

**The end or ... the beginning of the EU Waste framework directive:
EP agreed on the Common Position.**

The second reading and final vote in the European Parliament was held today, Tuesday 17th June. The Parliament accepted the compromise made with the Council and Commission. The Council now has to formally accept the deal next week in their meeting on 23-24th June. The institutional wish to reach an agreement during Slovenian presidency was very high resulting in the fact that the outcome provokes mixed feelings as it is no big victory for the environment.

In April 2008, the Environment Committee of the European Parliament voted to reinstate most of Parliament's first reading amendments that were not taken up by the Council in June 2007 and our hopes were high for a directive pulling Europe towards a prevention-reuse-recycling society. The Environment Committee called again for total waste production to be stabilized by 2012, for measures to promote the reuse of products, for recycling targets, for the waste hierarchy as a general rule in waste policy, etc... At that time the EP already gave in on the incineration-recovery debate and voted in favor of the Council position to categorize incineration with certain energy-efficiency standards as recovery. Parliament stressed that this was only acceptable if prevention and recycling targets would be agreed upon by the Council. However, they now accepted a postponed prevention target and watered down recycling targets. Waste stabilization in 2012 was unmentionable for many countries, so no immediate target has been set, only in 2014 the commission has to set waste prevention and decoupling objectives for 2020, based on best available practices. The parliament had called for separate source-based recycling targets for household, industrial and other forms of waste, to be met by 2020. But governments suggested a much weaker recycling goal for 2020 and finally agreed on same targets of 50 and 70 % but for a much smaller piece of cake.

But for RREUSE, the revised directive will open new opportunities and solely on this aspect, the directive is going fairly well in the good direction in comparison with the 1975 directive or even the original revision proposal of the Commission.

Although reuse has been introduced already in waste stream specific legislation, such as the WEEE-directive, it is the first time reuse is legally defined in an overall framework directive and receives its specific place in the waste hierarchy. Reuse will be seen as part of prevention and partly as a second step in the hierarchy, as 'preparing for reuse'.

RREUSE urged the institutions that reuse-centers, making a network across the country are essential drivers to promote reuse. As reuse of products encounters a lot of economical or product-related barriers a real obligation to take measures

is crucial. However, the Council saw measures for the promotion of reuse as an example for Member States to be possibly adopted within their prevention programs, literally the last sentence of the last annex in the directive.

The now agreed and current wording in Article 8 of the directive states that *"Member States shall take measures as appropriate to promote the re-use of products and preparing for re-use activities, notably through encouraging the establishment and support of re-use and repair networks, the use of economic instruments, procurement criteria, quantitative objectives or other measures."*

The adding of the words 'if appropriate' and 'through encouraging' makes it less compelling than originally wanted. But the most important issue is that this wording now became part of a legally binding article, and not anymore part of an annex listing examples.

Furthermore, separate collection received a definition and all Member States shall set up separate collection of waste where technically, environmentally and economically practicable, at least for few specific waste streams as paper, glass, metal. Member States shall take measures to encourage the separate collection of bio-waste with a view to the composting. The focus on material recovery has been set by this, however a bio-waste directive setting minimum requirements remains a possibility only after an assessment by the commission.
