

## **Retailers and wholesalers weigh in on waste framework directive: Request harmonisation for textiles and action by everyone linked to food waste**

Today, the European Commission published [a proposal](#) for a revision of textiles and food waste aspects of the EU Waste Framework Directive. Retailers and wholesalers see the update of the waste legislation as necessary to enable the sustainable transformation of their sector and to achieve the objectives of the Green Deal.

Christel Delberghe, Director General of EuroCommerce, the European trade association representing retailers and wholesalers, commented:

*“Our members recognise the importance of circularity and waste reduction. A study, conducted in partnership with McKinsey, estimates that addressing circularity in our sector requires investments in the range of €35bn by 2030, complemented by supportive measures, including waste reduction both up and downstream, harmonised regulation, standards and norms, and supportive collection and sorting infrastructure.”*

### **Textiles aspects of the waste framework directive**

Christel Delberghe explained: *“With regards to the proposals for a new Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for textiles, we see enormous opportunity in establishing an EU-wide framework that ensures the textile sector becomes circular. To do so, we need to follow the examples set in dealing with other waste streams and prioritise harmonisation and setting common principles, right from the start”.*

Today, retailers and wholesalers still experience differences and diverging implementation, especially in EPR requirements in the Member States. To promote common circular economy principles across the whole EU and to avoid distorting the Single Market, more harmonisation and interoperability are urgently needed.

Many Member States have or are currently developing national EPR schemes for textiles to fulfil the separate collection obligation of textile waste by 2025, covering different scopes, responsibilities, and types of products (e.g., France, Italy, Sweden, the Netherlands).

Therefore, the new EPR schemes for textiles need to be harmonised at the EU level from the start and should be based on common principles and definitions. According to EuroCommerce, an EU-wide framework on EPR for textiles should include:

- a set of common principles, a clear scope definition, harmonised reporting and eco-modulation requirements and allocation of responsibilities among all relevant stakeholders;
- a robust mechanism of monitoring, control and surveillance;
- proportional financing and a transparency and traceability system;
- the exchange of best practices between Member States themselves and with relevant stakeholders, to avoid fragmentation.

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***EuroCommerce** is the principal European organisation representing the retail and wholesale sector. It embraces national associations in 27 countries and 5 million companies, including leading global players and many small businesses. Over a billion times a day, retailers and wholesalers distribute goods and provide an essential service to millions of business and individual customers. The sector generates 1 in 7 jobs, offering a varied career to 26 million Europeans, many of them young people. It also supports millions of further jobs throughout the supply chain, from small local suppliers to international businesses. EuroCommerce is the recognised European social partner for the retail and wholesale sector.*

### **In relation to food waste targets**

Also commenting on the proposal for legally binding targets to reduce food waste across the EU, which is part of the revision of the Waste Framework Directive, Christel Delberghe added:

*“Food waste targets need to be set at all stages throughout the food supply chain, from farm gate to final consumer. Retailers and wholesalers have long recognised the urgency of taking action and [have implemented many measures to reduce food waste](#), raising awareness and fostering collaborative efforts. As shown in [the first EU-wide monitoring of food waste](#), food waste occurs throughout the food supply chain, with retailers and wholesalers accounting for just 7% of waste, as a result of their pre-existing preventative measures and commitments. Only by working together, can we reach the desired end goal of ensuring a truly sustainable food system.”*

However, EuroCommerce highlighted that since retailers have limited influence at the household level, combining retail targets with those for households could conceal meaningful progress by the sector. EuroCommerce welcomes the flexibility for Member States to adopt a different baseline years, if data is available, whereby the progress made in the retail and wholesale sector in previous years will count towards reaching the proposed target.

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