



PRESS RELEASE

EU waste legislation must address free-riding caused by distance selling

EXPRA, WEEE Forum and EucoLight call on policymakers to introduce explicit obligations for online sellers under the new waste legislation

14 December, Brussels: The issue of free riding is one of growing concern in light of **distance sales already representing up to 20 and 30 per cent of the market** across various waste streams in certain Member States. In a bid to solve this problem, the three organizations propose online sellers and fulfilment houses to be required to take on the duties of a 'producer' under the Directive dealing with the product they sell or stock.

Free-riding describes the process whereby companies placing products on the market circumvent Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) obligations, including registering with EPR schemes and financing their products' end-of-life management. By avoiding to pay for their collection and reprocessing costs, these sales **distort the market**: they impose an unfair cost on compliant producers, thus rendering these - mostly local companies - less competitive. In addition, they alter the collection rates: unregistered distance sales artificially lower the product-placed-on-the-market figures, thereby making the legal targets easier to reach.

In a bid to face this challenge, online sellers and fulfilment houses should furthermore be required to meet the full array of Extended Producer Responsibility obligations under both EU and national laws, from registration to cost-coverage and reporting.

For the purposes of monitoring and verifying compliance, Member States should moreover be allowed to lay down additional provisions for online sellers that tackle the specificities of their operations. Dedicated enforcement mechanisms should also be contemplated, including improved coordination between customs, tax, trading standards officials and environmental authorities responsible for product law.

The three organizations strongly believe that the EU waste proposals represent a unique opportunity to enhance the transparency and data accuracy in waste management practice across the EU. This is why online sales should be explicitly covered under the new EU waste legislation.

*** **

ENDS



About EucoLight:

EucoLight is The European association of collection and recycling organisations for WEEE lamps and lighting. On behalf of its 19 members, EucoLight engages with everything related to the WEEE Directive, legislations and standards affecting the collection and recycling of WEEE lighting. EucoLight members collect and recycle, in aggregate, 79 % of the lamps waste collected in the 18 countries in which they operate.

EucoLight is the voice of European WEEE compliance schemes specialised in managing the collection and recycling of WEEE lighting; working to make the circular economy a reality for lighting products.

Founded mid-2015, EucoLight has quickly embarked into constructive dialogue with relevant stakeholders to provide expertise in the field of management and treatment of WEEE lighting and to promote the positive role of Extended Producer Responsibility schemes on the environment and society.

For more information, visit the EucoLight website www.eucolight.org, follow EucoLight on Twitter @EucoLight or contact the Secretary General, Marc Guiraud (marc.guiraud@eucolight.org).

About WEEE Forum:

The WEEE Forum, set up in 2002, is a Brussels-based international not-for-profit association speaking for 34 not-for-profit electrical and electronic equipment waste (WEEE) producer compliance schemes – alternatively referred to as ‘producer responsibility organisations’ (PRO). The 34 PROs are based in Europe, Australasia and North America: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Czechia, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Italy, Greece, France, Iceland, Ireland, Lithuania, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. It is the biggest organisation of its kind in the world. In 2016, its member organisations reported collection and proper de-pollution and recycling of 2,100,000 tonnes of WEEE. Members in 2017: Amb3E, ANAKYKΛΩΣΗ ΣΥΣΚΕΥΩΝ, ASEKOL, Australia New Zealand Recycling Platform, Ecodom, Eco-systèmes, Ecotic, ECOTIC, EES-Ringlus, EGIO, Electrocyclosis Cyprus, ElektroEko, Elektrowin, El-Kretsen, elretur, Environ, EPRA, Fotokiklosi, Norsirk, Recipo, Recupel, Remedia, RENAS, Repic, Retela, RoRec, SENS e-Recycling, SWICO, UFH, Úrvinnslusjóður, Wecycle, WEEE Ireland, WEEE Malta and Zeos. Contact: info@weee-forum.org. Website: www.weee-forum.org. See also [15 Years On](#)

About EXPRA:

EXPRA is the alliance for packaging and packaging waste recovery and recycling systems which are owned by obliged industry and work on a not-for-profit basis. EXPRA acts as the authoritative voice and common policy platform representing the interests of all its member packaging recovery and recycling organisations founded and run by or on behalf of obliged industry. Over the past 20 years, our 26 members across 24 countries, including 17 EU Member States, have co-organised the collection, sorting and recycling of used packaging, with a focus on household packaging, on behalf of the obliged industry. EXPRA members provide over 200 million inhabitants with packaging collection, sorting and recycling infrastructure and ensure recycling and recovery of over 18 million tons of packaging per year. For additional information, please visit www.expra.eu