

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-006390/20
to the Commission
Kosma Złotowski (ECR)
(24 November 2020)**

Subject: The European Green Deal and exports of European waste to third countries

Studies carried out by Irish universities have shown that almost half of Europe's plastic waste is exported, mainly to South-east Asia, where recycling infrastructure is so poor and overburdened that ultimately 31% of the plastic is not recycled and a quarter of it ends up in the oceans ⁽¹⁾. A similar mechanism exists with old cars when their poor technical condition and non-compliance with pollution standards means that in Europe they should be scrapped. It appears that as many as 80% of them continue to be driven, but outside the EU. The high targets for waste recycling and the ambitious goals of the European Green Deal will certainly increase the export of waste beyond the EU's borders.

1. What action is the Commission taking to reduce exports of waste, including old cars, to Third World countries?
2. Is the Commission not afraid that the increase in exports of European waste to developing countries is having a very bad impact on the image of the EU, which aims to be a role model in terms of ecology and recycling?
3. What action is the Commission taking at international level to support developing countries in the area of waste disposal and to neutralise the impact from Europe's waste exports, including the polluting of the oceans with plastic?

**Answer given by Mr Sinkevičius on behalf of the European Commission
(15 March 2021)**

The Commission is well aware of the problem raised by the Honourable Member. In recent years, a number of third countries have announced that they would restrict or ban the import of waste into their territory.

In 2019, the EU exported around 30 millions tonnes of waste. An important share of this waste was shipped to countries which do not have the same environmental and human health requirements as the EU when it comes to waste treatment.

This problem has been identified in the context of the European Green Deal ⁽²⁾ and in the new Circular Economy Action Plan ⁽³⁾, which called to restrict EU waste exports to third countries.

The Commission plans i.a. to revise the Waste Shipment Regulation ⁽⁴⁾, which sets out the EU rules on export of all waste, and intends to table a legislative proposal to this effect in 2021 ⁽⁵⁾.

The EU introduced in December 2020 new rules on the shipments of plastic waste ⁽⁶⁾, which ban the export of unsorted plastic waste to countries other than the members of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). In addition, the Commission started to work on the review of the rules relating to the treatment and export of end-of-life vehicles, with a view to table a proposal in 2022 ⁽⁷⁾.

The Commission also supports the efforts made at the international level to better monitor international trade in waste and improve its management, notably in the context of the Basel Convention and the United Nations (UN) Environmental Assembly.

The EU provides financial support to improve waste management and tackle waste trafficking, either bilaterally to low-income EU partner countries, or multilaterally, for instance through the Basel Convention, the UN Environmental Programme and the UN Office on Drugs and Crime.

⁽¹⁾ <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0160412020318481#s0125>

⁽²⁾ https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_en

⁽³⁾ <https://ec.europa.eu/environment/circular-economy/>

⁽⁴⁾ Regulation (EC) No 1013/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 June 2006 on shipments of waste, OJ L 190, 12.7.2006, p. 1-98.

⁽⁵⁾ More information on this review can be found here : https://ec.europa.eu/environment/waste/shipments/review_of_the_wsr.htm

⁽⁶⁾ https://ec.europa.eu/environment/news/plastic-waste-shipments-new-eu-rules-importing-and-exporting-plastic-waste-2020-12-22_en

⁽⁷⁾ <https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/12633-Revision-of-EU-legislation-on-end-of-life-vehicles>