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Council revises rules on recycling of electronic devices

The Council today determined its first-reading position on revised EU rules concerning waste electric and electronic equipment such as mobile phones and household appliances. The agreement is designed to improve collection and recycling of used electronic devices and to reduce illegal exports of such waste from the EU.

Already now, EU countries must annually collect at least 4kg of electric and electronic waste per inhabitant. In order to make collection more effective, the recast would adapt this target to the size and economic situation of individual EU countries: The agreement reached today foresees that member states must annually collect 45% of the average weight of electrical and electronic equipment placed on their national markets. This would take effect four years after the entry into force of the revised law. Four years later, member states are to achieve a 65% collection rate. Some EU states where consumers use less electronic devices may achieve the targets with some flexibility.¹

The Council also "opened" the scope of the law to cover in principle all electric and electronic equipment from six years after the entry into force of the recast. Photovoltaic panels will be included and will have to be separately collected. The Commission can propose changes to the scope after analysing the impact on businesses and the environment.

The review aims to encourage the re-use of entire appliances. The Council position foresees that previously established objectives for recovery and recycling are increased by 5%, with re-use of whole appliances counting towards them. This would take effect three years after the entry into force of the revised rules.

¹ The Czech Republic, Hungary, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Latvia and Lithuania may attain a collection rate of 40-45% by 2016 and must achieve the full collection targets by 2022 at the latest.

P R E S S

The so-called WEEE directive (2002/96) requires member states to collect waste electronic devices separately. Producers must pay for the collection and treatment of the waste, including its preparation for re-use, recycling or energy recovery.

The recast was proposed by the Commission in December 2008 ([17367/08](#)). The European Parliament voted its first reading position on 3 February 2011. Negotiations for an agreement with the European Parliament are expected to take place in the second half of this year.
