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Is EU's waste package making a step towards a Circular Society?

All commercial actors handling WEEE should report, in the same way producers do and treatment standards for WEEE should be mandatory for all parties.

The significant efforts of home appliance manufacturers in Europe, represented by APPLiA, to reduce environmental impacts across products, services and operations under the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Directive (WEEE) Directive have been safeguarded in the Waste Package¹ adopted by the European Parliament. On 18 April, deputies in Strasbourg decided to support what has been achieved in the last several years and to give flexibility to producers to comply individually or collectively to their obligations.

Following the rules, producers take the responsibility of environmental sound management of appliances at their end of life. Challenges, however, remain. Today, [the Material Flows of the Home Appliance Industry report](#) shows that 2,3 Mt of the estimated 5 Mt of e-waste generated in all of the EU is collected by different actors, other than the industry, making the fate of products largely unknown.

"The volumes of e-waste collected and properly recycled have steadily increased through the investments made by industry, in line with WEEE legislation," the Director General of APPLiA, Paolo Falcioni said. "Legal certainty on the roles and responsibilities of all actors handling waste will be key under the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) minimum requirements", he also added.

While some aspects of the Waste Package are promising, APPLiA still has some concerns mostly regarding the introduction, at a late stage in the negotiations, of a database of information on chemical substances of concern, intended to be accessible to waste treatment operators. "The database has been agreed without any prior impact assessment and we regret that waste legislation has been used as a back-door to introduce new obligations and extend the scope of the current information requirements in chemical legislation", Paolo Falcioni explained.

Producers already have information obligations under existing legislation, for instance those pursuant to REACH Article 33.

In parallel, producers also have information obligations towards recycling operators on hazardous substances contained in WEEE under the WEEE Directive. To respond to recyclers' quest for information about the presence of materials and components in electronic waste that require separate treatment, producers and producer responsibility organisations have teamed up to recently create "Information for Recyclers – I4R", a unique one-stop source platform aimed at providing information and guidance on how to handle WEEE: <http://www.i4r-platform.eu>

¹ Proposals for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Directive 2008/98/EC on waste, amending Directive 1999/31/EC on the landfill of waste, amending Directive 94/62/EC on packaging and packaging waste, amending Directives 2000/53/EC on end-of-life vehicles, 2006/66/EC on batteries and accumulators and waste batteries and accumulators, and 2012/19/EU on waste electrical and electronic equipment.



APPLiA also noted the introduction, in the Waste Package, of the modulation of fees paid by producers under EPR minimum requirements. The Association's membership has been working on a list of minimum criteria for practical implementation and are keen to further working with the Commission and national authorities towards full harmonisation of criteria across the European Union to safeguard the Single Market.

Co-legislators could have been more ambitious by obliging all commercial actors handling WEEE to report, in the same way producers do and by making treatment standards for WEEE mandatory for all actors treating WEEE, not only to ensure a level playing but also to increase the overall level and quality of treatment.

Paolo Falcioni concluded: "This new waste acquis must support the transition to a [Circular Society](#), ensure consistency between the various pieces of waste legislation and be effectively implementable and enforceable, nationally and locally".

Once the finally adopted also by the Council, the home appliance industry will be ready to work with Member States on practical implementation at national level by continuing to highlight best practices and experiences from the EEE sector.

APPLiA - Home Appliance Europe represents home appliance manufacturers from across Europe. By promoting innovative, sustainable policies and solutions for EU homes, APPLiA has helped build the sector into an economic powerhouse, with an annual turnover of EUR 44 billion, investing over EUR 1.4 billion in R&D activities and creating nearly 1 million jobs.

