



**Actively welcoming the new age:
Sphera Franchise Group will introduce paper straws across all its
stores in Romania from April 2019 starting the process to remove
single use plastic from its business.**

Sphera Franchise Group is taking yet another step towards sustainability, by fully replacing plastic straws with paper straws by April 2019 at KFC, Pizza Hut and Taco Bell Romania.

Sphera Franchise Group has worked over the year on its sourcing of packaging materials to support sustainability and in a small way to enhance environmental considerations. Sphera's partners and suppliers involved in this project are compliant with the Programme for Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC).

Bucharest, November 7th 2018 - Sphera Franchise Group announces its decision to cease giving out plastic straws in all its KFC, Pizza Hut and Taco Bell restaurants in Romania, by April 1st 2019.

The process will begin in KFC restaurants and by the end of 2019 all plastic straws will be replaced in all restaurants owned by Sphera.

Single use plastic is one of the major causes of waste in the planet's oceans with straws one of the major contributors. To give some perspective, every minute a ton of single-use plastic items end up in the planet's oceans. In this context, Sphera has adopted internally its plan to eliminate plastic straws in all locations operated in Romania from April 2019.

Sphera aims to replace plastic straws in Moldova in the summer of 2019 and will work with Yum! Brands Inc, in Italy as it is a multiple franchisee market to secure a similar position.

This change requires significant investment to ensure that the upcoming paper straws are being produced from sustainably managed forests. The aim is to ensure we act as responsible corporate citizens and support society in addressing environmental concerns in general and in this case specifically the need to address the impact of single use plastic waste contaminating our oceans.

Sphera has already obtained certification for the Programme for Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC) and Forest Stewardship Council. PEFC is the world's leading forest



certification organization, in charge of guaranteeing the traceability and sustainable origin of forest raw material used in product manufacturing. All such products are marked PEFC, making it easy for consumers to identify sustainably produced items. Forest Stewardship Council is an independent, non-profit and nongovernmental organization that promotes the use of wood originating from sustainable forests, as per social, economic and ecologic arguments.

Sphera has been working in part with “Clear Public Space” and “Viitor fără gunoi” Association to secure this transition to paper straws, organizations focused on changing the behaviour towards recycling and correct separation.

“We are in a privileged position in working with such great brands as KFC, Pizza Hut and Taco Bell, but along with that privilege comes responsibility. Sphera employs more than 4,000 people and serves more than 50 million customers every year, the vast majority being young people. It’s incumbent on us therefore to work with society to ensure that we contribute where we can to help address societal challenges. One particular area, acknowledged with the recent decisions in the EU is with single use plastics and in particular straws. Sphera is committed to address single use plastics and the move we are announcing today to replace plastic straws with paper straws further signifies this intention. We are grateful to the support we have had from our suppliers and partners in enabling us to take this step. Our commitment to do more will continue in the following years.

Sphera is in a fortunate position to be able to communicate to a large number of people who visit our stores everyday and we take this responsibility very seriously. We see this therefore as an opportunity *to also raise awareness about this critical environmental issue and hope that as an industry other brands and partners around the country will join us in this endeavour to remove single use plastic.* said **Mark Hilton, CEO of Sphera Franchise Group.**

“To have businesses as significant as Sphera Franchise Group moving in this good direction so quickly is amazing.” added *Luke Douglas-Home, General Manager of Clean Public Space.*

The plastic/paper straw swap is the latest measure Sphera Franchise Group is adding to its already existent projects that are diminishing the company’s ecological footprint, listed also in the company’s [2017 Annual Report](#), which include:



- ✓ **Removing Palm Oil** from all products since 2016, thus contributing to impact reduction on tropical forests and other ecosystems.
- ✓ Using many of the **latest innovations in construction** to ensure that the new restaurants are designed and built to be as environmentally friendly as possible.
- ✓ **Recycling** increasing amounts of plastic and cardboard from the restaurants, via specialized 3rd party collection and recycling companies, with **more than 23 tons per year** being recycled from Pizza Hut restaurants and **over 250 tons per year** from KFC locations.
- ✓ Cardboard for Pizza Hut and Pizza Hut Delivery boxes being sourced from **responsibly managed forests and/or recycled sources**.

About Sphera Franchise Group S.A.

Sphera Franchise Group S.A. is the largest holding company in the food service industry in Romania that operates under the franchise system the following KFC[®], Pizza Hut[®], Pizza Hut Delivery[®] and Taco Bell[®].

In Romania, the KFC network has 72 restaurants in Bucharest and other major cities around the country such as Timișoara, Arad, Botoșani, Cluj-Napoca, Oradea, Suceava, Pitești sau Brașov. Also, KFC[®] Romania operates two restaurants in Chișinău, Republic of Moldova and also seven in Italy.

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