

Packaging and packaging waste: recovery and recycling of waste

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The committee adopted the report by Dorette CORBEY (PES, NL) amending the report under the codecision procedure (1st reading). It adopted a large number of amendments designed to reinforce the proposal, whose targets it felt were too modest. The committee wanted to raise the minimum target for recycling the "totality of packaging materials contained in packaging waste" from the Commission's proposed 55% to 65% (by weight) and to scrap maximum targets. To allow sufficient time for the measures to be put in place, it wanted the date for meeting the targets to be put back from 30 June 2006 to 31 December 2008 (the date set in the Spanish Council Presidency's compromise text). The committee also felt that, if the recycling targets were to be met, the active involvement of consumers should be encouraged through awareness campaigns and suitable information on the return, collection and recovery systems available and the meanings of markings on packaging. It also said that the generation of packaging waste should be cut by 10% from 1998 levels and that Member States should ensure that, after 1 January 2004, new packaging - for both new and existing products - was only placed on the market if producers had taken all necessary measures to minimise its environmental impact whilst not compromising its "essential functions". The report said that companies must be able to show that they had complied with the legislation and Member States should provide incentives for using materials derived from recycling packaging waste. The committee also inserted a requirement for the eco-friendly design of packaging and wanted a broader revision of the directive, linked to the 6th Environment Action Programme and the work on an Integrated Product Policy, to be presented by 1 January 2005. Other amendments sought to reduce the hazardousness of packaging waste. Member States should ensure that, by 31 December 2006, new packaging and parts of packaging did not contain lead, cadmium, mercury or hexavalent chromium. Lastly, the committee adopted a number of amendments to the Annex defining what did or did not constitute packaging. It said, for example, that gift wrapping paper should not constitute packaging if it was sold as a separate product and that flower pots should not count as packaging unless they were added immediately prior to sale.