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Council steps up collection and recycling targets for waste electrical and electronic equipment

The Council adopted a directive on waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE) ([PE-CONS 2/12](#)), which aims to improve collection, re-use and recycling of used electronic devices so as to contribute to the reduction of waste and to the efficient use of resources. It also seeks to limit illegal exports of such waste from the EU and to improve the environmental performance of all operators involved in the life cycle of EEE, e.g. producers, distributors and consumers.

Four years after the entry into force of the present directive, member states must collect annually 45% of the average weight of electrical and electronic equipment placed on their national markets. Three years later, member states are to achieve a 65% collection rate. Some EU states where consumers use fewer electronic devices may achieve the targets with some flexibility.

The Council also widened the scope of the legislation in order to cover in principle all electric and electronic equipment, such as photovoltaic panels, equipment containing ozone-depleting substances and fluorescent lamps containing mercury, which will have to be collected separately and properly treated six years after the entry into force of this legislation. The Commission can propose changes after analysing the impact of the open scope on businesses and on the environment.

Moreover, the directive establishes the producer responsibility, as a means of encouraging design and production of EEE which take into full account and facilitate its repair, upgrading, re-use, disassembly and recycling. It also provides for the collection, at retail shops with sales areas relating to EEE of at least 400m², or in their immediate proximity, of very small WEEE (no more than 25cm) free of charge to end-users.

P R E S S

The proposal was presented by the Commission in December 2008 ([17367/12](#)), as a recast of the previous WEEE directive (2002/96) which was in force since February 2003. The European Parliament voted its first-reading position ([6099/11](#)) on 3 February 2011 and on 19 July 2011 the Council adopted its position at first reading ([7906/2/11](#)). On 19 January 2012, following informal contacts between the Council, the European Parliament and the Commission, the Parliament adopted, at second reading, amendments to the Council's position ([5410/12](#)) which reflected the compromise agreement reached between the three institutions.
