

Thematic Strategy on the recycling of waste

2006/2175(INI) - 19/01/2011 - Follow-up document

This Commission Working Document accompanies the Commission's report on the progress achieved in relation to the Thematic Strategy on the Prevention and Recycling of Waste. It gives detailed references to the data regarding progress in reaching long term objectives and to the relevant legislation mentioned in the report. It also includes a summary the key findings of the stakeholder consultation.

The Commission notes that current policies have led to a **decrease of the relative environmental impacts per ton of waste treated**. However, this is **offset by the negative environmental impacts caused by the expected increase in waste generation**. Without further initiatives, opportunities will be missed to reduce green house gas emissions and environmental impacts in general, create jobs and meet the future demands for resources.

The document stresses the following point:

- continuous efforts are needed to improve the knowledge-base: new indicators are needed to measure progress towards a recycling society and to map waste and material streams and resource flows. Better forecasts of life cycle based environmental and health impacts of the waste policies with a specific focus on resource and climate policies should be developed;
- proper **implementation and enforcement of the existing EU waste acquis must remain a priority** notably by ensuring compliance with key EU targets and to the full implementation of the WFD and the WSR. In this context, a proactive verification procedure combined with an early warning system on compliance with key EU targets will be developed based on the national waste management plans;
- in the light of the **recent accident in Hungary**, A particular focus will be set on the EU coordination of national inspection activities to be based on result-oriented strategies and on the promotion of peer-review inspections and independent auditing schemes notably for facilities with a potential trans-boundary impact;
- **significant room for progress still exists beyond the current EU minimum collection and recycling targets**. To this end, the introduction of instruments used by well performing Member States should be strongly encouraged particularly in worse performing Member States. Optimal combination of economic and legal instruments should be promoted notably through landfill bans and by applying the producer responsibility concept to additional waste streams on the basis of a common European approach;
- **improving the competitiveness of EU recycling industries** is essential for the generation of jobs in the EU. In that context, ensuring that competition takes place within a framework maintaining high levels of environmental protection is a key priority for the Commission. In addition, the Commission will look into **how to better prevent illegal exports of waste** and ensuring that waste exported to third countries is treated in high standard facilities, particularly for ship dismantling;
- **waste policies can help develop the markets of secondary raw materials** and strengthen market mechanisms favouring secondary raw materials should be explored, including economic incentives, notably to better take into account the significant potential in terms of GHG emission reduction conferred by recycling;
- **defining more ambitious prevention and recycling targets** can directly contribute to meet the [Europe 2020](#) objective of promoting a resource efficient economy. In that sense, materials having negative environment and health impacts over their entire life cycle, including on energy use and climate change should be **better targeted**. These targets could be incorporated into monitoring of

Member States' progress towards resource efficient growth in the national reporting for Europe 2020;

- new initiatives to support innovation through Framework Programme and Innovation Partnerships and better incorporate life-cycle thinking in policy development will deserve particular attention. **Use of Structural and Cohesion Funds** will be encouraged along the lines of the waste hierarchy and for adoption of best available technologies.

Lastly, the report notes the need to improve stakeholder participation and raise public awareness, as well as better incorporate life-cycle thinking in policy development. The Commission will make further proposals in 2012.