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Extended Producer Responsibility and the role of reuse activities: Opportunities for a resource efficient, socially inclusive waste management system

Abstract

Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) is being promoted as a key market based instrument to help Member States implement EU waste legislation, including application of the waste hierarchy. However, little attention has been paid to how EPR can support initiatives at the top of the hierarchy including reuse, a waste prevention activity, and preparation for reuse. Using case studies from EPR schemes active in the management of electronic, textile and furniture waste, this paper highlights how EPR schemes can potentially support the development of reuse and repair networks as called for by the EU Waste Framework Directive.

In summary, EPR schemes can support reuse and preparation for reuse activities by granting access for reuse centres and networks to the waste stream in order to separate what is reusable; organising the handling and transport of waste to preserve potential for reuse prior to any further treatment; support the flow of information between the producers and reuse centre and networks such as through provision of information relating to product repair; helping raise public awareness about the importance of reuse. In addition, the EPR schemes presented have been found to support reuse activities in particular where the social value of the reuse organisation is clear and that their activities are carried out in an appropriate manner. There is thus a strong tendency for EPR schemes to partner with organisations from the social economy who have often built up decades of experience in the field.

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1. Introduction

Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) is viewed as a key market based measure to help Member States fully implement EU waste legislation and be in line with the EU waste hierarchy¹. However, reuse, a form of waste prevention, and preparation for reuse² are not always promoted and supported by EPR schemes³. As a result, there is significant missed socio-economic and environmental opportunity if potentially reusable items in the waste stream are automatically recycled, incinerated or landfilled.

Article 11 of the EU Waste Framework Directive (2008/98/EC) calls for Member States “to take measures, as appropriate, to promote the re-use of products and preparing for re-use activities, notably by encouraging the establishment and support of re-use and repair networks...” As such, EPR schemes must play their role in ensuring that this happens.

Using case studies, this paper aims to highlight how some EPR schemes active in the management of electronic, textile and furniture waste streams are attempting to support reuse and preparation for reuse activities. These three product categories have been chosen because of their high demand on the second hand market⁴. An analysis of the effectiveness of implementing these strategies in practice, however, has not been included in this paper but could be an area of future research (See Chapter 6). This paper can hopefully complement the limited research in how reuse activities can be better integrated in EPR⁵.

Firstly, the benefits of reuse and preparation for reuse activities will be presented, followed by three case studies of national and regional EPR schemes active in the aforementioned waste streams. Finally a number of conclusions are made.

Information has been gathered through desk based research and complemented where possible by semi-structured interviews with experts in the field, both from EPR schemes themselves as well as organisations from the RREUSE network⁶.

¹ EC 2011a. COM(2011) 21: A resource-efficient Europe – Flagship initiative under the Europe 2020 Strategy Brussels.

² ‘re-use’ means any operation by which products or components that are not waste are used again for the same purpose for which they were conceived;

‘preparing for re-use’ means checking, cleaning or repairing recovery operations, by which products or components of products that have become waste are prepared so that they can be re-used without any other pre-processing; (Directive 2008/98/EC)

³ RREUSE. 2011. Challenges to boosting reuse rates in Europe. Available: http://www.rreuse.org/t3/fileadmin/editor-mount/documents/200/WMW_article_RREUSE.pdf.

⁴ EC 2011b. Flash Barometer Survey: Attitudes of Europeans towards Resource Efficiency: Analytical Report.

⁵ FORTIN, J. 2013. Faire du réemploi et de la réutilisation un objectif, une mesure innovante et un critère d'éco-conception pour prévenir les déchets dans les filières à REP. Available:

http://www2.ademe.fr/servlet/getBin?name=C0452446370A8400BADA0908BBAF192E_tomcatlocal1374668544788.pdf.

⁶ RREUSE is a platform representing social enterprises in Europe active in the field of reuse, repair and recycling. www.rreuse.org

2. Benefits of Reuse

2.1. Environmental Benefits

The amount of potentially reusable goods ending up in the waste stream is staggering, fuelled in part by our throw away culture, high repair costs but also the general decline in quality of cheaper mass produced products⁷. For example, much of the two million tonnes of furniture waste generated annually in France finds its way into an incinerator, a significant proportion of which is still reusable⁸. A recent study also found that around 40% of discarded large kitchen appliances were known to still be in working order⁹ and in Ireland alone, at least one third of items ending up in the waste stream, including electronics, furniture and textiles, have reuse potential. This equates to some 1.2 million items with a sale value of 60 million Euros¹⁰. Regarding used textiles, the flood of cheaper and poorer quality textiles on the EU market has caused the directly reusable fraction to have declined from 60% to 40% between 2000 and 2005¹¹

Put simply, extending the lifetime of a product through reuse and preparation for reuse saves on the embodied materials, and chemicals needed for the production of a new product¹². In the case of electronics, addressing material efficiency and durability of products is imperative. A recent study showed that 'the environmental impacts of the production phase of an electronic notebook are so high that there cannot be compensation in realistic time-periods by energy efficiency gains in the use phase¹³'. In addition, for many categories of electronics such as washing machines, the amount of product energy efficiency improvement through time has slowed down considerably since the turn of the century¹⁴. Historically little attention has been paid to product durability and ease of reparability in implementing measures under the Ecodesign Directive¹⁵.

Regarding textiles and furniture, it is also estimated that current reuse of T-Shirts and sofas in the UK saves 450,000 tonnes CO₂-equivalent¹⁶ and 52,000 tonnes CO₂ equivalent per year¹⁷.

⁷ e.g. COOPER, T. 2010. *Longer Lasting Products: Alternatives to a Throwaway Society*, Surrey, Gower Publishing.

⁸ ADEME. 2012b. Filieres & recyclage 2012: Déchets d'éléments d'ameublement. Une nouvelle filiere REP voit le jour. Available: <http://www2.ademe.fr/servlet/getDoc?id=81066&cid=96&m=3&p1=3&ref=17205>.

⁹ EVANS, S. & COOPER, T. 2011. Consumer Influences on Product Life-Spans. In: COOPER, T. (ed.) *Longer Lasting Products: Alternatives to a Throwaway Society* Farnham: Gower Publishing Ltd. .

¹⁰ RX3. 2013. *All Island Bulky Waste Reuse Best Practice Management Feasibility Study* [Online]. Available:

http://www.rx3.ie/MDGUploadedFiles/file/rx3publications/Bulky_Waste_Reuse_Study_website.pdf.

¹¹ Ouvertes Project: Available : http://www.textile-recycling.org.uk/Report_Ouvertes_Project_June2005%5B1%5D.pdf

¹² RREUSE. 2011. Challenges to boosting reuse rates in Europe. Available: http://www.rreuse.org/t3/fileadmin/editor-mount/documents/200/WMW_article_RREUSE.pdf.

¹³ PRAKASH, S., LIU, R., SCHISCHKE, K. & STOBBE, L. 2011. Timely replacement of a notebook under consideration of environmental aspects. Fraunhofer Institute and Oko Institute.

¹⁴ MAURICE.W.OCONNELL, STEWART.W.HICKEY & FITZPATRICK, C. 2011. Evaluating the Sustainability Potential of a White Goods Refurbishment Program in Ireland. Limerick, Ireland: Department of Electronic and Computer Engineering, University of Limerick, Limerick, Ireland.

¹⁵ SCHRIDDE, S. & KREISS, C. 2013. Geplante Obsoleszenz: Entstehungsurachen, Konkrete Beispiele, Schadensfolgen, Handlungsprogramm. Available: http://www.gruene-bundestag.de/fileadmin/media/gruenebundestag_de/themen_az/umwelt/PDF/Studie-Obsoleszenz-BT-GRUENE.pdf.

¹⁶ WRAP. 2011a. Benefits of Reuse Case Study: Clothing Project. Available: http://www.wrap.org.uk/downloads/Clothing_reuse_final1.45d9eb41.11447.pdf.

¹⁷ WRAP. 2011b. Benefits of Reuse Case Study: Domestic Furniture. Available: http://www.wrap.org.uk/downloads/Domestic_Furniture_chapter_final.87b19591.11446.pdf.

In addition to the environmental benefits of product reuse, the reuse sector also has key social and economic value in terms of its provision of employment and training opportunities, especially to those groups distanced from the labour market.

2.2. Socio-Economic Benefits

Long term unemployment (LTU) where a person is unemployed for one year or more, reached 4.6% of the entire EU workforce in 2012, with 2.5% unemployed for more than 2 years. LTU has a marked impact on the lives of the people affected, social cohesion and economic stability¹⁸ and must be addressed by the creation of jobs and meaningful work¹⁹.

Social enterprises economically active in reuse and recycling aim to address this issue by focussing on the socio-economic integration of people most distanced from the labour market such as the disabled, ex-offenders, former drug and alcohol addicts, homeless people etc.²⁰ Many of these organisations have been active in reuse for many years, far outdating the introduction of EPR schemes, and are present across the globe, from South America and Europe to Australia.

The specific and transferable skill sets the sector provides include operating commercial vehicles, fork lift trucks, joinery, sales, mechatronics, warehouse logistics etc. As such, the amount of jobs created in the reuse of one tonne of material far exceeds that of recycling. Irish social enterprise calculated that in 2010, business to business IT reuse and repair generated 10 times more jobs than the equivalent tonne of recycled materials²¹

Gaining these skills in a real working environment places the person in a much better position on the open labour market as well as helping boost morale and self-confidence of themselves and their families which provides true societal benefits. For example, Caritas Vorarlberg, Austria, succeeded in a 30% employment rate of those workers who were on insertion contracts in 2011²² and in Spain it has been calculated that supporting social enterprises active in reuse and repair generates societal benefit of around 26,000 EUR per person²³. In the UK, looking at the social return on investment, increasing the involvement of social enterprises in local collection contracts from 0.25%-2% across all public services, with the largest proportion of this increase assigned to re-use projects, could generate £54 million in social value²⁴

¹⁸ Eurostat (2013) Unemployment Statistics. Available at

http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/Unemployment_statistics

¹⁹ CROOKS, C. 2011. *How to make a million jobs: A charter for social enterprise*, London, Tree Shepherd.

²⁰ The European Commission defines social enterprises as businesses with a method of production of goods or services with a social objective (social and professional integration via access to employment for people disadvantaged in particular by insufficient qualifications or social or professional problems leading to exclusion and marginalisation) but whose activity may be outside the realm of the provision of social goods or services (COM(2011)682)

²¹ FITZPATRICK, C., O'CONNELL, M., REDDY, M., LAVELLE, U. & OSPINA, J. 2011. *Towards a new National Waste Policy - Discussion Document August 2011* [Online]. Available: http://www.reevaluate.ie/wp-content/uploads/Towards_a_new_national_waste_policy_30_Sept.pdf.

²² CARITAS. 2012. *Carla - ein Project der Caritas Vorarlberg. Nachhaltigkeitsreport*. Available: http://www.carla-vorarlberg.at/fileadmin/user/vorarlberg/Downloads/1_Hilfe_und_Einrichtungen/9_Caritas_Shopping/Carla/carla_report_web.pdf.

²³ AERESS. 2011. ESTUDIO SOBRE LAS ENTIDADES RECUPERADORAS DE AERESS (2007-2010): Nuevas oportunidades de empleo, formas empresariales y sociales de la economía social y solidaria en el sector de la gestión de residuos en España. Available: http://www.aeress.org/default.asp?lang=es&seccion=noticias&subSeccion=campanas_de_sensibilizacion_proyectos_y_otras_publicacion_es_&idItem=730&extra=estudio_sobre_las_entidades_recuperadoras_de_aeress_2007_2010:_nuevas_oportunidades_de_empleo_formas_empresariales_y_sociales_de_la_economia_social_y_solidaria_en_el_sector_de_la_gestion_de_residuos_en_espana_.

²⁴ GEORGESON, R. 2012. *Creating Social Value: The Role of the Waste and Resource Management Industry*. Available: <http://www.sita.co.uk/downloads/CreatingSocialValue-1210-web.pdf>.

The longevity and experience of these organisations has allowed them to develop know-how and expertise in areas such as appropriate collection and logistics systems for waste which help preserve reuse potential of products. Some have even developed detailed reuse and repair protocols as well as contributed to the creation of national standards for preparation for reuse.

The reuse sector also plays an extremely important societal role through the provision of good quality second hand items to those who find it difficult to afford a new appliance. This is important as “...more than one in six members of the EU population was materially deprived in 2011²⁵”

Regarding the macro-economic benefits of the sector, reuse of a selection of waste streams brings benefits of £720 Million of savings to the economy²⁶. In Australia the economic impacts of the social enterprise reuse sector amounts to some 40 million Euros annually^{27 28}

2.3. Key factors influencing reuse centre and network operation

Prior to presenting the case studies it is important to highlight some basic preconditions for reuse centres and networks to operate that should be supported by the regulatory environment in general. These include:

- stable and secure access to the waste stream in order to separate potentially reusable items
- waste stream must be handled, transported and stored in an appropriate manner prior to selection for reuse potential,
- access to information for reuse centres about the products they repair and prepare for reuse such as service manuals, which is of particular importance in the case when working with WEEE

As such, EPR schemes should take the above points into account when looking to support reuse initiatives.

3. Case Studies: Integrating reuse and preparation for reuse within EPR schemes

The following case studies highlight how reuse and preparation for reuse activities are being supported by a selection of EPR schemes managing electronic, textile and furniture waste. A full summary of the findings can be found in Annex 1. As mentioned in the introduction, these case studies simply outline some of the strategies that exist and reasons for them, rather than investigating the effectiveness of implementation in practice.

²⁵ Eurostat (2013) Material deprivation and low work intensity statistics - http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/Material_deprivation_and_low_work_intensity_statistics

²⁶ WRAP. 2011c. A methodology for quantifying the environmental and economic impacts of reuse. Available: <http://www.wrap.org.uk/sites/files/wrap/Final%20Reuse%20Method.pdf>.

²⁷ YOUSEFPOUR, N., BARRAKET, J. & FURNEAUX, C. 2012. A baseline Study of Australia's community recycling enterprises (CRE). Available: <http://www.communityrecycling.com.au/resources/uploadedFiles/1340002419239-5594.pdf>.

²⁸ Statistics for Europe are currently being gathered by the RREUSE network at the time of writing

3.1. WEEE EPR

WEEE EPR schemes are long established in Europe, mainly due to the introduction of the first WEEE directive (2002/96/EC)²⁹. Electronic goods on the second hand market have high demand with one in two EU citizens happy to purchase them³⁰

One key problem noted by reuse operators is that once EPR schemes control and manage a waste stream it is very difficult for reuse centres to gain access to those materials resulting in the destruction of potentially reusable goods, which impedes the flow of materials into a reuse centre. For example, a recent Irish study found that where every collection point is owned or under the sole responsibility of an EPR scheme very little reuse activity, if at all, occurs in comparison to if the collection point is managed by a local authority³¹.

Control of the waste stream by EPR schemes, acting on behalf of producers, has been cited as one of the main reasons for this. Other reasons include fears about competition between the second hand market and new goods and difficulties in management of a collection point with too many operators³².

In light of this, the following examples provide a brief insight into how certain WEEE EPR schemes are attempting to cooperate with reuse partners.

3.1.1. Selection of WEEE EPR schemes recognising reuse and preparation for reuse activities

Belgium: Recupel

Recupel asks all partners active in collection of WEEE to check all appliance collected for reuse potential, prior to being sent for further treatment and sets basic requirements for the handling of WEEE during collection. These requirements are included within the call for tender for WEEE operators. This gives a possibility to allow various social enterprises from the Komosie and Ressources networks to access the collection points directly and help separate potentially reusable equipment. In some cases social enterprises are even in charge of managing the collection in certain Belgian provinces. The reuse centres then take what is potentially reusable and prepare it for reuse.

Regarding financing, the appliances which are put back onto the market are effectively a free donation as the initial collection of WEEE is paid for by Recupel and so the operators are reimbursed for their efforts (Annex 1). Recupel can also help facilitate access to repair and service manuals for cooperating reuse partners.

²⁹ SACHS, N. 2006. Planning the Funeral at the Birth: Extended Producer Responsibility in the European Union and the United States. *Harvard Environmental Law Review*, 30.

³¹ RX3. 2013. *All Island Bulky Waste Reuse Best Practice Management Feasibility Study* [Online]. Available: http://www.rx3.ie/MDGUploadedFiles/file/rx3publications/Bulky_Waste_Reuse_Study_website.pdf.

³² See footnote 31

France: Eco-Systèmes

Eco-Systèmes in France also have partners from social economy networks, active in both reuse and recycling activities: Emmaüs France, Réseau Envie and Réseau des Réssourceries. It has arrangements to allow social enterprises to carry out the collection and logistics of WEEE, representing some 36% of total collection in 2011. Social enterprises can also act as collection points of Eco-Systèmes. As such the reuse organisations have access to the waste stream. In 2011, a total of 6600 tonnes of reusable appliances were put back on the local market out of a total of 328,805 Tonnes collected by Eco-Systèmes partners³³. In addition they support a number of awareness raising campaigns in France about the importance of reuse and have also helped finance and develop training and support materials for the repair of cooking, washing, refrigerant and visual equipment for the Envie network³⁴.

Romania: Ecotic

In Romania, Ecotic partners with social enterprise Ateliere Fara Frontiere (AFF) and supports their reuse activities through a monetary donation gained from the visible fee of new products in order to help AFF in its reuse and refurbishment of ICT equipment. Ecotic will support access to potentially reusable products by occasionally letting AFF know whether clearances from consumers are likely to yield a high proportion of reusable equipment. They are also supporters and partners in campaigns such as Assoclic³⁵ which aims to help bridge the digital divide in Romania by providing disadvantaged communities with donated PCs as well as partnering in a national awareness raising campaign on the importance of reuse and recycling in schools and community groups across Romania (See Annex 1).

UK: Various EPR schemes

In the UK, the Environment Agency asks for Operational Plans of EPR schemes to include clear actions in how they intend to support the reuse of whole appliances in order to fulfil the objectives of the waste directives. They must also outline how they will develop relations with reuse operators from the existing voluntary and community sector infrastructure³⁶. Such schemes would include giving access to reuse centres from the social economy in order to separate reusable whole appliances for testing and repair offsite.

3.1.2. Reasons for support of reuse activities

The above examples show a strong tendency for WEEE EPR schemes to partner with social enterprises. In many cases it is seen as a good CSR strategy. It is also recognised that many networks of social enterprises have been well established prior to the setting up of EPR schemes and so it is seen by organisations, such as Eco-Systèmes, to be their duty to support their economic activity in order to fulfil their social mission.

³³ ECOSYSTEMES. 2012. Rapport Annuel 2011. Available: http://www.eco-systemes.fr/documents/Rapport_complet_basse_definition.pdf.

³⁴ See footnote 33.

³⁵ Assoclic website: <http://assoclic.ro/>

³⁶ EA. 2011. Guidance note WMP8: Guidance on operational plans for WEEE compliance schemes Available: <http://a0768b4a8a31e106d8b0-50dc802554eb38a24458b98ff72d550b.r19.cf3.rackcdn.com/geho1011bues-e-e.pdf>.

Both Eco-Systèmes and Recupel state that they do not see supporting these activities as competition between the second hand market and market for new equipment³⁷. In addition, one of Ecotic's main motivations for supporting reuse activities is to address the digital divide in Romania between urban and rural areas³⁸.

Regarding WEEE, the importance of having a professional approach to collection, logistics, preparation for reuse and dismantling, where applicable, is at the heart of allowing the social enterprises to be partners in the schemes. Many have developed their own standards and protocols which are recognised at national/regional level as well.

3.2. Textiles EPR

EcoTLC³⁹ is the only national textiles EPR scheme in the world and is mandated by the French Ministry of Environment to fulfil the objectives of the national decree⁴⁰ together with all stakeholders. The scheme was set up in response to the 'economic difficulties encountered in sorting and recycling operations in France, especially from the social economy' (Ademe, 2012a) who are significant players in this field. French social economy actors working with textiles have created 3500 jobs since they began operating⁴¹. The issues arose because of the decreasing quality of clothing and shoes which began to enter the market since the turn of millennium as well as competition from cheaper new products and increasing costs of waste disposal.

In short the system works by placing a fee on each new garment which is put on the market in order to help support textile sorting companies, finance R&D and help local authorities and municipalities communicate the importance of separate collection of textiles to the general public. In order for an organisation to be part of the scheme, at least 70% of the clothing must be re-used and/or recycled with a maximum of 30% being residual waste. The scheme is open to all types of organisations, be they social or private and not necessarily based in France. Today, the majority of actors involved in the scheme are still social enterprises.

For each organisation that is successful in the tendering procedure, they receive two types of financial contributions. One is per tonne sorted and the other is a development contribution applicable to every extra tonne collected in comparison to the previous year. Interestingly, the second contribution is only awarded if at least 15% of the new jobs created as a result of increasing tonnages collected, are for people who are distanced from the labour market.

Whilst social enterprises can provide for the employment of much higher percentages of disadvantaged people, this case study is a good example of how social clauses can be used in order to help encourage reuse and recycling as well as the socio-economic inclusion of disadvantaged groups. It also recognises the social value the sector can provide.

³⁷ See footnote 33 p.33

³⁸ ECOTIC. 2012. Activity Report 2012. Available: <http://www.ecotic.ro/uploads/original/6e85ac8be9fafc80d05ef2a7ce45cac4841402db.pdf>.

³⁹ <http://www.ecotlc.fr/>

⁴⁰ Décret n. 2008-602 du 25 Juin 2008 relatif au recyclage et au traitement des déchets issus des produits textiles d'habillement, des chaussures ou du linge de maison neufs destinés aux ménagers

⁴¹ <http://www.irfs.fr/>

Finally it is worth mentioning that due to current high prices on the global market for textiles, interest from public and private actors is increasing in textiles collection, raising ethical questions about the importance of safeguarding the role of the social economy in this sector.

3.3. Furniture EPR

Similar to textiles, France also has the only national furniture EPR scheme of its kind in the world, known as Eco-mobilier (domestic furniture) and Valdelia (professional furniture).

In 2011, a decree on the prevention and management of waste furniture was published⁴², giving the go ahead to create a national EPR scheme for domestic and professional furniture. It was set up in response to the significant amounts of furniture waste which were entering landfill (around 2 million tonnes), a lot of which still had reuse potential⁴³. The law sets a re-use and recycling target of 45% for waste household furniture and 75% reuse and recycling rate for workplace furniture. In addition it sets a separate reuse target in the form of increasing the amount of used furniture put back on the market by 50% from a baseline situation by 2017⁴⁴.

The key point about the law is that it grants access to collection points exclusively to social enterprises in order to carry out reuse activities because it realises the social value of furniture reuse. The EPR scheme must therefore guarantee the quality and quantity of furniture for the reuse centres from the social economy to achieve the target⁴⁵.

The EPR scheme is very much in its infancy with collection operations to officially start on behalf of the scheme later this year. The results of this experimentation phase will make it possible to better understand how such reuse strategies used by EPR schemes can help contribute to waste prevention⁴⁶.

4. Conclusions

From the presentation of the above case studies, the following can be concluded:

1. In order to support reuse and preparation for reuse activities, EPR schemes must grant access for reuse centres to collection points which they manage. This action secures an input for the reuse centre which is crucial in order to help realise the development of reuse and repair networks as called for by the EU Waste Framework Directive. One EPR scheme even mandates that every WEEE collection operator must assess the appliances collected for potential reuse.

⁴² Décret n° 2012-22 du 6 janvier 2012 relatif à la gestion des déchets d'éléments d'ameublement. Available: <http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000025114585&categorieLien=id>

⁴³ ADEME. 2012b. Filières & recyclage 2012: Déchets d'éléments d'ameublement. Une nouvelle filière REP voit le jour. Available: <http://www2.ademe.fr/servlet/getDoc?id=81066&cid=96&m=3&p1=3&ref=17205>.

⁴⁴ See footnote 36

⁴⁵ See footnote 5

⁴⁶ See footnote 41

2. The French law on waste furniture sets a clear reuse target, the only one of its kind in Europe and independent of EU requirements. However, in order to achieve this target, the EPR scheme grants access for reuse centres to the waste stream in order to meet the target. Market demand should help dictate which waste streams are amenable to having potentially reusable items within them.
3. EPR schemes can also help facilitate information sharing between the producers and reuse organisations, for example through helping finance access to repair manuals. They also can help support public awareness raising campaigns about the importance of reuse.
4. EPR schemes tend to partner with reuse organisations from the social economy because:
 - a. Professional approach to collection, logistics and reuse/preparation for reuse activities and carry out activities in an appropriate and transparent manner
 - b. Recognise that in many cases, social enterprises have been operating in reuse activities for a number of years and that they should be obliged to support these activities
 - c. Social enterprises support work integration of disadvantaged groups which EPR schemes can use as Corporate Social Responsibility strategies
 - d. provide goods primarily to low income groups who otherwise would not be able to afford new equipment and as such the activities are not seen as competition between the new market
5. Recognition of the social value of the social economy active in reuse is especially evident in the French EPR scheme for furniture, which restricts reuse activities exclusively to social economy actors. There are also social clauses integrated in the French textiles EPR scheme. Market demand should help dictate which waste streams are amenable to having potentially reusable items within them. Social clauses can be used in order to preserve the role of social enterprises acting in the field of reuse and repair.

EPR schemes have the potential to support waste prevention and reuse activities through cooperation with reuse partners. If those partners are social enterprises, realising the goals of the EU 2020 strategy of a resource efficiency and socially inclusive Europe could be seen as more attainable.

6. Further Thinking and Acknowledgements

This paper presents how certain EPR schemes are promoting reuse and preparation for reuse activities primarily from a theoretical perspective. Further research could focus on gathering information on promotion of reuse activities from different waste streams, as well as looking into their effectiveness in practical implementation. This has not been possible for this paper due to resource limitations.

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Who we are:

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 40,000 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) employees and over 200,000 volunteers and trainees work throughout our 24 member organisations across 14 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

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Annex 1: Summary table of Results

WEEE

Country	EPR Scheme	Measures used by EPR scheme to support reuse/preparation for reuse	Reasons and comments
Belgium	Recupel	<p>Source: Interview with Recupel</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> obligation for all WEEE operators that respond to calls for collection tenders to check all WEEE collected for reuse potential Recupel collection points can allow access for reuse centres from social economy networks Komosie and Ressources to all WEEE collection points managed by Recupel. This includes access to certain retail collection points where the best quality used products can be found (due to appropriate handling and transportation) Trained personnel from collection point and/or personnel from reuse centre carry out selection process of potentially reusable equipment which then goes for preparation for reuse WEEE collectors are asked to handle WEEE in an appropriate manner so as not to damage the items during transport, which improves potential for reuse prior to sorting. Collection carried out by social enterprises themselves can yield high amount of potentially reusable equipment due to care in handling and transportation of WEEE 	<p>Source: Interview with Recupel and their Activity Report 2012⁴⁷:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reuse activity not seen as competition with new market as products mostly sold to low income groups with little purchasing power for new goods <p>Work Integration Social Enterprises that Recupel partners with social enterprises because they ‘guarantee disadvantaged groups with sustainable employment’. Recupel highlights this cooperation as a form of corporate social responsibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognises that social economy has been active in reuse for a very long time and wants to support it with access to goods. They recognise two significant benefits: second hand goods are sold at a reasonable price and, VIA the social economy people distanced from the labour market have the chance to gain skills such as being an electro-technician.
UK	Various including Repic/ERP/Wastecare and WEEECare	<p>Source: Interview with the Furniture Reuse Network (FRN)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> UK Environment Agency requires the submission of operational plans for EPR schemes. Within these plans it states that WEEE reuse is a priority and asks: <p><i>“You will need to provide details of how you will prioritise the reuse of whole appliances in a manner consistent with the objectives of the directive, and the relationships you intend to develop with those persons carrying out reuse activities, including making use of the existing voluntary and community sector infrastructure”⁴⁸</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In practice, compliance schemes in the UK work with reuse organisations from the social 	<p>Repic, a WEEE Compliance scheme is happy to work with social enterprises from the Furniture Reuse Network (FRN) because</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides affordable access to essential items for individuals and families that otherwise would be excluded Already forms part of Repic’s members CSR activity Appreciate the experience of social enterprises active in reuse and repair especially through linking the economic, social and environmental benefits they bring.

⁴⁷ RECUPEL. 2012. Rapport Annuel 2012. Available: http://www.recupel.be/Nieuws-Rapport-annuel-Recupel-2012_3.html.

⁴⁸ EA. 2011. Guidance note WMP8: Guidance on operational plans for WEEE compliance schemes Available: <http://a0768b4a8a31e106d8b0-50dc802554eb38a24458b98ff72d550b.r19.cf3.rackcdn.com/geho1011bues-e-e.pdf>.

		<p>economy to gain access to designated collection facilities in order to segregate and separate reusable whole appliances for testing and repair offsite.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The compliance scheme should also ensure that any collection point under contract for clearance (either operated by local authority or retailer) must prioritise reuse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with social enterprises could help minimise transport costs, maximise reuse and minimise waste⁴⁹
Romania	Ecotic	<p>Source: interviews with Ecotic and Ateliere Fara Frontiere as well as Ecotic's Activity Report 2012⁵⁰</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ecotic partner with social enterprise Ateliere Fara Frontiere. They support reuse activities by providing a monetary contribution from the visible fee gained from new equipment to the reuse and repair of ICT equipment carried out by AFF Ecotic supports the Assoclic campaign which was initiated and organised by AFF which aims to help disadvantaged communities through the donation of PCs. Private companies and institutions donated their used equipment to AFF for refurbishment and thus donate in a responsible way. Ecotic is engaged in an awareness raising campaign about the importance of reuse and recycling in schools and community groups across Romania Ecotic will strive to notify AFF of WEEE collection which is likely to yield a high proportion of potentially reusable appliances Ecotic are also involved together with AFF in the project "RRResponsible: Reduce, reuse, recycle and offer a new chance to disadvantaged people." It is financed by the Swiss-Romanian Cooperation Programme. 	<p>Source: Ecotic interview</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addressing the digital divide in Romania is extremely important, especially between rural and urban areas. Supporting the donation of good quality ICT equipment to disadvantaged communities is seen as an obligation by Ecotic to support
France	Eco-systèmes	<p>Source: Eco-Systemes Activity Report 2012⁵¹</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eco-systèmes cooperate with three networks of social enterprises: Emmaus France, Envie, and Réseau des Ressourceries Eco-systèmes have two national conventions with Emmaus and Envie with who they work in order to support the work integration activity for disadvantaged groups of both networks Support the fact that large part of the collection of WEEE is carried out by social enterprises (36% of total collection in 2011) Helped finance and develop a number of repair guides and manuals for cooking, washing, 	<p>Source: Eco-Systemes Activity Report 2012⁵²</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Realised that the social enterprises in reuse and repair of used electronics had a very strong presence in France prior to the creation of Eco-Systemes. Decided that socio-economic and environmental goals carried out by social enterprises must be supported and developed by Eco-systèmes. This would be seen as a direct action in favour of waste prevention. Do not see support of the reuse sector carried out by

⁴⁹ FRN. 2006. Repic and FRN join forces. Available: <http://www.frn.org.uk/frn-news/247-repic-and-frn-join-forces.html>.

⁵⁰ ECOTIC. 2012. Activity Report 2012. Available: <http://www.ecotic.ro/uploads/original/6e85ac8be9fafc80d05ef2a7ce45cac4841402db.pdf>.

⁵¹ ECOSYSTEMES. 2012. Rapport Annuel 2011. Available: http://www.eco-systemes.fr/documents/Rapport_complet_basse_definition.pdf.

⁵² Ibid.

		refrigerant and visual appliances together with the Envie Network <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support a number of public awareness campaigns about the importance of reuse and support for the social economy Results: of 328,805 Tonnes of WEEE collected in 2011, with 6600 tonnes of reusable appliances put back on the market 	social enterprises as competition
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Textiles

Country	EPR scheme	Measures used to support reuse/preparation for reuse	Reasons and comments
France	EcoTLC	Source: Information provided by Emmaus France <ul style="list-style-type: none"> EcoTLC mandated to carry out requirements of décret n° 2008-602 du 25 juin 2008 Fee placed on each new garment which is put on the market in order to help support sorting companies, finance R&D and help local authorities and municipalities communicate the importance of separate collection of textiles to the general public. In order for an organisation to be part of the scheme, at least 70% of the clothing must be re-used and/or recycled with a maximum of 30% being residual waste. For each organisation that is successful in the tendering procedure, they receive two types of financial contributions. One is per tonne sorted and the other is a development contribution applicable to every extra tonne collected in comparison to the previous year. The second contribution is only awarded if at least 15% of the new jobs created as a result of increasing tonnages collected, are for people who are distanced from the labour market. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scheme set up in response to the 'economic difficulties encountered in sorting and recycling operations in France, especially from the social economy' due to decreasing quality of clothing with little reuse value, competition from cheap new clothing and increasing costs of waste disposal⁵³

Furniture

Country	EPR scheme	Measures used to support reuse/preparation for reuse	Reasons and comments
France	Eco-mobilier Valdelia ⁵⁴ /	Supporting for the social economy is described within the law on the management of furniture waste <p>Article R. 543-242 of Decree no. 2012-22 states the importance of national communication measures, aimed in particular at holders, with regard to the importance of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> transferring used furniture and waste furniture in satisfactory working order and sanitary condition to social- and voluntary-sector bodies for the purpose of its further use and re-use respectively; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scheme set up in response to the amounts of furniture ending up in landfill and to address the fact that a large proportion is still considered reusable⁵⁵. Realise that the social economy use the activity of furniture reuse as a way of supporting their social mission

⁵³ ADEME. 2012a. Extended Producer Responsibility Chains in France: Panorama 2011. Available: http://www2.ademe.fr/servlet/getBin?name=27A5B1F39C895139BEBF7C64041664E2_tomcatlocal1367316036908.pdf.

⁵⁵ ADEME. 2012b. Filières & recyclage 2012: Déchets d'éléments d'ameublement. Une nouvelle filière REP voit le jour. Available: <http://www2.ademe.fr/servlet/getDoc?id=81066&cid=96&m=3&p1=3&ref=17205>.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – legislation sets a re-use and recycling target of 45% for waste household furniture and 75% reuse and recycling rate for workplace furniture – a separate reuse activity development target exists in the form of increasing the amount of furniture put back on the market by 50% on a national level by 2017. The reuse actors involved are only from the social economy, namely from Emmaus France, Réseau des Ressourceries and the Envie Network. – social enterprises active in reuse have direct access to collection points in which they have negotiated to be a partner. They segregate what is reusable and then send the remaining fraction for recycling 	<p>and have thus safeguarded all reuse activities to the social economy in this waste stream</p>
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