

Vote of the European Parliament on the circular economy package European recyclers see substantial room to improve calculation method to measure recycling rates

The European Recycling Industries' Confederation (EuRIC)* sees substantial room for improvement in the method chosen by the European Parliament to measure recycling rates. *"Recyclers support ambitious recycling targets and have a vested interest in uniform rules to measure real recycling rates. This is crucial to stop counting as recycled waste ultimately landfilled or incinerated"*, says Emmanuel KATRAKIS, Secretary General of EuRIC. Only waste turned into secondary raw materials from recycling must be counted as recycled.

Nevertheless, by backing the option chosen by the ENVI Committee, the European Parliament opted for a method which falls short on two major aspects.

First, this notion confuses two distinct steps in the value chains, namely recycling and manufacturing, the latter using both virgin and recycled materials. **At the input of production processes, setting targets for recycled content enabling to measure the proportion of recycled materials used to manufacture new semi-finished products or goods would be much more effective to convert linear supply chains into genuinely circular ones.** Such targets will act as a catalyst to pull the demand for recycled materials, create a well-functioning market for secondary raw materials and boost a low-carbon economy.

Second, at this stage, it is in most instances impossible to trace back the origin of the waste stream(s) for which targets have been set, contrary to the output based method proposed by the European Commission. In other words, measuring recycling targets at the input of production processes runs against the objective of accurate and uniform statistics across the EU. *During dialogues, it is crucial that Member States and the European Parliament ensure that the rules to measure recycling targets will not create more confusion and loopholes but rather agree on a method able to deliver robust and comparable statistics across the EU,* Emmanuel Katrakis concluded.

Among the others measures approved, EuRIC welcomes:

- Strengthened **pull measures** which are instrumental to level the playing field with virgin materials even if more still needs to be done, in particular by alleviating in parallel administrative obstacles which hamper recycling markets;
- More stringent **obligations linked to separate collection which is a key driver for quality raw materials from recycling**;
- Higher recycling targets echoing what recyclers do since decades: find innovative solutions to **recycle all kinds of waste**, intrinsically valued as resources, into new raw materials.

Through its Member Recycling Federations from 20 EU and EFTA countries, EuRIC represents today over:

- ✓ 5,500 companies generating an aggregated annual turnover of about 95 billion €, including large companies and SMEs, involved in the recycling and trade of various resource streams;
- ✓ 300,000 local jobs which cannot be outsourced to third EU countries;
- ✓ An average of 150 million tons of waste recycled per year (paper, metals, glass, plastics and beyond).

Recyclers play a key role in a circular economy. By turning wastes into resources, recycling is the link which reintroduces recycled materials into the value chains again and again.

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