

Environment and health: waste electrical and electronic equipment WEEE

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The Commission presents a report on the implementation of EU waste legislation, including the early warning report for Member States at risk of missing the 2020 preparation for re-use/recycling target on municipal waste.

The report is based on information provided in national implementation reports for the 2013- 2015 period on:

- [Directive 2008/98/EC](#) (Waste Framework Directive);
- Directive 2002/96/EC on waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE);
- [Directive 94/62/EC](#) (Packaging Directive);
- [Directive 1999/31/EC](#) (Landfill Directive);
- [Directive 86/278/EEC](#) (Sewage Sludge Directive).

Municipal waste – early warning reports

In 2016, Europeans generated on average 480 kg of municipal waste per person, 46 % of which was recycled or composted, while a quarter was landfilled. Municipal waste represents only around 10 % of the total waste generated in the EU, but it is one of the most complex streams to manage due to its diverse composition, its large amount of producers and fragmentation of responsibilities.

The [revised Waste Framework Directive](#) includes new and more ambitious targets: 55 % municipal waste preparing for re-use/recycling target to be achieved by 2025, 60 % by 2030 and 65 % by 2035¹². It also introduces a system of early warning reports to assess Member States' progress towards these targets three years ahead of the respective deadlines, 14 Member States have been identified as at risk of missing the 2020 target of 50%. These are: Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia and Spain. Country-specific actions to close the gap have been identified, as well as common priorities, including:

- cascade national recycling targets down to the municipal level with responsibility for waste collection systems, and ensure that there are consequences for municipalities that fail to meet targets.
- introduce measures (incl. taxes) to phase out landfilling and provide economic incentives to support the waste hierarchy;
- introduce mandatory requirements to sort bio-waste;
- improve Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) schemes;
- introduce measures to encourage households to sort waste, including higher collection frequency for separated streams as compared with that for mixed waste.

Construction and demolition waste

The Waste Framework Directive sets a 2020 target of 70 % preparation for re-use, recycling and other material recovery for this waste stream. Member States' performances vary significantly, with over half

reporting that they already met the 2020 target in the 2013- 2015 period, and some even achieving over 90% recovery. However, Cyprus, Greece, Slovakia, and Sweden are still below 60 %. The report sets out key actions.

Hazardous waste

The analysis of hazardous waste management across the EU, including on PCBs/PCTs, suggests that there are serious gaps in the implementation of key legal obligations. These include inadequate planning, data inconsistencies and statistical gaps between generation and treatment, and misclassification of waste. The report sets out general list of priority actions.

Waste electrical and electronic equipment

During the 2013-2015 period, the amount of waste equipment collected from private households in the EU 28 grew by 8 %. In 2014, an average of 6.21 kg of waste equipment per person was collected from private households. In 2015, 23 Member States met the minimum collection target of 4 kg of household WEEE per person with Sweden and Denmark collecting as much as 12 kg while Cyprus, Latvia, Malta and Romania missed the target by a considerable margin. The Commission sets out recommendations for improvement.

Packaging waste

In 2015, the total packaging waste generated around 3.4 % of the total waste generated. The amount of waste generated has been slowly increasing in the recent years. Since 2005, the average overall packaging recycling rate in the EU has steadily increased (to 65.8 % in 2015). However, between 2013 and 2015 the amount of packaging waste generated grew by 6 % across the EU, suggesting that more work on waste prevention is needed.

The [revised Packaging Directive](#) introduced more ambitious overall recycling targets for packaging (65 % in 2025 and 70 % in 2030), and higher material-specific targets (such as 55 % in 2030 for plastic). This will require increased efforts across the EU to organise separate collection schemes more efficiently in order to capture more recyclables, including through improved EPR schemes. Most Member States are meeting current overall recycling targets, although Hungary (since 2012) and Malta (since 2013) missed them by a considerable margin. Several Member States missed one or more material-specific targets. The Commission has engaged with the Member States concerned and developed targeted advice via the compliance promotion and other activities to improve performance.

Landfilling

Landfilling is the least preferable waste treatment option. Large differences across the EU persist: in 2016, 10 Member States still landfilled over 50 % of municipal waste, while five reported rates above 70 %. The [revised Directive](#) requires Member States to reduce the landfilling of municipal waste to a maximum of 10 % by 2035, and it introduces a ban on the landfilling of separately collected waste, including biodegradable waste. As regards meeting the targets for biodegradable waste reduction, the completeness of the data submitted by Member States varies. According to the reported data, in 2015, half of Member States had already met the 35 % target for 2016.

15 Member States are not fully meeting the obligation laid down in the Directive to treat waste before landfilling. Despite the closures of non-compliant landfills reported by the Member States, the number of facilities that are not in line with the requirements of the Directive remains a matter of concern.

Sewage sludge

The Directive has been in force for over 30 years and is well implemented across the EU. All Member States have set concentration limit values for heavy metals in soil that are in line with the requirements of the Directive - or indeed much stricter.

The report concludes that full implementation of waste legislation is crucial if the EU is to reap the environmental and economic benefits of the circular economy and compete in a world of increasingly scarce resources. Good progress is possible if the Member States concerned take action urgently to implement the actions identified in the report and the accompanying country-specific reports.