

Waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE). Recast

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In accordance with the requirements of Directive 2012/19/EU on waste electrical and electronic equipment (the "new WEEE Directive"), this Commission report examines three issues:

review of recovery targets;

examination of the possibility of setting separate targets for WEEE to be prepared for re-use;

review the methodology for calculating the achievement of recovery targets in order to analyse whether it is possible to set targets based on the products and materials (outputs) resulting from the recovery, recycling and preparation for re-use processes.

The main findings of the review are as follows:

1) Recovery targets: electrical and electronic equipment (EEE), which falls within the scope of the WEEE Directive, is currently classified in 10 'product-oriented' categories. From 15 August 2018, EEE will be classified under 6 "collection-oriented" categories. The recovery targets to be achieved by producers are applicable for each category of EEE.

The analysis focused on a comparison between the level of ambition of the valuation targets applicable to each of the 10 categories between 15 August 2015 and 14 August 2018 and the recovery targets applicable to each of the 6 categories from 15 August 2018.

The analysis concluded that:

- as regards most products, the absolute value of recycling and recovery targets is not affected by the transition from 10 to 6 categories of EEE;
- the change in the categories results in an increase of more than 7% in the mass to be recycled. The recycling targets applicable from 2018 (for 6 categories) are therefore more ambitious than the 2015-2018 targets (for 10 categories);
- the clustering in 6 categories is more suitable at collection and treatment levels.

The Commission concludes that the revision of the recovery targets in relation to the 6 new categories of EEE is not justified since these objectives maintain a level of ambition similar to the objectives established under the 10 current categories of EEE.

2) Separate targets for WEEE are to be prepared for re-use: in 2012 approximately 70 000 tonnes of WEEE were declared by the Member States to Eurostat as having been re-used/ prepared for re-use in the EU. However, many Member States have not reported separately the quantities of WEEE re-used/prepared for re-use. With the exception of a few Member States, re-use and preparation for re-use are not well developed at Union level.

The feasibility study showed that there were considerable differences between Member States with regard to the consumption behavior of second-hand products, making it difficult to assess the potential for preparation for re-use in the Union.

In Member States where preparation for re-use is not well developed, a separate objective for preparing for re-use would require changes to the collection structures and procedures for testing WEEE at the time of collection and prior to any transfer. The development of a reporting system would also be necessary. This would entail new obligations for economic operators and the Member States (for example, in terms of information and monitoring) and a significant increase in the administrative burden.

The Commission therefore concludes that it is not necessary at this stage to establish in the WEEE Directive separate objectives for WEEE to be prepared for re-use. However, it encourages the exchange of information between Member States in order to identify good practice.

(3) Methodology for calculating the achievement of recovery targets: on the basis of the evaluation carried out, the Commission concludes that there is no justification for replacing the input-based method for the calculation of the achievement of the recovery targets by setting targets on the basis of products and materials resulting the recovery, recycling and preparation for re-use processes (output-based approach).

In the circular economy action plan, the Commission set out to promote the development of European standards for material-efficient recycling of WEEE, as well as of waste batteries and other relevant complex end-of-life products, to increase the recycling of critical raw materials. This approach is seen as more pragmatic than setting mandatory, output-based recycling targets.