

16 August 2022, Brussels

FEAD feedback to the Public Consultation Questionnaire on the revision of the Waste Framework Directive (WFD)

FEAD, the European Waste Management Association, representing the private waste and resource management industry across Europe, **is fully committed to the objectives of the European Green Deal and the Circular Economy Action Plan** as essential tools for providing the adequate stimuli to our economy while pushing forward EU Climate goals through the circular economy. **FEAD welcomes the objective to improve the performance of waste management systems in the EU, in particular to achieve high quality recycling, which is essential for a circular society.**

In relation to the Public Consultation Questionnaire on the revision of the Waste Framework Directive, due to limited space within the questionnaire for further comments and insights, FEAD preferred to supplement its feedback with this document.

1. Waste prevention

Measures to improve waste prevention should be based on “upstream” approach, instead of an “end-of-pipe” thinking. For example, data collection is always very important when there is a specific objective to reach.

The imposition of specific targets for citizens must necessarily be accompanied by training and information campaigns to raise awareness of waste generation and management issues. In this way, important results can be achieved in the long term.

Pay-As-You-Throw (PAYT) schemes are used by local authorities in Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg in an effort to increase recycling and reduce residual waste collected from households. There are numerous different methods of applying PAYT schemes, with the part of the fee related to the choice / behaviour of residents linked either to:

- The size of container chosen by the household
- The frequency of collection of a given container
- The application of a fee per bag used
- The weight of waste set out for collection; or
- A combination of the above

Studies into the various PAYT schemes have found that the schemes have resulted in a reduction of overall waste generated, and in particular lower rates of residual waste disposed of. However, not all schemes perform in the same way, and their impact depends also on the scheme that was in place prior to the implementation of PAYT. Schemes based solely on bin capacity do not bring about the same level of benefits as those based on weight or frequency of collection.

2. Expansion of EPR schemes

EPR (Extended Producer Responsibility) systems have shown that they can be useful in some situations (household waste flows difficult to collect separately and with enough tonnages) but **should not be expanded to all waste flows as the “regular” system.** Expanding EPR schemes has the adverse effect of duplicating financing circuits at the expense of citizens and consumers: the collection of some waste flows is financed from EPR systems, without any decrease of municipal taxes. The costs involved to change the collection infrastructure (bins, containers) and frequencies would be high. New EPR schemes might be developed at the expenses of the private waste

management. This can result from a monopoly given to an ad-hoc operating body, or, more frequently, from the organisation of the market through call for tenders not allowing for offers based on innovation, multiple services, particular timeframes better suiting the clients' needs, etc. This is particularly true for industrial and commercial waste, whose treatment should rather be financed on the basis of the polluter pays principle. B-to-B contracts can perfectly meet requirements of data collection, waste collection and recycling performances that usually motivate the creation of EPR schemes. Additionally, existing **EPR systems are so diverse that it would be extremely difficult to harmonise them. We do not see a need further harmonisation beyond the already existing EU legislation.**

a. Extension of EPR schemes to textiles

Creating EPR schemes for textiles might be a good instrument, considering that it is household waste with high tonnages, whose separate collection, sorting, preparation for reuse/recycling needs to be further developed. However, EPR schemes have to be accompanied by regulatory tools to foster the development of a true, strong demand for textile recyclates, or they will otherwise only foster separate collection and sorting, without closing the loop. An EPR scheme for textiles should be based on the following principles¹:

- Full alignment with the EU waste hierarchy
- Collaborative approach among all stakeholders on how to design and implement EPR
- Harmonised approach at the EU level through a common policy framework
- System that ensures competitiveness, accompanied by measures to create demand for secondary raw materials

FEAD further proposes a set of common goals and a shared responsibility system:

- Adequate financing to create an efficient infrastructure for waste minimization, collection, and proper treatment (reuse and high-value recycling)
- Thriving markets for second-hand textiles
- Functioning markets for recycled materials with a strong demand for recycled materials
- Rewarding circular design through incentives and/or targets
- Supporting innovation and development of technologies
- Increasing transparency and traceability of material flows
- Supporting robust environmental claims
- Engaging European consumers to use and dispose of their textiles sustainably.

To implement these goals and principles, it is important to take into account some basic aspects in the legislative process, that are necessary to frame the issue and define priorities to make the system effective. The EPR should have a harmonised scope with a phased approach to define which categories or types of textile products are in-scope and should be adequately financed. The EPR scheme for textile should include and affect:

- Defining the perimeter of the products that become textile both in terms of categories or types (e.g. clothes, accessories -including non-textiles, household linen, furniture, etc.) and of origin (e.g. with the exclusion of sanitary waste, production waste, rags and industrial clothing)
- Definition of textile waste, which should not be left to the interpretation of operators and citizens
- Design requirements on quality, repairability, recyclability and easy disassembly
- Specifications for the use of mandatory recycled content
- Traceability of materials and products
- Minimum requirements for collection, sorting and recycling
- Documentation, verification, data collection and control, through qualification of operators and certification of plants

¹ See also our joint position paper on EPR for the textile value chain: <https://fead.be/position/extended-producer-responsibility-epr-for-the-textile-value-chain-joint-position-paper/>

- Development of a real industrial chain for the recycling of non-reusable fractions
- Establishing a clear identification of responsibilities, including financial ones, of the producers/importers (including online sales channels) and of the other subjects along the supply chain, avoiding shifting the possible shortfalls of the chain onto the collectors and treatment companies
- Eco-modulation of fees to consistently reward circular design, considering potential criteria such as durability, re-cyclability and recycled content. Member States should manage the system and establish the specific criteria according to the relevant economic, social and local factors.
- Awareness of citizens with adequate information campaigns
- Economic support schemes for R&D and commercialisation of new environmental technologies

In the light of the upcoming regulatory requirement to separately collect textile waste in all EU Member States by 2025 and the expected publication of the EU Textiles Strategy, **FEAD seeks an open dialogue with European policymakers to jointly drive the debate on EPR for textiles forward and shape a common framework** that:

- builds upon the learnings and success factors from existing EPR frameworks, both in textiles and other key value chains;
- is tailored to the specificities of the textile value chain and its broad portfolio of materials and products, which have different cycles and functionalities;
- is preceded by an impact assessment, to ensure the best options to be set up with regards to expected performances and costs;
- effectively contributes to drive circular change, contributing to prolong the use of textiles and to keep textile resources in re-circulation as much as possible and prioritize recycling to develop a secondary raw materials market for textiles; and
- takes due consideration when setting up EPR schemes of existing, well-performing business-to-business contracts between producers and the waste management sector.

3. Separate collection efforts may be confronted with several challenges

Harmonised pictograms for standard waste-fractions, taking into account the link to product labelling is likely to be quite effective and is more transferable across State boundaries. It would take time to develop but is certainly worth considering.

Harmonised bin colours across the EU are a much more difficult option, as there are major inconsistencies within countries as well as across the Union. Changing bin colours would have major financial and environmental costs and would generate a lot of unnecessary plastic waste. Moreover, the re-education of people towards new colours would take a long time, as consumers are used to the colour scheme of their host country.

The need for detailed knowledge about proper waste separation is high. Most Germans, for examples, know at least basic information about waste separation - however, more than half of the respondents of a survey would like to have more detailed knowledge (https://www.muelltrennung-wirkt.de/fileadmin/user_upload/Presse/Factsheets_und_Studien/Duale-Systeme_Factsheet_BUS_Umfrage.pdf). More knowledge about correct waste separation should be spread among the population by the local administration. When throwing away waste, it is often too inconvenient to consult the internet to find out about correct waste separation, so educational leaflets on proper waste separation at regular intervals must be provided by competent authorities.

Moreover, providing data to citizens on their own waste management performance in the context of their peers and environmental targets, has a lot of merit, particularly if there is a reward for improved performance. Most people would take an interest in their performance if it was measured and presented directly to them. It would move waste management higher up in their priorities.

The door-to-door collection system has shown to increase the participation of users in sorting and collecting solid waste. In particular, the subsequent increase of collected recyclable waste has appeared to reduce its environmental impact.

Citizens practicing separate waste collection using a door-to-door system were more aware of the recycling process and more satisfied with the system, as a result of the effectiveness of the information campaigns that have been locally implemented. However, if municipal authorities did not provide appropriate schemes and programs to facilitate waste collection operations, the correct involvement of citizens in recycling was shown to be very low.

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