed areas. Within variety of issues connected to their organization, (stadiums, roads, social and accommodation infrastructure etc.) it is important to highlight the necessity of ensuring gastronomic services for a significant number of people. This, in turn, leads to an increase of packaging waste, mainly from plastics. This waste needs to be collected and recovered in a relatively short time period. Single use plastic food trays, cups, containers and cutlery usually offered by fast food establishments on event sites, can be in many cases substituted for compostable packaging manufactured from biodegradable polymers.

In comparison with traditional plastic packaging, the main advantage of packaging from biodegradable polymers is the possibility of collecting it along with food residues (organic waste) and composting it together in industrial composting plants. Industrial composting is based upon natural biochemical processes intensified in artificial conditions. According to the official terminology this is known as "Organic Recycling".

Organic waste composting is fully acceptable from the point of view of environment protection policy, due to the fact that the industrial composting processes can be controlled.

As highlighted by specialists in the field, composting of biodegradable waste is much cheaper than material recycling of traditional plastics. On the other hand, biodegradable plastics need to be tested according to compostability standards, and preferably marked by a symbol comprehensible for the inhabitants, that instructs the need of disposing those materials with other organic waste in contrast to plastic recycling.