



RREUSE opinion on the ENVI Committee Draft Own Initiative Report on the Roadmap for a Resource Efficient Europe

Introduction

Around 2.7 billion tonnes of waste was generated in 2010, but only about 40% of that was reused, recycled, or composted and digested in Europe (Eurostat Waste Statistics, 2011). Considering also the pressing need to boost employment and training opportunities, of which there is significant potential within the field of resource efficiency, RREUSE welcomes the draft ENVI Committee own initiative report on the Roadmap for a Resource Efficient Europe.

In response to this draft, RREUSE would like to highlight a number of factors which should be acknowledged in order to bring out the **essential role of waste prevention and reuse** within the document.

Improve product design and waste hierarchy implementation (ITRE Committee Opinion)

RREUSE supports the EP Committee on Industry, Research and Energy's suggestion (2011/2068 INI) to include the following:

- Point 7: Extra attention to be given to the reuse of raw materials by investing in the design of products which function reliably over a longer period (from the time they are placed on the market until the end of their useful lives), which, once they wear out, are easy to deal with in terms of recycling and waste management, and **which can easily be repaired and re-used**.
- extension of the scope of the eco-design directive to cover criteria such as resource efficiency, recycled material rates, **durability and reusability**

Note: Combating planned obsolescence at the design stage and maximising the lifecycle of a product through making easily disassembled and repairable is essential. The costs of refurbishing/remanufacturing mobile phones for example could be reduced by 50% if they were designed to be easily taken apart (Ellen Macarthur Foundation, 2012).

- Point 9: Call for a swift implementation of the WFD and in particular of the waste hierarchy aiming at prioritising prevention, reuse and recycling...

Set quantitative targets and improve data collection

RREUSE agrees that **quantitative targets** are essential to achieve a transformation to a resource efficient Europe, especially for waste prevention and reuse/preparation for reuse. The demand is certainly there. On average in Europe, one in two citizens are willing to purchase second hand furniture as well as electronic appliances whilst one in three would purchase second hand textiles (clothing, bedding, curtains etc.) for example (European Commission, 2011).

The compromise deal on the WEEE Recast was a missed opportunity to introduce the first 'prepare for reuse' target from the outset which could and should have set a precedent for other waste streams. In the UK for example it has recently been estimated that a quarter of all WEEE brought to

household waste recycling centres could have a reuse value of over GBP 220 million in gross revenue each year (WRAP, 2011)! Targets within Green Public Procurement to enhance the use of recycled materials in products would also be a positive step in creating demand for recyclates.

With regards to biowaste, RREUSE advocates the introduction of targets for the source separation of biowaste to enhance the quality of compost and digestate in soil remediation or alternatively targets for the production levels of quality compost and digestate products. Recent reports highlighting the declining state of the EU's soils (e.g. European Commission, 2012) confirm the need to better manage EU soils through moving towards a possible Soils Directive for example.

Linked to targets and implementation of such targets, **a strong monitoring and data collection system is needed**. Unfortunately data for reuse/preparation for use activities is very fragmented at European level, although there are many excellent case study examples. Data collection, and accountability for reuse and preparation for reuse activities must be significantly improved, otherwise accountability of what happens to end of life products will continue to be poor leading to continued illegal exportation outside of the EU for example. Extensive national networks of accredited reuse centres could play a significant role in monitoring and recording reuse/preparation for reuse activities.

Lastly, aside from target setting, legislation relating to waste management and resource use at EU level must also be improved where possible to meet the basic preconditions for reuse/prepare for reuse activities to flourish (e.g. incentivising adequate collection, transportation and handling conditions of various waste streams prior to being recycled, recovered or landfilled and allowing unrestricted access to these potentially reusable products/appliances at collection points to accredited reuse centres),

Shift taxes from labour to resources

RREUSE agrees on the need for a shift of taxation away from labour and over to environmentally and resource based taxes. By moving these taxes across and trying to internalise the environmental costs of production we could increase the labour force in this area whilst at the same time incentivising more durable, easier to repair and disassemble products which have a longer use phase and can ultimately be also easily recycled.

Increase job opportunities in waste prevention, reuse and recycling

The job potential in increased waste prevention, reuse and recycling activities are significant. For example in WEEE reuse, UNIDO and Microsoft estimates that computer reuse creates 296 jobs for every 10,000 tons of material processed (UNIDO, 2009) and the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity estimates that 1,000 tonnes of electronics creates 200 jobs if repaired (DCEO, 2008).

The involvement of the **social economy** in the roadmap for a resource efficient Europe would also offer many job opportunities for people at risk and disadvantaged in the labour market, helping achieve the environmental goal of reducing waste and the social goal of inclusion and providing affordable goods. Such a strategy fits perfectly with Europe's 2020 vision of moving towards a socially inclusive and resource efficient Europe.

The above is a very brief overview on the vital role waste prevention and reuse in moving towards a resource efficient Europe which should have a strong place in the ENVI Committee report.

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References:

[DCEO, 2009, Electronics Recycling: Economic Opportunities and Environmental Impacts](#)

[Ellen Macarthur Foundation, 2012. Towards the Circular Economy](#)

[European Commission, 2011. Attitudes of Europeans towards Resource Efficiency: Analytical Report](#)

[European Commission, 2012. The implementation of the Soil Thematic Strategy and ongoing activities COM\(2012\)](#)

[Fitzpatrick et al., 2011, Towards a new National Waste Policy: Discussion Document August 2011](#)

[UNIDO, 2009. Reuse and Recycle: Growing Green Business](#)

[WRAP, 2011. The Value of Reusing Household Waste Electricals and Electronic Equipment](#)

Eurostat Waste statistics:

<http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/waste/data/database>

About us

The Reuse and Recycling EU Social Enterprises network (RREUSE) is a European umbrella organisation for national and regional networks of social enterprises with re-use, repair and recycling activities. Approximately 42,000 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) employees and over 150,000 volunteers work throughout our 22 member organisations across 11 EU Member States. Although structures and national contexts are diverse, RREUSE members share common elements such as the protection of the environment, the fight against poverty and, especially, the progress of disadvantaged people back into the labour market. RREUSE's main goal is to put sustainable development into practice by encouraging job creation and social inclusion in the field of waste prevention and sustainable waste management activities