

Circular Economy: New rules will make EU the global front-runner in waste management and recycling

The new rules – based on Commission’s proposals part of the Circular Economy package [presented](#) in December 2015 – will help to prevent waste and, where this is not possible, significantly step up recycling of municipal and packaging waste. It will phase out landfilling and promote the use of economic instruments, such as Extended Producer Responsibility schemes. The new legislation strengthens the “waste hierarchy”, i.e. it requires Member States to take specific measures to prioritize prevention, re-use and recycling above landfilling and incineration, thus making the circular economy a reality.

Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, Karmenu **Vella** said: *“The final approval of new EU waste rules by the Council marks an important moment for the circular economy in Europe. The new recycling and landfilling targets set a credible and ambitious path for better waste management in Europe. Our main task now is to ensure that the promises enshrined in this waste package are delivered on the ground. The Commission will do all it can to support Member States and make the new legislation deliver on the ground.”*

The Commission had originally presented proposals for new waste rules in 2014, which were withdrawn and replaced by better designed, more circular and more ambitious proposals on December 2015 as part of the Circular Economy agenda of the Juncker Commission. These proposals were then adopted and are now part of the EU rule book.

The new rules adopted today represent the most modern waste legislation in the world, where the EU is leading by example for others to follow.

The details of the new waste rules:

Recycling targets for municipal waste:

By 2025	By 2030	By 2035
55%	60%	65%

In addition, stricter rules for calculating recycling rates will help to better monitor real progress towards the circular economy.

New recycling targets for packaging waste:

	By 2025	By 2030
All packaging	65%	70%
Plastic	50%	55%

Wood	25%	30%
Ferrous metals	70%	80%
Aluminium	50%	60%
Glass	70%	75%
Paper and cardboard	75%	85%

Separate collection

Building on the existing separate collection obligation for paper and cardboard, glass, metals and plastic, new separate collection rules will boost the quality of secondary raw materials and their uptake: **hazardous household waste will have to be collected separately by 2022, bio-waste by 2023 and textiles by 2025.**

Phasing out landfilling

Landfilling of waste makes no sense in a circular economy and can pollute water, soil and air. By 2035 the amount of municipal waste landfilled must be reduced to 10% or less of the total amount of municipal waste generated.

Incentives

The new legislation foresees more use of effective economic instruments and other measures in support of the waste hierarchy. Producers are given an important role in this transition by making them responsible for their products when they become waste. New requirements for extended producer responsibility schemes will lead to improving their performance and governance. In addition, mandatory extended producer responsibility schemes have to be established for all packaging by 2024.

Prevention

The new legislation will place a particular focus on waste prevention and introduce important objectives for food waste in the EU and halting marine litter to help achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals in these areas.

Next steps

The new rules will enter into force 20 days following publication in the Official Journal.

Background

As part of its Circular Economy Action Plan the European Commission adopted on 2 December 2015 a package of [legislative proposals on waste](#). A provisional agreement on the Commission's four legislative proposals was reached between the co-legislators on 18 December 2017. The European Parliament endorsed the agreement at its Plenary Session in April 2018.

Over the past two decades many Member States have gradually improved their waste management, in line with the EU waste hierarchy. In 1995, on average 64% of municipal waste was landfilled in the EU. In 2000, the average had

been reduced to 55% while the average recycling rate stood at 25%. In 2016, landfilling of household waste in the EU as a whole dropped to 24%, with recycling having increased to 46%. Yet, challenges and big differences between EU countries remain. In 2016 ten Member States still landfilled over 50 % of their household waste and six of them incinerated 40% or more.

For More Information

Text of the new Directives click [here](#).