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Press release | 19.03.2014

Waste shipments

New EU rules to clamp down on illegal waste shipments

The European Parliament's environment committee today confirmed a legislative agreement reached with EU governments revising EU rules on waste shipments (1). The Greens welcomed the vote on the legislation, which is being shepherded through parliament by Green MEP Bart Staes, parliament's rapporteur/draftsman. The new rules will strengthen controls on waste shipments. After the vote, **Bart Staes** said:

"The high number of illegal waste shipments to third countries and recurring scandals on the dumping of hazardous waste in developing countries have underlined the need to tighten up EU rules on waste shipments. The overarching and common European goal should be to prevent illegal waste shipments and the damage to human health and the environment that they cause. We need to ensure effective compliance with the EU hazardous waste export bans. These new rules are an important step forward towards this goal.

"EU member states have been dragging their feet on implementing EU rules on waste shipments, with on average 25% of waste shipments contravening these rules. Due to the insistence of the European Parliament, the new law will ensure that member states are obliged to make comprehensive and meaningful inspection plans to check waste shipments, with an appropriate minimum number of physical checks in line with the risk of illegal waste shipments. Parliament also made sure that inspection plans are accessible to the public.

"Enforcement will also be stepped up, with more powers for authorities involved in inspections to check shipments. Finally, cooperation between member states will be significantly strengthened. This agreement will not only help prevent the potentially devastating consequences of illegal waste shipments on public health and the environment, it is also in the best interest of legal waste operators. At a time of rising production costs, waste should be considered as a valuable resource and recycling should be prioritised in an effort to promote a more sustainable European economy. We hope that the legislation will now be swiftly adopted, so it can enter into force without delay."

(1) The legislation is set to be finally confirmed by the European Parliament as a whole at its plenary session in April.

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Bart Staes

Member

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