



The Greens | European Free Alliance
in the European Parliament

CIRCULAR ECONOMY Greens/EFA Briefing

On Wednesday 18 April, MEPs vote on a series of reports to revise legislation related to waste and packaging, under the banner of “the Circular Economy”.

The Greens/EFA group has focussed on concrete preventative action: reduction targets for food waste and marine litter; improved collection of waste materials; stronger recycling targets; reduction of hazardous substances and decontamination of waste; and an end to incineration of recyclable or compostable waste.

While not as far reaching as the Greens/EFA group would have liked in terms of level of ambition and urgency of action, the result of negotiations between the European Parliament and Council is still a significant improvement on the existing legislation.

Provided that Member States deliver on implementation, these measures will be an important step towards meeting the EU’s climate commitments and boosting the economy.

What is the Circular Economy?

In today's economy, materials are extracted, products manufactured, used, and thrown away, at as low a cost as possible. This is not only polluting, it is unsustainable on a planet with limited resources. In a circular economy, products stay in use for longer and at the end of their life they are reused, repaired, re-manufactured, upgraded, or recycled.

What are the benefits?

Jobs and the economy: estimates suggest that the circular economy could boost the European economy by as much as €1.8 trillion by 2030. It also has the potential to unlock huge job creation. It is estimated that for every 10,000 tons of waste, 36 jobs can be created if it is recycled, and up to 296 if it is reused - compared to one job in case of incineration or six jobs in case of landfill.

Environmental: There are also clear environmental benefits: reducing the damaging extraction of raw materials; improving air quality by reducing incineration; and preventing toxic residues leaking into the soil through landfill waste sites.

What is being adopted in plenary?

The package includes revision of three pieces of legislation in substance (the waste framework directive, the packaging and packaging waste directive, and the landfill directive) and to bring three other pieces of legislation in line in terms of comitology and reporting requirements (on batteries, end of life vehicles, waste electrical and electronic equipment).

What are the key improvements?

The Greens/EFA group has been a driving force for ensuring new measures on waste prevention, separate collection of biowaste, gradually increasing recycling targets and significantly reducing landfill, reducing hazardous substances and ensuring decontamination of hazardous substances and fighting planned obsolescence.

Key modifications in the **waste framework directive** include:

- manufacturers will be obliged to provide information about substances of very high concern present in their products to the European Chemicals Agency - this information will be made accessible via a database.
- obligation for Member States to reduce food waste, with an aspirational target of 30% by 2025 and 50% by 2030;
- obligation for Member States to identify key sources and reduce marine litter with the aim to halt it;
- compulsory separate collection of bio-waste by end of 2023 and of textiles by January 2025;
- compulsory separate collection of hazardous waste by January 2025, with no derogations;
- increase of recycling targets for municipal waste (55% by 2025, 60% by 2030; currently 50% by 2020) - with 5 years derogation for those Member States that recycled less than 20% or landfilled more than 60% in 2013.

Key modifications in the **packaging and packaging waste directive** include:

- increase of recycling targets for packaging waste (65% by 2025, 70% by 2030; currently 55% by 2008);
- increase of specific recycling targets for specific materials (plastic, wood, ferrous metals, aluminium, glass, paper and cardboard) for 2025 and 2030.

Key modifications in the **landfill directive** include:

- maximum 10% landfill for municipal waste in 2035, with possibility for Estonia, Greece, Croatia, Latvia, Malta, Romania and Slovakia to have a five-year extension, provided they meet 25% in 2025;
- no landfilling of biodegradable waste that has been separately collected (currently: reduction to 35% by 2015).

Next steps

Wednesday's vote is the formal adoption of the final agreement with Council. Member States have to transpose the revised laws into national law within 24 months after it enters into force. We are also eager to receive the Commission's proposal to ban unnecessary single use plastic items before the summer as a further means to promote the Circular Economy.

Any questions?

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