

Circular economy: Four proposals on waste

As part of a shift towards a circular economy, the European Commission put forward four legislative proposals intended to improve waste management in the European Union in 2015. First-reading negotiations with the Council delivered a compromise, which now awaits a vote in Parliament during the April plenary session.

Background

Although waste management in the EU has improved considerably in recent decades, over a quarter of municipal waste is still landfilled and less than half is recycled or composted. Despite targets set at EU level, wide differences exist between Member States in the treatment of different types of waste. Improving waste management according to the 'waste hierarchy' (a concept enshrined in EU legislation which prioritises treatment options, from prevention, reuse, recycling, incineration with energy recovery, to landfilling) could deliver benefits for the environment, climate, health and the economy.

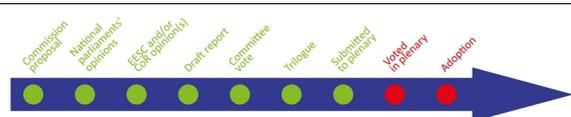
European Commission proposals

In December 2015, the Commission adopted a package of four proposals amending six directives on waste (Waste Framework Directive; Landfill Directive; Packaging Directive; Directives on end-of-life vehicles (ELVs), batteries and accumulators, and waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE)). The proposals would require Member States to prepare for reuse and recycling of at least 65 % of municipal waste and to landfill at most 10 % of municipal waste by 2030 (with five-year extensions for seven Member States), as well as requiring them to prepare for reuse and recycling of 75 % of packaging waste by 2030, with specific targets by materials. In addition, the proposals would require Member States to use economic instruments to implement the waste hierarchy, to take measures to prevent waste generation and to ensure the separate collection of bio-waste where 'technically, environmentally and economically practicable'. They define general requirements for extended producer responsibility schemes, and bring down the number of calculation methods for targets from four to two. The Commission expects the proposals to deliver economic and environmental benefits, although they would also generate investment needs.

European Parliament position

The compromise texts ([waste](#); [landfill](#); [packaging](#); [ELVs, batteries and WEEE](#)), reached with the Council during interinstitutional negotiations and endorsed by Parliament's Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI) on 27 February 2018, introduce a number of changes to the proposals. These include: modifying the targets for municipal waste reuse and recycling (60 % by 2030, and 65 % by 2035), for the landfilling of municipal waste (10 % by 2035), and for the recycling of packaging waste (70 % by 2030); strengthening the implementation of the waste hierarchy, for instance by broadening the scope of measures required from Member States on waste prevention, including on food waste; making extended producer responsibility schemes mandatory for packaging by 2024; strengthening requirements related to separate waste collection and requiring separate collection for bio-waste by 2023 and for textiles and hazardous waste from households by 2025; as well as requiring a number of actions from the Commission, in particular examining the feasibility of setting new targets on specific aspects. The provisional agreements now await a vote at first reading in plenary.

First reading: [2015/0275\(COD\)](#), [2015/0274\(COD\)](#),
[2015/0276\(COD\)](#), [2015/0272\(COD\)](#); Committee responsible:
ENVI; Rapporteur: Simona Bonafè (S&D, Italy). See also our 'EU
Legislation in Progress' briefing: [Circular economy package](#).



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