Packaging and packaging waste

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The European Commission's report intended to inform the other Community Institutions, Member States and the interested public of the implementation of Community legislation for the period 1998 to 2000, in particular the implementation of Directive 75/442/EEC on waste; Directive 91/689/EEC on hazardous waste; Directive 75/439/EEC on the disposal of waste oils; Directive 86/278/EEC on the protection of the environment, and in particular of the soil, when sewage sludge is used in agriculture, and Directive 94/62/EC on packaging and packaging waste. The results shown in this paper made it clear that Directive 94/62/EC had encouraged increases in the recovery and recycling of packaging waste. In addition, although total tonnages of packaging waste continued to increase in most Member States, a decoupling between economic growth and growth of packaging waste had occurred for the EU as a whole and for many individual Member States in particular in the period 1997 to 1999. The directive had to be implemented by Member States by 1996. It was therefore reasonable to assume that most of the increases in the recycling and recovery of packaging waste from 1997 to 1999 were the direct result of the directive. It was possible to make a rough estimate of about EUR 200 million for the environmental savings that had resulted from these higher rates of recycling and recovery, though it was not possible to say exactly how much of this was due to the implementation of Directive 94/62/EC on packaging and packaging waste. It was not possible at present to evaluate more fully the effects of the directive, since such an exercise would require additional analytical work. Additionally, the results of a cost-benefit study on possible targets supported the feasibility and usefulness of a considerable increase in recycling and recovery targets in the proposed revision of the Packaging Directive. Despite positive results achieved the progress made with the implementation of Community waste legislation could not yet be considered satisfactory. The number of infringement procedures reflected well the current state of play. Significant efforts were therefore needed to achieve full implementation of Directives 75/442/EEC, 91/689/EEC, 75/439/EEC, 86/278/EEC and 94/62/EC, focusing in particular on the hierarchy of principles of waste management.