

INTERNAL UPDATE, edition 7-8-9/2015, 9-27 February

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1. Official withdrawal of the Circular Economy Package on Wednesday 25 February 2015

On 24 February Commissioner Vella announced at the ENVI Committee that the Commission would proceed with the formalization of the withdrawal in the coming days. The formal announcement was made the following day by a Commission spokesperson, following the first meeting of the transversal working group which includes all relevant Directorates General and which will be preparing the new CEP proposal. The Council had adopted a general statement of support on the Commission's overall programme for 2015 on 10 February despite their opposition to the withdrawal of the Circular Economy Package.

Vella promised that the new proposal would be tabled this year and other Cabinet sources have confirmed that the aim is to publish it after the summer. He said that they want to put an end to the regulatory uncertainty for those who have made or want to make investments based on the previous proposals. The new CEP will have a new legislative proposal on waste targets taking into account the input already given to them and ensured that the new proposal will keep the EU's vision on the waste hierarchy and on the aim to increase recycling levels in Europe. He said "we need to set ambitious but smart and effective objectives [...]. We have to be more ambitious on implementation". The rest of the Package will close the circle in the Circular Economy, looking at the sustainable consumption and production side both upstream, in the production and use phase, and downstream looking at what can be done to encourage and develop a market for the recycled products. Vella also explained that they are looking into how resource efficiency and the circular economy can contribute to their energy efficiency ambitions (see point 2 of the Internal Update). According to him actions are required at all stages of the life cycle of products: from the extraction of raw materials, through product design, production, distribution and consumption of goods, repair and re-use schemes, to waste management, and back into production.

More information on the Council decision:

<http://www.euractiv.com/sections/sustainable-dev/ministers-want-circular-economy-saved-back-commissions-better-regulation>

Speech of Commissioner Vella's at the ENVI Committee:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/envi/publications.html?id=20150225CPU01921>

2. Adoption of a Strategic Framework for the Energy Union

On 25 February, Vice-President Šefčovič, responsible for Energy Union, presented the adoption of a Strategic Framework for the Energy Union in Parliament. The work, according to the new working methods of the Commission, has directly involved 14 different Commissioners including amongst others: transport, research and digital agenda. In the Strategic Framework document the Commission communicates its wide-ranging plans for turning the EU into a low-carbon economy with an integrated energy system and secure supplies. Regarding Waste to Energy it is stated that: "The Commission will further establish synergies between energy efficiency policies, resource efficiency policies and the circular economy. This will include exploiting the potential of waste to energy". Other relevant action is that in order to meet the target of at least 27% at EU level for renewable energy by 2030, "The Commission will propose a new Renewable Energy Package in 2016-2017. This will include a new policy for sustainable biomass and biofuels as well as legislation to ensure that the 2030 EU target is met cost-effectively."

Speech of Šefčovič:

http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_SPEECH-15-4503_en.htm

Access to the Framework document:

http://ec.europa.eu/priorities/energy-union/docs/energyunion_en.pdf

3. MWE participated at the European Innovation Partnership on Raw Materials meeting

On 12 February, the European Innovation Partnership (EIP) on Raw Materials organised a meeting of the Operation Groups. Municipal Waste Europe was invited because we are involved in the Priority area of "Improving Europe's Waste Management Framework conditions of excellence". From now on,

the members of the Operation Groups became Experts in order to work together with DG GROW and DG ENVI. During the meeting it was also explained that the European Commission is undertaking an online survey to get an overview on all on-going and recently completed research and innovation activities (e.g. programmes, projects) funded or not by the EU and related to raw materials, such as: technologies for primary and secondary raw material production, waste management framework conditions, raw material flows or international cooperation. The analysis and mapping of the survey results will enable DG GROW to identify potential gaps and to find ways to overcome fragmentation and to streamline different instruments and initiatives. Completion of the survey should take no more than 15 minutes and will be open until 9 March 2015. All MWE members are encouraged to complete the survey, particularly if there are any on-going or planned innovation activities.

To fill the Survey:

<https://ec.europa.eu/eip/raw-materials/en/content/online-survey-research-innovation-activities-related-raw-materials>

More information:

<https://ec.europa.eu/eip/raw-materials/en>

4. Plastic bags Directive to be expected in April

On 17 February, during the Joint Action on plastic bags organised by the Deutsche Umwelthilfe, Ms. Marianne Muller, DG Environment, informed participants that the new Directive on Plastic Bags will be approved in April. The last draft is not available publically, but the measures agreed by the Parliament and Council will take measures to ensure that the yearly consumption of plastic carrier bags (between 15 and 50 microns) does not exceed 90 per person by 31 December 2019 and 40 per person by 31 December 2025 - or - they will adopt instruments ensuring that by 31 December 2018 these plastic bags will not be provided free of charge for consumers (the consumption level was 176 bags per person in 2010). In addition, the European Commission and the Member States will, at least during the first year, encourage public information and awareness campaigns concerning the adverse

environmental impact of excessive use of plastic bags. Member States will have 18 months to incorporate the new rules into national legislation following their entry into force. Two years after the entry into force of the Directive, the Commission will present two reports to the EP and the Council. The first one will examine the impact of the use of oxo-degradable plastic bags on the environment and the second will assess the different possibilities to reduce the use of very lightweight plastic bags (under 15 microns). Both reports will be accompanied, if appropriate, by legislative proposals. The presentations during the conference demonstrated that in Ireland, UK and Italy, similar actions have already been successful.

More information:

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/envir/145898.pdf

Initial Draft proposal from the Commission (November 2013)

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52013PC0761>

5. Destination of textile waste and donations of used clothing

According to estimates of the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP), a UK government and EU-backed agency tasked with reducing waste, almost half of the garments we now throw out end up in a landfill or at an incineration plant. The other half have a new life as a reused item handed over for charity. However, Dr. Andrew Brooks, lecturer at King's College London, argues in his book *Clothing Poverty*, that many donors do not realise that the majority of the cast-offs they hand over will be traded abroad for profit. WRAP estimates that more than 70% of all UK reused clothing heads overseas, joining a global second-hand trade. Top destinations are Canada, Chile, Guatemala and India. This flow of old clothing from the Western world - as well as the availability of cheap, new garments from East Asia - has had a negative effect on local textile industries in many countries. This is particularly so in Sub-Saharan Africa, where a third of all globally donated clothes are sold, he says. The problem is due in part to the lack of transparency in the relationships between textile traders and some charities and the poor second-hand market in Europe. In order to avoid this dependency on middlemen, some organisations, including Oxfam have set up their own recycling businesses.

Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) report:

<http://www.wrap.org.uk/sites/files/wrap/VoC%20FINAL%20online%202012%2007%2011.pdf>

More information:

<http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-30227025>

Ecodesign

6. Swedish have launched an ecolabel for waste prevention

Sweden's waste management and recycling organisation, Avfall Sverige, has announced the launch of the Miljönär label (using game word combining the word environment and millionaire) aimed at inspiring sustainable consumption and reducing the amount of waste produced. Unique in Europe, the Swedish ecolabel, which will be funded by municipalities, will promote reuse and repair. The message is that by sharing, repairing and reusing you can save both money and the environment. Despite that in Sweden they are good at taking care of the waste generated, the basic problem is that there is too much waste and therefore the initiative is trying to overcome that issue.

More information:

<http://www.eupackaginglaw.com/waste-management/sweden-launches-unique-waste-prevention-tool-106051.htm>

7. Public consultation on the EU rules on pre-packaging of products

The European Commission is evaluating rules dealing with the measurement of quantities contained in pre-packaged goods and with their sizes (the Pre-packaging Directives). Three major pieces of legislation on standardised filling in bottles and pre-packed products and EU legislation on pack sizes are being examined.

Access to the public consultation:

http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/newsroom/cf/itemdetail.cfm?item_id=8026

Technology and business

8. Copper's Contribution to the EU's Circular Economy

To support the investment and employment that metal recycling generates, the copper sector needs EU policy makers to ensure a well-thought out balance between legislation on chemicals, industrial emissions and climate change and Europe's goals for more sustainable growth and the Circular Economy. For that, the European Copper Institute released a document and a promotion video with Hugo-Maria Schally (Head of Unit, Eco-innovation and Circular Economy for DG Environment, at the European Commission) and Karl-Heinz Florenz (MEP shadow rapporteur of the Waste Package) explaining the potential of copper in the EU's Circular Economy. The high economic value of copper metal drives the collection and recycling of copper scrap from the downstream value chain as well as from end-of-life products. Copper is also 100% recyclable and can be reintroduced again and again into the material cycle without reducing its performance. Currently, 50% of the EU demand for copper is met through recycling.

More information and the video:

<http://www.copperalliance.eu/news-and-media/press-releases/copper's-contribution-to-the-eu's-circular-economy>

9. Recycling hot spot centre in Belgium co-financed by the EC

Recycling technology company Umicore, together with three major Belgian universities, technology institute VITO and the Centre de Recherche Métallurgique, are working towards the foundation of a recycling knowledge centre to be co-financed by the European Commission. The centre will be based at the University of Leuven in order to help Belgium become 'the global hot spot for recycling innovation'.

More information:

<http://www.recyclinginternational.com/recycling-news/8429/research-and-legislation/belgium/new-centre-help-belgium-become-recycling-039-hot-spot-039>

Internal

10. MWE Benchmarking Seminar

On 25 February MWE organised an internal benchmarking seminar in which members of the benchmarking expert group presented their experiences in their respective countries: Sweden, Norway, France, Netherlands, Denmark and Slovenia. Also the person responsible for the R4R project from ACR+, Philippe Michaux-Naudet gave a presentation on the project.

Conferences, seminars and meetings

External

1. Workshop: The best Zero Waste practices in the US and the EU, 4 March, Brussels.

Zero Waste organises a Workshop in Brussels reporting the zero waste practices in San Francisco, CA and Contarina, in Treviso, Italy. The aim of this workshop is to provide proof of the economic, social and environmental benefits of having an ambitious waste policy. San Francisco was the first city in the world to adopt the Zero Waste goal in 2002 and since then has increased recycling from 35% in 1995 to 80% in 2010. In Europe, the district of Treviso served by the public company Contarina, covering 550,000hab, has increased its recycling from 30% to 85% over the last decade. In both cases, the zero waste approach has generated jobs, spurred innovation, reduced costs and emissions and increased resource efficiency.

More information and registration:

http://www.zerowasteeurope.eu/event/workshop-the-best-zero-waste-practices-in-the-us-and-the-eu/?utm_source=Press+Release+ZWE&utm_campaign=b8cacf2431-Press_Release_Ljubljana_1st_EU_capital_to_adopt_a_&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_a7b3972a6a-b8cacf2431-209359053

2. The reindustrialisation of Europe: Innovation, jobs and growth, 23 June, Brussels

On 23rd June 2015, Forum Europe in partnership with RAND Europe will host a high-level debate on the Reindustrialisation of Europe. The conference will analyse Europe's industrial policies and how

Europe can re-energise its industrial and manufacturing sectors to ensure their global competitiveness, with a focus on hi-tech and innovation. The conference will be opened by Elzbieta Bienkowska, European Commissioner for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship, SMEs & Space.

More information and registration:

https://eu-ems.com/summary.asp?event_id=247&page_id=2171

Internal

Past:

- Trainee Mercedes Berenguer Bodí attended to the meeting of the Operation Groups on Raw Materials of the European Innovation Partnership, 12 February
- Joint Meeting WFD and EPR Expert Groups: 16 February in Brussels
- Trainee Mercedes Berenguer Bodí attended to the Joint Action on Plastic bags, 17 February
- PC meeting: 24 February in Brussels
- Benchmarking experts meeting: 25 February in Brussels
- Weine Wiqvist, President, represented MWE as a panellist in the European Packaging Forum: 25 February in Brussels

Upcoming:

- PC meeting and General Assembly: 12 May in Brussels
- PC meeting: 15 September (tbc)
- PC meeting: 23 November in Brussels
- Seminar: 24 November in Brussels