

EN

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Answer given by Mr Sinkevičius
on behalf of the European Commission
(2.3.2021)

The management of e-waste is regulated in the EU by Directive 2012/19/EU¹ that provides for the proper treatment of e-waste and sets targets for collection², recycling and recovery. In 2018, the EU achieved an e-waste collection rate of 47%³, which is the highest rate as compared to other regions worldwide. Directive 2011/65/EU⁴ provides for the restriction of the use of certain hazardous substances in electrical and electronic equipment and therefore contributes to the elimination of hazardous substances in e-waste.

Under the Marine Strategy Framework Directive⁵, Member States are obliged to adopt programmes of measures that reduce contaminants, including those from e-waste, to a level compatible with good environmental status.

While not having specific estimates of the impact of the transport and energy transition on e-waste as such, the Commission is aware that this transition will lead to the global demand for batteries to increase 14 fold by 2030 (compared to the 184 GWh in 2018), mostly driven by electric transport⁶. In order to address the entire lifecycle impacts of batteries, including related hazardous substances, the Commission proposed a comprehensive Batteries Regulation⁷ that provides, inter alia, for the, the restriction of hazardous substances and collection, treatment and recycling of batteries, including the repurposing of batteries from electric vehicles.

The Commission does not have estimates of the quantities of toxic and hazardous substances that have been released or may end up in the ocean by 2050 as a result of improper management of e-waste.

EU and international law prohibit hazardous e-waste exports to countries to which the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Decision⁸ does not apply.

¹ Directive 2012/19/EU OJ L 197, 24.7.2012, p. 38–71.

² 45% of electrical and electronic equipment (EEE) placed on the market to be collected from 2016 to 2018 and from 2019, 65% of EEE placed on the market to be collected (or equivalent 85% of WEEE generated) with recycling targets according to categories, between 55% and 80%.

³ % of the average weight of electrical and electronic equipment placed on the market in the three preceding years (2015-2017), Eurostat

⁴ Directive 2011/65/EU OJ L 174, 1.7.2011, p. 88–110.

⁵ Directive 2008/56/EC establishing a framework for community action in the field of marine environmental policy, OJ L 164, 25.6.2008, p. 19–40

⁶ Impact assessment report accompanying the Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning batteries and waste batteries (SWD 335 final, 10.12.2020).

⁷ COM(2020) 798/3 (<https://ec.europa.eu/environment/waste/batteries/index.htm>)

⁸ Decision C(2001)107/Final of the OECD Council concerning the revision of Decision C(92)39/Final on control of transboundary movements of wastes destined for recovery operations.