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INTRODUCTION BY THE MANAGING DIRECTOR

Dear reader,

We are well into this year on Circular Economy and Green Economy, and the Commission’s work on their EU Waste Policy Review continues. Extended Producer Responsibility Organisations have important roles to play when it comes to fulfilling EU waste targets, in particular for household packaging. The possible development of EPR guidelines is being worked at under a separate, but linked Commission initiative which EXPRA is closely following.

In this context, EurActiv and Europen recently organised an event on EPR for packaging waste and what are the success factors that can best contribute to resource efficiency. EXPRA’s President William Vermeir and Ecoembes’ Begoña de Benito Fernandez both gave presentations during the event, stressing among other things that EPR is not an end goal in itself, but an efficient tool that helps companies to fulfil their legal obligations and a strong contributor to sustainable consumption and production. You can find a more detailed update on this event on page three.

During the last month we have also seen developments related to the Commission’s proposal to reduce the consumption of lightweight plastic bags, with the European Parliament’s Environment Committee adopting their report on the matter in view of the plenary vote later on this month. EXPRA recently published a position paper on this dossier, and we are of the opinion that the issue to be addressed is the problem of consumption rather than one of the use of materials.

EXPRA sees very high potential in initiatives involving the business sector to reduce the use of lightweight plastic bags. Voluntary agreements with retailers are a sustainable solution in order to reduce the use of lightweight plastic bags and one that can prove to be more effective than restrictive measures. The Commission states that the measures foreseen will be derogated from Article 18 of the Packaging and Packaging Waste Directive, which guarantees the free movement of all packaging materials and packaged goods. This sets a dangerous precedent, as it will allow unilateral market restrictions to be applied by the 28 Member States. This means that industries trading in Europe could now face 28 different regimes relating to lightweight plastic bags, which undermines the principles of the internal market and will hamper businesses and industry. You can find the full position paper on the EXPRA website.

In the pages to follow, you will find a glimpse of recent EXPRA activities, EU policy developments and some interesting and inspiring updates from our members.

I hope that you will find the content of interest.

With best regards,

Joachim Quoden
Managing Director of EXPRA
EXPRA news

EURACTIV AND EUROPEAN ORGANISES HIGH LEVEL EVENT ON EPR


EXPRA’s President William Vermeir and Ecoembes’ Begoña de Benito Fernandez both gave presentations during the event, stressing among other things that EPR is not an end goal in itself, but an efficient tool that helps companies to fulfil their legal obligations and a strong contributor to sustainable consumption and production.

Ms de Benito Fernandez spoke about ways to overcome barriers to drive post-consumer collection with EPR. As regards household packaging, which is a complex and therefore expensive waste stream to be collected, EPR provides a good framework for public-private collaboration, where responsibility is shared between industry, the local authorities and the individual consumers. This ensures that there is buy-in to the process of managing post-consumer waste in society as a whole, which serves the consumers interest at the same time. This ownership and co-responsibility generated through EPR creates a highly sustainable system that leads to increased post-consumer packaging collection, Ms de Benito Fernandez argued.

Mr Vermeir, who spoke about the role of obliged industry for EPR, also stressed the need to ensure that all actors fulfil their roles in the most sound and efficient way possible across the value chain. In this context, he emphasised in particular the importance of strong and trustful collaboration between the obliged industry, the EPR scheme, the municipalities and the waste management sector, who also have a very important role to play. In order to avoid inefficiencies, non-optimisation and conflicts of interest, we need to ensure that the different roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, Vermeir added. He noted in particular that the word producer is at the center of the EPR concept and should have an active, not a passive, connotation.

Among the other issues stressed was the need for clear and well defined legislation, high quality collection infrastructure and improved data reliability and accuracy. These are all important factors in the context of sound and efficient waste management and the move towards a circular economy, where EPR has a key role to play.

Following the event, EurActiv published two articles on the discussions. According to the journal, industry representatives present agreed on the need for fair, transparent and universal minimum EPR requirements. The call takes place against the background of the ongoing review of EU waste policy, including the scrutiny of waste targets in the Packaging and Packaging Waste Directive, Waste Framework Directive, and the Landfill directive.

Keynote speaker Karl Falkenberg, Director of Commission’s environment directorate, stated that waste should be at the centre of the circular economy, adding that without targets action towards more sustainable waste management would probably not be fast enough. Olivier De Clercq, policy officer in the Commission’s environment directorate, commented that data and transparency on local waste collection and treatment schemes is currently lacking.

Martin Reynolds, Chairman of Europen, reiterated de Clercq’s remarks, adding that industry responsibility for collection and treatment also implies the right to have some control over the running and cost management of the schemes.

Please find the articles here and here.

BELGIAN EXPRA MEMBER FOST PLUS RECEIVES NEW ACCREDITATION FROM INTERREGIONAL PACKAGING COMMISSION

Belgian EXPRA member Fost Plus recently received a new accreditation from the Interregional Packaging Commission. This approval provides the practical framework within which Fost Plus can operate in order to reach the recycling targets set by the law concerning the management of packaging waste on behalf of its members (the companies, targeted by law, who bring packaged products to market). This approval governs the authorised body’s operating procedures.

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This new approval came into effect on January 1st, 2014 and is valid for 5 years (until December 31st, 2018).

In short, this new approval will support Fost Plus in accomplishing its mission – ‘Together trend-setting towards a sustainable packaging management’ – while upholding its values: transparency, quality, cooperation, flexibility, and innovation.

In the new possibilities offered by its approval Fost Plus sees opportunities to build up from the present situation, including:
- an incentive to recycle even more plastic packaging in addition to bottles and flasks;
- an incentive for greater flexibility as regards collection systems so as to meet specific needs even more purposefully (multi-storey housing, underground bottle banks, paper/cardboard containers, collection frequency, etc.);
- an encouragement to press on with efforts voluntarily made by Fost Plus to sort waste outside the home (for instance, postconsumer packaging in companies);
- an encouragement to pursue efforts designed to streamline the administration of the system;
- analysing the possibilities of fine-tuning the fee calculation mechanisms in order to strengthen its role in reducing the environmental impact of packaging material.

With this new approval, Fost Plus will do its utmost to maintain its leading European ranking in the recycling of household packaging waste, as witnesses the most recent comparison of recycling results for different European countries published by Eurostat.

### News Updates

**European Parliament’s Environment Committee adopts draft legislative resolution on lightweight plastic bags**


The report, as amended, calls for a quantitative reduction target for lightweight plastic bags of 50% by 2017 and 80% by 2019. Excluded are very lightweight plastic bags (below 10 microns). Biodegradable plastic bags are included in the target, but certain forms of preferential treatment are allowed. The amendment by MEP Anna Rosbach (ECR, DK) calling for a refund system for plastic carrier bags was not adopted.

The Parliament will vote on the draft resolution in plenary on 17 April.

See [here](#) for the final text.

**Member States and European Parliament agree on waste shipment inspections**

The Council's Permanent Representatives Committee approved the 6 March compromise between the Council and the European Parliament on waste shipment inspections. The agreement obligates Member States to prepare waste inspection plans by January 2017 in order to combat illegal waste export.

National authorities have to carry out risk assessments before formulating their plans. The plans will have to be reviewed every three years. The agreement also enhances the powers provided to inspectors compared to the Commission’s proposal. Results of inspections are to be published on an annual basis.

The agreement is scheduled to be voted on in the European Parliament Plenary on 17 April.
See [here](#) for the press release by the Council.

### COMMISSION STUDY ON TIMELY RESOURCE EFFICIENCY INDICATORS

The European Commission published last week a study that identifies potential indicators to measure resource efficiency using the latest available data. The results of this study will inform the Commission proposal on resource efficiency indicators and targets that are expected to be published in May.

The study was conducted by Ecorys, and analysed 66 indicators on their potential for early estimates and nowcasting. In order to make meaningful decisions, policy makers need data that is timely and accurate. Data on resource efficiency can currently only be collected two or three years later – for example to set targets for resource use of mineral raw materials in the EU decision makers can only use data from 2012. By using early estimates and nowcasting, a technique to extrapolate future trends from a large data set, the Commission wants to close the time gap for resource efficiency indicators to less than 12 months.

Some of the indicators analysed relate to waste management, including ‘total waste generated’, ‘overall recycling rate’, ‘landfill rate’ etc. As regards the waste category, it is outlined that some indicators are already available, but more data is available and further development of indicators should be carried out.

The publication of this study contributes to the work to identify the right indicators to measure resource efficiency and closes the groundwork previously carried out by the Commission.

Please find the study [here](#).

### INTERVIEW WITH ALMUT REICHEL (EEA) ON EUROPEAN WASTE MANAGEMENT

The European Environment Agency (EEA) has published an interview with Almut Reichel, responsible at the EEA for waste and sustainable consumption issues.

According to Reichel, waste is both a problem and a resource, depending on what is done with it. She states that EPR and landfill taxes are approaches that contribute to Member States reaching their recycling targets under the Waste Framework Directive.

The EEA is currently reviewing Member States’ waste prevention programmes and will publish their findings later this year. In addition, she remarked that the EU is developing three new indicators on waste generation, recycling, and diversion from landfills, which will replace the existing indicators.

Please find the interview [here](#).

### COMMISSION REPORT ON STATISTICS COMPILED ON WASTE STATISTICS AND THEIR QUALITY

Following the adoption of the Waste Statistics Regulation in 2002 (Regulation (EC) No 2150/2002), the Commission is required to send a report on the implementation of the Regulation to the Parliament and Council every three years. The Regulation defines the type and quality of the data on waste generation to be submitted by Member States, but does not determine the method.

The Commission has published its 2014 report which discusses the implementation of the regulation across the Member States. Among the findings are that there has been significant progress when it comes to compiling waste statistics since 2006 when the reporting started, and the completeness of Member State data delivery has improved. However, it finds that “in order to help achieving EU environment, industrial and raw materials policy objectives, further improvement is needed”.

You can find the report [here](#).
EUROSTAT REPORTS EU RECYCLED OR COMPOSTED 42% OF TREATED MUNICIPAL WASTE IN 2012

Eurostat, the Commission’s directorate for statistics, recently published municipal waste treatment figures in 2012 for the EU and individual Member States. It states that 34% of municipal waste was landfilled, 24% incinerated, 27% recycled and 15% composted during that year.

The figures also differentiate according to the different treatment methods, showing substantial differences between Member States.

See here for the press release.

News from EXPRA members

GREEN DOT NORWAY

GREEN DOT NORWAY PRESENTS RECYCLING FIGURES 2013

1 April every year the result of last year recycling is reported to the Norwegian environmental authorities. Please find the reported recycling rates for packaging Green Dot Norway administer on behalf of the material companies Norwegian Carton packaging and Plastic Packaging:

Key figures 2013:

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<th>On the market</th>
<th>Material recycling</th>
<th>Energy recovery</th>
<th>Total recycling</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tons</td>
<td>Tons</td>
<td>Tons</td>
<td>Tons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beverage carton (ex school/kindergarten)</td>
<td>19 816</td>
<td>10 220</td>
<td>7 847</td>
<td>18 066</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beverage cartons in schools and day care centers</td>
<td>748</td>
<td>595</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>720</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carton Packaging</td>
<td>47 980</td>
<td>19 316</td>
<td>26 732</td>
<td>46 060</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ordinary plastic packaging</td>
<td>156 682</td>
<td>60 244</td>
<td>83 833</td>
<td>144 069</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Of which Industry:</td>
<td>65 806</td>
<td>37 447</td>
<td>20 457</td>
<td>57 904</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Of which consumer:</td>
<td>90 876</td>
<td>22 787</td>
<td>63 368</td>
<td>86 841</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taxable plastic beverage units without deposit</td>
<td>1 976</td>
<td>495.7</td>
<td>1 199.3</td>
<td>1 695.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPS</td>
<td>8 611</td>
<td>3 037</td>
<td>5 239</td>
<td>8 276</td>
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<tr>
<td>Plastic packaging used for hazardous materials</td>
<td>4 500</td>
<td>1 708</td>
<td>1 457</td>
<td>3 165</td>
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Eco-Rom Ambalaje

Eco-Rom develops ECOLLECT - separate collection of waste at the workplace

Taking into consideration the legal obligations for waste generators and owners to collect waste separately, and the numerous requests from other companies with similar obligations, Eco-Rom Ambalaje has developed the so called ECOLLECT service.

This service is available in Romania since November 2013, and exclusively covers office areas. The main goal is to increase the quantities of plastic and paper-cardboard waste collected separately from these areas.

The ECOLLECT service has proven to be a real success, not only to manufacturing companies and importers of packaged products which are members of the Eco-Rom Ambalaje system, but also to companies working in other fields, such as electricity, industrial gas, pharmaceuticals, construction materials, IT software and mobile applications, advertising, complete home appliance systems, consumable goods distribution, event organising, law firms, etc. Over 170 companies use the ECOLLECT service, and the first four months since launch resulted in over 9,500 kilos of paper/cardboard and 1,100 kilos of plastic and metal packaging waste being collected separately.

ECOLLECT is more than a service provided to companies; it is a social program with tangible results and a positive impact on the environment. For more details, please visit www.ecollect.ro.
ROMANIAN MUNICIPALITIES ARE FIGHTING TO BECOME "THE RECYCLING CITY"

Eco-Rom Ambalaje initiated in 2012 the ‘battle’ for the title “The Recycling City”. The competition is a national first in terms of encouraging the separate collection and recycling of packaging waste campaigns at local level. It is addressed to the local municipalities, and aims to mobilise them so that the services for separate collection of packaging waste further improves and so that the amounts of packaging waste collected grows.

20 municipalities were enrolled in the first edition of the competition, in which Eco-Rom Ambalaje supported the development of separate collection of packaging waste services.

In early 2014, Eco-Rom Ambalaje launched the second edition, under the aegis of the Romanian Ministry of Environment and Climate Change. This time 32 municipalities are fighting on ‘the battle front’ open between 1 January and 30 June 2014. Their weapons are the same, yet more powerful: a quality service, an effective communication with the population and large amounts of packaging waste collected separately and sent for recycling. The project is supported by the Association of Municipalities of Romania.

More details about the competition “The Recycling City” can be found by visiting www.ColecteazaSelectiv.ro.

ECOEMBES

PREVENTION WORKING GROUP ECOEMBES - PUBLIC ADMINISTRATIONS

On 29 January, the first meeting of a newly created Prevention Working Group took place. It was led by Ecoembes and all Spanish autonomous regions as well as the Ministry of Environment were invited to take part. 13 out of the 17 regions and the ministry attended this first meeting and also the second one that took place a month and a half later. Ecoembes’ intends to organise around 5-6 meetings per year.

The group works on issues related to prevention and transparency, and was been created as a platform where knowledge, experience and opinions can be shared. The group also aims to establish a communication and working space to further improve collaboration between Ecoembes and Public Administrations in the field of prevention. In 2014, Ecoembes will also need to prepare its triennial (2015-2017) Prevention Plan with licensees, so there will indeed be a strong emphasis on prevention in 2014.
LAUNCH OF “THE POWER OF COLLABORATION”

Ecoembes has launched a new advertising campaign called “The power of collaboration”. It aims to further increase awareness among the general public of Ecoembes on the one hand and on the importance of recycling on the other.

The campaign stresses the importance of collaboration in the recycling process, and it consists of a TV spot, radio and newspaper ads.

The ad was shot in Medinaceli and is based on a true story in which the citizens of the village contribute to the creation of a large sculpture made from packaging. It gives the message that thanks to collaboration and recycling, packaging can get a second life.

Additional information on the campaign can be found on the Ecoembes website, please see here.

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