



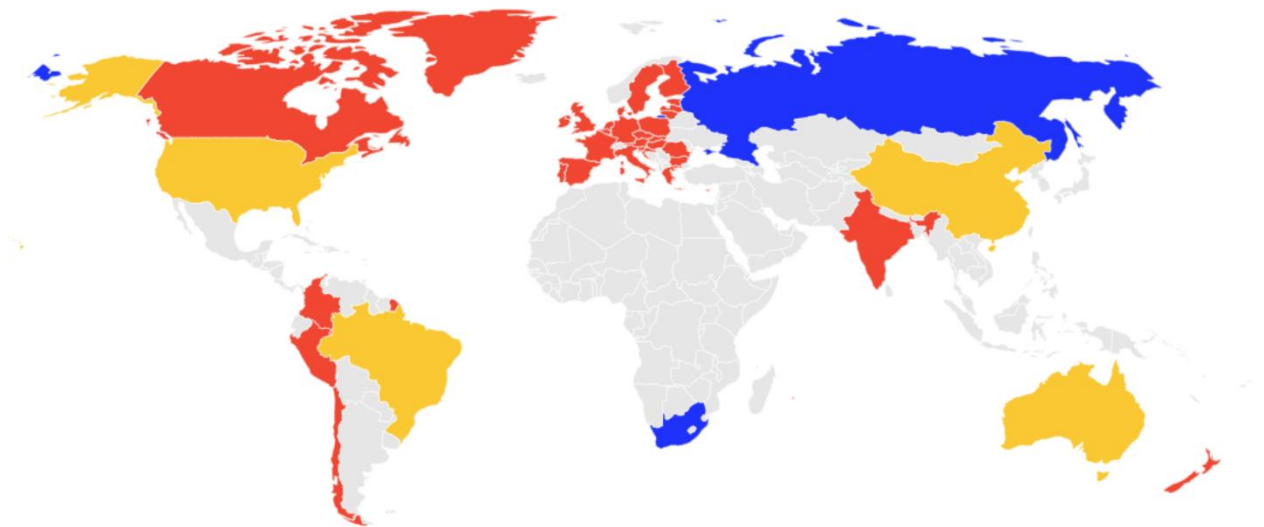
Chart of the Week

24 May 2024

Lack of harmonized rules hampers plastic replacement

Single-use plastics regulations across the world (excluding plastic bag bans)

■ Countries enforcing SUPP restrictions ■ Airport/state-level sub-restrictions on SUPP
■ Countries proposing SUPP restrictions ■ Countries under research



Source: IATA Sustainability and Economics, 2024

Note: This map simplifies borderlines for better data visibility, which does not imply IATA's endorsement of any territorial claims or borderlines.

- Plastic pollution is a key challenge of our times. According to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), [430 million metric tons](#) of plastic is produced each year, with over one-third being discarded after only one use. To address this challenge, regulators in more than 90 countries are implementing local, regional, or national restrictions on the manufacture, import, and distribution of single-use plastic products (SUPP).
- However, the resulting patchwork of regulation is neither consistent nor comprehensive. It creates complexity and additional costs for global businesses – including [aviation](#), where international airlines can fly to as many as 120 different countries and encounter different rules in nearly all of them. Current regulations do not agree on the definition of SUPP, nor is there a common framework to identify acceptable substitutes and alternatives. Furthermore, the regulations typically do not adopt a “lifecycle approach” which includes environmental emissions from flight operations and wider supply chain impacts of the use of SUPP.
- The SUPP used throughout the aviation value chain plays an important role in the passenger experience and in cargo operations thanks to the lightweight and hygienic properties. Indeed, some items are required by civil aviation authorities’ regulations for safety and security purposes. The fragmented SUPP regulations can result in different products having to be introduced on separate legs of a journey, confusing passengers and crew, increasing compliance costs, and generating more waste.
- Airlines have taken a proactive approach, demonstrating that the sector is keen to replace SUPP and to make a more positive contribution to the circular economy, but meaningful change cannot be achieved without due recognition of the complexities in the airline industry’s value chain.

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