### Basic information

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Waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE)
Amending Directive 2012/19 2008/0241(COD)

Subject
3.40.06 Electronics, electrotechnical industries, ICT, robotics
3.70.12 Waste management, domestic waste, packaging, light industrial waste

### Key players

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<th>European Parliament</th>
<th>Committee responsible</th>
<th>Rapporteur</th>
<th>Appointed</th>
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<td>Environment, Public Health and Food Safety</td>
<td>ŽALEWSKA Anna</td>
<td>11/04/2023</td>
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<td>Shadow rapporteur</td>
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<th>Council of the European Union</th>
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| Key events |
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| 07/02/2023 | Legislative proposal published | COM(2023)0063 |
| 13/02/2023 | Committee referral announced in Parliament, 1st reading | |
Waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE)


ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: the European Parliament decides in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure and on an equal footing with the Council.


Article 13(1) of Directive 2012/19/EU establishes that producers of electronic and electrical equipment (EEE) are to bear the costs for the collection, treatment, recovery and environmentally sound disposal of waste EEE (WEEE) from users other than private households resulting from products placed on the market after 13 August 2005.

On 25 January 2022, the Court of Justice of the European Union in its judgement in case C-181/20 declared as partially invalid Article 13(1) of Directive 2012/19/EU on waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE Directive) by reason of non-justified retroactive effect, insofar as it provides for producers to have to assume the financing of the costs of collection, treatment, recovery and environmentally sound disposal of
The main objective of the proposed provisions is to ensure compliance with the Court of Justice of the European Union judgement and thus to clarify the time from when producers of different electrical and electronic equipment both for private households and for users other than private households have to provide for the financing of the management of the waste that occur from their products.

The proposed amendments aim to:

1) clarify the time from when producers of photovoltaic panels and of electrical and electronic equipment for private households that falls into the scope of the WEEE Directive only from 15 August 2018 (open scope EEE) have to provide for the financing of the costs for the collection, treatment, recovery and environmentally sound disposal of WEEE from private households. In particular, it clarifies that producers of photovoltaic panels for private households provide for the financing of the collection, treatment, recovery and environmentally sound disposal of WEEE resulting from photovoltaic panels where such photovoltaic panels were placed on the market from 13 August 2012. It also lays down that producers of open scope EEE for private households provide for financing regarding the abovementioned costs for the resulting WEEE where the EEE was placed on the market from 15 August 2018.

2) clarify from when producers of photovoltaic panels and of electrical and electronic equipment for users other than private households that falls into the scope of the WEEE Directive only from 15 August 2018 (open scope EEE) have to provide for the financing of the costs for the collection, treatment, recovery and environmentally sound disposal of WEEE.

The proposal clarifies that producers of photovoltaic panels for users other than private households provide at least for the financing of the collection, treatment, recovery and environmentally sound disposal of WEEE resulting from photovoltaic panels where such photovoltaic panels were placed on the market from 13 August 2012. It also clarifies that producers of open scope EEE for users other than private households shall provide for financing regarding the abovementioned costs for WEEE resulting from such EEE where it was placed on the market from 15 August 2018.

3) update the reference in the WEEE Directive to the European standard EN 50419. Since this standard has been revised in 2022, the proposal is to replace the reference to the 2006 version of the standard with the updated version of 2022.

Waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE)


As a reminder, the proposal seeks to amend Directive 2012/19/EU on waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE) following the judgment of the Court of Justice of the European Union in case C-181/20.

The committee recommended that the European Parliament's first-reading position under the ordinary legislative procedure should amend the Commission's proposal as follows:

- provide more clarity to the changes, where it would be useful, as the matter is not immediately obvious, as well as provide changes to other parts of the existing WEEE directive to ensure consistency and coherence;

- highlight the need to respect the principle of legal certainty and introduce provisions which would ensure the prevention of future instances of unjustified retroactivity, particularly in the anticipating upcoming overall revision of the WEEE directive.

Legal certainty

In order to maintain the principle of legal certainty in the future revisions of Directive 2012/19/EU, the report stressed that it is important to pay particular attention to preventing the adoption of any provisions that could potentially have unjustified retroactive effects. It is necessary to give clarity and predictability to EEE producers with regard to the operating conditions that were in effect when their products were placed on the market. That approach helps to avoid the risk of incurring unpredictable costs associated with future WEEE management. Furthermore, such revisions should respect the waste hierarchy as laid down in Article 4 of Directive 2008/98/EC.

The amended text stipulated that no later than 31 December 2026, the Commission should assess the need for a revision of this Directive and, where appropriate, present a legislative proposal in that respect, accompanied by a thorough socio-economic and environmental impact assessment.

In the impact assessment, the Commission should in particular assess the following:

- provisions which specifically ensure that the principle of legal certainty is adhered to and that there is no provision that could entail unjustified retroactive effect in any Member State;

- provisions to ensure the implementation of the waste hierarchy as laid down in Article 4 of Directive 2008/98/EC;

- provisions to ensure that citizens and consumers are not burdened with disproportionate costs, in line with the polluter pays principle;

- provisions ensuring full implementation and enforcement of this Directive, in particular with regard to adequate collection targets, as well as preventing illegal trade of WEEE;

- creating a new photovoltaic panels category under this Directive with the aim to disassociate photovoltaic panels from the existing WEEE category 4, large equipment, as referred to in Annexes III and IV, and calculating the collection targets on the basis of waste photovoltaic panels available for collection based on their projected lifetime, rather than on the quantity of products placed on the market;

- establishing a mechanism to ensure that in case of failure or liquidation of the producer, the future costs of collection, treatment, recovery and environmentally sound disposal of waste from photovoltaic panels from both private households and users other than private households will be covered financially.
Financing in respect of WEEE from users other than private households

The proposed amendment clarifies that the provisions relating to the costs of historical WEEE apply specifically to WEEE, as set out in Article 2(1)(a), without including photovoltaic panels. In the case of other historical EEE waste, other than photovoltaic panels, the costs will be financed by users other than private households.

Transposition

This should take place no later than 18 months (instead of one year) after the date of entry into force.

Waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE)


The matter was referred back to the relevant committee for interinstitutional negotiations.

As a reminder, the proposal seeks to amend Directive 2012/19/EU on waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE) following the judgment of the Court of Justice of the European Union in case C-181/20.

Legal certainty

To maintain the principle of legal certainty in the future revisions of Directive 2012/19/EU, Members stressed that it is important to pay particular attention to preventing the adoption of any provisions that could potentially have unjustified retroactive effects. It is necessary to give clarity and predictability to EEE producers with regard to the operating conditions that were in effect when their products were placed on the market. That approach helps to avoid the risk of incurring unpredictable costs associated with future WEEE management. Furthermore, such revisions should respect the waste hierarchy.

Guarantee sound treatment of photovoltaic panels

Given that unsound treatment of waste photovoltaic panels and open scope WEEE leads to significant adverse impacts on health and the environment, Members stressed the need ensure the proper treatment of photovoltaic panels and maximising the recovery of waste from photovoltaic panels at the end of their lifetime.

Without prejudice to the changes to the financial obligations necessary to cover collection and treatment of waste photovoltaic panels placed on the market before 13 August 2012 and of waste from all open scope EEE placed on the market before 15 August 2018 introduced by this Directive, Member States should ensure the environmentally sound management of related WEEE.

Revision of the scope of the Directive

The amended text stipulated that no later than 31 December 2026, the Commission should assess the need for a revision of this Directive and, where appropriate, present a legislative proposal in that respect, accompanied by a thorough socio-economic and environmental impact assessment.

In the impact assessment, the Commission should in particular assess the following:

- provisions which specifically ensure that the principle of legal certainty is adhered to and that there is no provision that could entail unjustified retroactive effect in any Member State;
- provisions to ensure the implementation of the waste hierarchy as laid down in Article 4 of Directive 2008/98/EC;
- provisions to ensure that citizens and consumers are not burdened with disproportionate costs, in line with the polluter pays principle;
- provisions ensuring full implementation and enforcement of this Directive, in particular with regard to adequate collection targets, as well as preventing illegal trade of WEEE;
- creating a new photovoltaic panels category under this Directive with the aim to disassociate photovoltaic panels from the existing WEEE category 4, large equipment, as referred to in Annexes III and IV, and calculating the collection targets on the basis of waste photovoltaic panels available for collection based on their projected lifetime, rather than on the quantity of products placed on the market;
- establishing a mechanism to ensure that in case of failure or liquidation of the producer, the future costs of collection, treatment, recovery and environmentally sound disposal of waste from photovoltaic panels from both private households and users other than private households will be covered financially.

Financing in respect of WEEE from users other than private households

The proposed amendment clarifies that the provisions relating to the costs of historical WEEE apply specifically to WEEE, as set out in Article 2(1)(a), without including photovoltaic panels.

In the case of other historical EEE waste, other than photovoltaic panels, the costs will be financed by users other than private households.

Transposition

This should take place no later than 18 months (instead of one year) after the date of entry into force.