

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006739/20
to the Commission
Dan-Ștefan Motreanu (PPE)
(9 December 2020)

Subject: Recycling of Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment

A recent report has shown that around half of Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) plastics are not recycled in the EU, but rather shipped to third countries.

This situation arises mostly because almost 50% of all electronics waste materials are not recyclable.

In the light of the new Circular Economy Action Plan, how does the Commission plan to keep WEEE materials in Europe, recycle them efficiently and enhance private investment in recycling across the EU?

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

The Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Directive ⁽¹⁾ sets targets for collection and recycling of WEEE ⁽²⁾ and requires producers that supply electrical and electronic equipment to the EU market to finance WEEE collection and recycling. It also contains provisions to prevent illegal WEEE exports. Furthermore, as part of reviewing EU rules on waste shipments ⁽³⁾, the Commission is exploring the tightening of rules on waste exports ⁽⁴⁾, and has recently adopted rules on the export of plastic waste ⁽⁵⁾.

Aiming at high quality recycling, the Commission is currently assessing options for more detailed WEEE treatment requirements at EU level, *inter alia* based on standards developed under its mandate ⁽⁶⁾. In addition, the Circular Economy Action Plan ⁽⁷⁾ focuses on key product value chains, including electronics, information and communications technologies and plastics. It announces a Sustainable Product Initiative ⁽⁸⁾ under which requirements to address recyclability and increasing recycled content in products will be considered. A Circular Electronics Initiative will include measures for mobile phones, tablets and laptops under the Ecodesign Directive ⁽⁹⁾, including design for reparability and recycling.

EU funding will also be mobilised to achieve this goal, through the European Regional Development Fund ⁽¹⁰⁾, smart specialisation, the EU programme for the environment and climate action ⁽¹¹⁾ and Horizon Europe ⁽¹²⁾, which will provide funding to research and innovation activities in this area. InvestEU ⁽¹³⁾ will mobilise public and private investment through an EU budgetary guarantee, and will provide opportunities to support investment in recycling and in the circular economy.

⁽¹⁾ Directive 2012/19/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 4 July 2012 on waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE) Text with EEA relevance, OJ L 197, 24.7.2012, p. 38-71.

⁽²⁾ Current collection target is 85% of WEEE generated; recycling targets according to WEEE categories range from 55% to 80%.

⁽³⁾ 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.

⁽⁴⁾ https://ec.europa.eu/environment/waste/shipments/review_of_the_wsr.htm

⁽⁵⁾ Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2020/2174 of 19 October 2020 amending Annexes IC, III, IIIA, IV, V, VII and VIII to Regulation (EC) No 1013/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council on shipments of waste, C/2020/7091, OJ L 433, 22.12.2020, p. 11-19.

⁽⁶⁾ https://ec.europa.eu/environment/waste/weee/standards_en.htm

⁽⁷⁾ https://ec.europa.eu/environment/circular-economy/pdf/new_circular_economy_action_plan.pdf

⁽⁸⁾ <https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/12567-Sustainable-products-initiative>

⁽⁹⁾ Directive 2009/125/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 October 2009 establishing a framework for the setting of ecodesign requirements for energy-related products, OJ L 285, 31.10.2009, p. 10-35.

⁽¹⁰⁾ https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/funding/erdf/

⁽¹¹⁾ <https://ec.europa.eu/easme/en/life>

⁽¹²⁾ https://ec.europa.eu/info/horizon-europe_en

⁽¹³⁾ https://europa.eu/investeu/home_en