

# New e-learning courses in cooperation with EU IP offices

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The EUIPO, together with the intellectual property offices of the EU Member States and the Benelux Office for Intellectual Property (BOIP), has developed a new series of tailor-made tutorials as part of the [European Cooperation Projects \(ECP\)](#).

The EUIPO's [Academy Learning Portal](#) now offers a module on '**Trade Mark Reform: National Practice**', which aims to inform users about the main changes in respect of the transposition of the new Trade Mark Directive into national law.

Representatives from BOIP and 15 EU IP offices adapted the tutorials to suit their national practice and subsequently recorded them during an implementation workshop in May, within the framework of the 'ECP3 Academy Learning Portal' cooperation project.

The new training modules are framed around the following headings/questions: What is the purpose of the trade mark reform? What has changed in regards to filing an application? Has the registration process changed? What has changed for trade mark owners?

The catalogue has recently been completed with other modules on '**How to Protect a Trade Mark**' and '**How to Protect a Design**', a set of tutorials providing guidance on trade mark and design practices within each EU Member State. The tutorials have also been made available on the websites of the participating offices.

More information can be found in the EUIPO's [Academy Learning Portal](#).

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## Illegal tobacco trade halted after international operation

### **Joint Eurojust – Europol – OLAF press release**

The Hague, 28 October 2019

Authorities from seven countries, with the active support of Eurojust, Europol and the European anti-fraud office OLAF, have dismantled an international organised crime group (OCG) which was involved in the large scale illegal trade of tobacco. During an action day, coordinated at Eurojust, 18 persons from different nationalities have been arrested, who are suspected of money laundering and the illegal trade and storage of around 670.000 kilos of tobacco. Three suspects from Italy will be heard. The illegal trade has led to a loss of customs and excise duties for the Dutch fiscal authorities of approximately 70 million Euro. A total of 29 searches have taken place in Italy, Poland, Belgium, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands, mainly in the south eastern province of Limburg. Authorities from Romania and Cyprus have contributed actively to the operation.



Photo © FIOD

The criminal organisation allegedly bought tobacco in Italy, which was then processed and sold to traders for the use in illegal cigarette factories. The criminals played a role as well in the brokerage of illegally produced cigarettes and bought, sold and repaired machinery for cigarette production. As a result of international cooperation, since last year already illegal cigarette factories have been dismantled in Poland, the Czech Republic and the Netherlands, whose operators had close links to the criminals who have now been arrested.

Eurojust held a coordination meeting and set up a coordination centre during the action day and provided assistance with the issuing of European Investigation Orders (EIOs) and European Arrest Warrants (EAWs).

The operation was based on an analysis of a special operational taskforce set up in February 2018 between Europol, the UK's HM Revenue & Customs (HRMC) and Dutch fiscal police FIOD and on an investigation conducted by OLAF in other EU Member States where the same criminal organisation was involved. The operation was one of the first cases which forms a vital part of the ongoing intelligence picture. Regular meetings at Europol between the taskforce

members helped identify numerous High Value Targets against which actions were taken in the framework of this operation.

Over 250 officers of police, fiscal police and customs have been deployed during the action day in the Netherlands, Italy, the United Kingdom, Poland and Belgium.

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## Article – Social Europe: what Parliament is doing on social policy



### **Competence in social policies: EU vs national governments**

The EU has only limited competence when it comes to social issues as most of it is up to national governments.

The responsibility for employment and social policies **lies mostly with the member states** and their governments. This means that national governments – and not the EU – decide on issues such as wage regulations, including minimum wage, the role of collective bargaining, pensions systems and retirement age, and unemployment benefits.

However, over the years, the **EU has been working on social issues** throughout the European integration process and come up with a series of instruments in the social sector. These include EU laws, funds and tools to better coordinate and monitor national policies. The EU also encourages countries to share best practices on issues such as social inclusion, poverty and pensions.

The Treaty of Rome in 1957 already included fundamental principles such as **equal pay for women and men** as well as the **right of workers to move freely** within the EU. To make this mobility possible, further provisions were adopted, such as rules for the mutual recognition of diplomas, guarantees regarding medical treatment when abroad and safeguards regarding already acquired pension rights.

In addition there are EU rules on **working conditions**, such as working time or part-time work, as well as legislation to tackle workplace discrimination and to ensure workers' health and safety.

The EU complements and supports EU countries in their efforts to organise healthcare and improve the health of Europeans through funding and legislation on a wide range of topics, such as health products and services, safe food, tackling diseases, clean air or healthy workplaces

In November 2017, the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission proclaimed the [European Pillar of Social Rights](#) to deliver new and more effective rights for people and support fair and well-functioning labour markets and welfare systems. The pillar is based on 20 principles and comprises a number of initiatives linked to equal opportunities and access to the labour market; fair working conditions; and adequate and sustainable social protection.

Since the early stages of European integration, the European Parliament has often called for the EU to be more active on social issues and has supported the Commission proposals in this area.

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## **Reuse and recycling are key to tackling Europe's waste problem and to foster a more circular economy**

European Union Member States face a dilemma on how to deal with the millions of tonnes of waste generated in Europe every year, amid a growing number of bans and tougher international rules on the export of certain waste to other countries. There is growing concern over the impact of such waste on the environment and our health, as well as the impacts of increased resource extraction, production and consumption. Waste generation also contributes to

air, water and soil pollution as well as climate change and biodiversity loss.

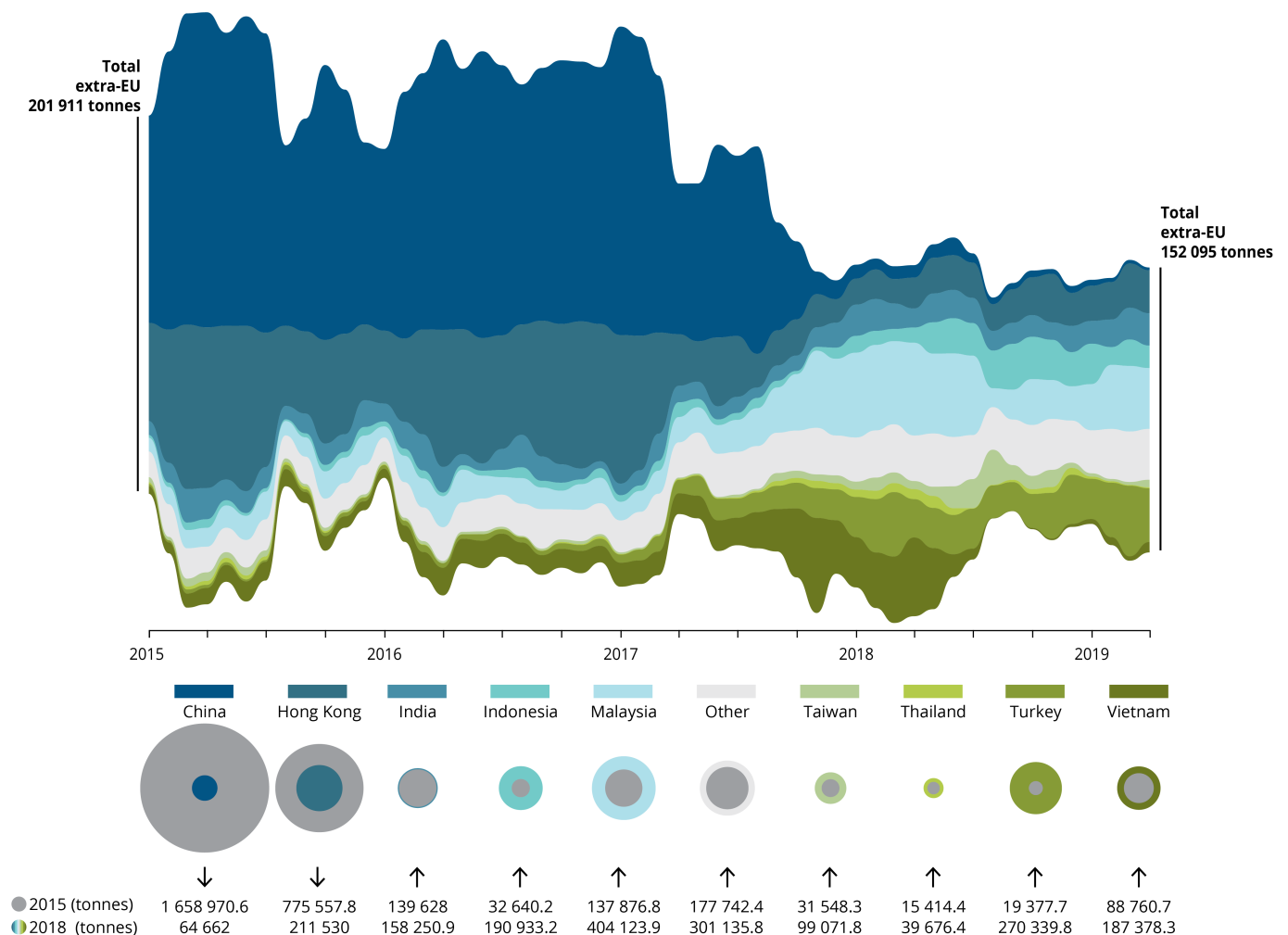
The two EEA briefings provide an assessment of the role of [plastic waste export in the circular economy](#) and a [snapshot of resource losses from waste management](#) – the latter looking specifically at waste from electrical and electronic equipment, end-of-life batteries, plus textile and plastic waste.

## **Reducing plastic waste exports is an opportunity to reuse and recycle**

In early 2019, the EU exported about 150 000 tonnes of plastic waste per month. This is around half the amount exported in 2015 and 2016, when exports went primarily to China and Hong Kong. However, new bans and restrictions on imports by China, combined with a number of banned types of plastic being added to a United Nations convention, are forcing the EU and countries to improve their own capacities to handle the waste at home. These bans and restrictions and a shrinking international market for plastics will likely increase landfilling and incineration in the short term, but should also trigger investments in capacities and systems to increase recycling and reuse of plastic waste.

The EEA briefing on exports of plastic waste shows there is huge potential to increase reuse and recycling in the coming years. Reusing and recycling plastic waste could provide a large amount of material resources for local manufacturers. The briefing notes that the EU has already taken steps to improve the management of plastic production, use and waste, including the European strategy for plastics in the circular economy, the EU's Single Use Plastics Directive, and new, more ambitious targets for plastic recycling included in the EU's updated waste directives of 2018.

### **Figure 1. Extra-EU-28 plastic waste trade by receiving country**



## Sustainable waste management is key

Progress is being made in Europe to bolster an already ambitious waste policy and to establish a solid circular economy framework. However, the EU is still losing out on opportunities to reuse a significant amount of valuable resources currently being lost through inefficient waste management practices.

The EEA briefing on resources and waste management shows that tens of millions of tonnes of plastic waste are generated in the EU every year. Alongside plastics, millions more of tonnes of electronic waste – like old computers, cameras or TVs, and textiles (mostly clothing) are also regularly thrown away with little to no recycling or repurposing. Poor or inadequate collection, reuse and recycling of these waste streams plus low consumer awareness of the waste problem all need addressing in order to improve the situation. The presence of hazardous substances can also hamper recycling and hence opportunities to move to increased circularity, as do products not properly designed for recycling.

# Plastic waste



30 Million tonnes (Mt)  
of waste generated in EU (2015)

17 %  
is collected  
for reuse or  
recycling  
(5 Mt)

83 %  
is lost (25 Mt)



## TYPES OF PLASTIC WASTE



16.3 Mt  
plastic packaging  
waste



1-1.5 Mt  
plastic waste from  
construction  
and demolition



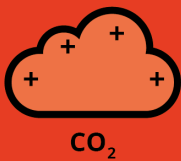
1.2 Mt  
plastic waste  
from end-of-life  
vehicles



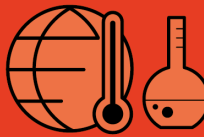
2.4 Mt  
plastic waste  
from e-waste



Process  
losses in  
recycling



1 ton of plastics results in  
2.5 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions  
from production and  
2.7 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions if  
incinerated.



Many other adverse environmental  
consequences are associated to the  
loss of plastic materials, such as  
release of microplastics into the  
environment.

Source: EEA/ETC-WMGE

## Article – Climate change in Europe: facts and figures



[Climate change](#) is a global issue, but how is it affecting Europe? Discover facts and figures highlighting different aspects of this issue: causes, consequences and evolution.

### **The EU's biggest greenhouse gases emitters**

The EU is the world's third largest greenhouse gases emitter after China and the United States and followed by India, Russia and Japan (2015).

Within the EU, the top six emitters in 2017 were Germany, the UK, France, Italy, Poland and Spain. The energy sector was responsible for 80.7% of greenhouse gases emissions in the EU in 2017, while industry for 8.7%, followed by agriculture (8.72%), industry (7.82%) and the waste sector (2.75%).

Discover more data in our [infographic on greenhouse gas emissions](#) by country and sector in the EU.

### **Reducing the EU's greenhouses gases emissions**

In 2008 the EU set a target to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 20% by 2020 compared to 1990 levels. Much progress has been made: in 2015 there was already a decrease of 22% compared with 1990 levels.

In 2014, the EU set a new objective of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by at least 40% by 2030 compared to 1990 levels. According to the [European Environmental Agency](#), the projected reductions based on the state of play of EU measures in 2017 will fall short of the target. It estimates there will be

a decrease of about 30% in 2030.

See our infographics on the [\*EU's progress towards reaching its 2020 climate change targets\*](#).