European
Commission

CIRCULAR ECONOMY
Closing the loop

CLEAR TARGETS AND TOOLS FOR BETTER WASTE MANAGEMENT

Turning waste into a resource is an essential part of increasing resource efficiency and closing the loop in a circular economy. Europe currently loses around 600 million tonnes of waste materials, which could potentially be recycled or reused. Only around 40% of the waste produced by EU households is recycled, with recycling rates as high as 80% in some areas, and lower than 5% in others. The proposal reflects a high level of ambition while taking account of the different realities and performance levels across the EU.

AMENDING THE EU'S WASTE LEGISLATION

The Circular Economy package includes **specific proposals to amend the EU's waste legislation**, seeking to improve waste management practices, stimulate recycling and innovation in materials management, and limit the use of land-filling. The proposals will provide a clear and stable policy to allow long-term investment strategies focusing on prevention, reuse and recycling.

KEY ELEMENTS OF THE REVISED WASTE PROPOSAL

Targets
- a common EU target for recycling municipal waste of 65% by 2030;
- a common EU target for recycling packaging waste of 75% by 2030.
- material-specific targets for different packaging materials;
- a binding landfill reduction target of 10% by 2030;

Measurements
- simplification and harmonisation of definitions and calculation methods to ensure comparable, high quality statistics across the EU;
- special rules for Member States facing the biggest implementation challenges;
- simplification of reporting obligations and alleviating obligations faced by SMEs;
- introduction of an Early Warning System for monitoring compliance with targets;
- steering Member States towards greater use of economic instruments (such as a landfill tax) to incentivise the application of waste hierarchy, to prioritise prevention, reuse and recycling, with disposal as the last resort.

Incentives
- concrete measures to boost reuse activities, including a clearer definition and rules that expand the scope of reuse activities rewarded under the EU targets;
- general requirements for the operation of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) schemes – meaning a producer's responsibility for a product is extended to the post-consumer stage of a product's life cycle, aimed at improving their performance and transparency, including direct financial incentives for greener product design;
- clearer rules on by-products and end-of-waste criteria to stimulate the sharing of by-product resources among industries and markets for recycled materials;
- new measures to promote prevention, including for food waste and marine litter, and reuse;
- provisions to improve the traceability of hazardous waste.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS TO THE ECONOMY, CITIZENS AND THE ENVIRONMENT OF THE NEW WASTE PROPOSALS?

These proposals will secure Europe's **access to high quality and affordable raw materials**, making our economy more competitive in the context of volatile resource prices, political instability, resource scarcity, and increasing global competition concerning the access to raw materials.

Sustainable growth will boost job creation, with more than 170,000 direct jobs potentially being created in Europe by 2030. A reduction in the total materials requirement of around 20 % can lead to an estimated 3 % boost in GDP. Measures such as better ecodesign, waste prevention and reuse could bring net savings to businesses in the EU of up to €600 billion or 8% of their annual turnover.

Our proposals will contribute to **reducing greenhouse gas emissions**. More than 500 million tons of greenhouse gas could be avoided between 2015 and 2035, directly by cutting emissions from landfills and indirectly by recycling materials which would otherwise be extracted and processed. Our proposals will reduce landfills, and their associated pollution.

Our proposals will **reduce the administrative burden**, in particular **for SMEs**, as well as for public administrations, by improving definitions and simplifying reporting requirements.