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PRESS RELEASE

EU Waste framework directive: European Parliament agreed on the Council Common Position.

Today the European Parliament accepted the compromise made with the Council and the Commission in their final vote (2nd reading) on the Waste Framework directive. RREUSE welcomes the adopted wordings concerning reuse in the directive however it has overall a very mixed feeling as the general result is disappointing.

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 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 at that time that this was only acceptable if prevention and recycling targets would be agreed upon by the Council. However, the institutional wish to reach an agreement during Slovenian presidency was too high and 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 by 2014 the Commission has to set waste prevention while decoupling objectives are only due for 2020. 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 for reuse and 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'.

The now agreed 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.*"

For RREUSE, this part is essential, since today reuse of products encounters a lot of economical or product-related barriers. To get real obligations for Member states to take measures to promote reuse the adoption within an Article is crucial. At first instance, these measures, which could be found literally in the last sentence of the fourth annex to the directive, were merely examples for Member States to be possibly adopted within their waste prevention programs.

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