In line with the polluter pays principle enshrined in the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, the Waste Framework Directive (WFD) requires Member States to ensure that the costs of waste management are borne by the original waste producer, its holder or the producer of the product from which the waste came. The WFD obliges Member States to use economic instruments and other measures to encourage waste management practices in line with the waste hierarchy.

Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) is established at EU level for several products obliging producers to bear the costs of separate collection and subsequent treatment of waste from their products. EPR schemes are financed by contributions linked to the consumption of the respective products. Mixed municipal waste is not subject to EPR obligations and therefore other measures are necessary to incentivise prevention and extracting the maximum value from waste, which reduces the costs of waste management and its environmental impact, while creating local jobs. Charges and restrictions for the landfilling and incineration of waste and economic incentives for regional and local authorities to promote waste prevention and separate collection, are part of the economic instruments and measures that Member States can use.

The WFD prohibits the dumping of waste. The Landfill Directive lays down strict requirements on landfilling and targets to reduce it to the minimum. Without prejudice to the role of the Commission as guardian of the Treaties, it is primarily the responsibility of national authorities to ensure that the EU rules are properly implemented.

---