



## Circular Economy Newsletter

### What happened in January

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#### | EuRIC's EU policy monitoring



#### Metals

EuRIC has released a statement responding to the unjustifiable and unacceptable calls by the EU steel and aluminium industries calling for restrictions on scrap exports. In our statement, we stress that recycled metal exports aren't to blame for Europe's steel and aluminium industry crisis. Limiting exports without making EU producers use recycled materials will threaten the viability of Europe's metals recyclers, jeopardise climate goals, and weaken the EU economy and competitiveness.

[Read our statement here](#)

On 29 January, the European Parliament's Industry (ITRE) and International Trade (INTA) committees held a joint debate on the European steel sector, focusing on global overcapacity, high energy prices, the transition to net-zero, and uncompetitive practices from third countries. European Commission representatives from DG TRADE and GROW addressed the steel crisis, identifying high energy prices and global overcapacity as key causes. They expressed concerns about reduced EU steel production and delayed decarbonisation projects, emphasising the need to create demand for green steel, potentially through green public procurement. The Commission also highlighted the complexity of the scrap export issue and did not support limitations on exports, despite several MEPs requesting such measures. Across political groups, MEPs raised concerns

about energy prices, overcapacity, and hydrogen availability. Some called for limits on scrap exports, while the Greens advocated for green quotas for steel.

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## Waste Shipments

The deadline of 21 February 2025, set by the newly adopted EU Waste Shipment Regulation (WSR) 1157/2024, is rapidly approaching. This regulation imposes stricter controls on EU waste exports to non-OECD countries. Key points include:

- A general ban on all EU waste exports to non-OECD countries by 21 May 2027, unless an exception is granted.
- Non-OECD countries must request an exception by 21 February 2025 to continue receiving certain waste types.
- Over 60 green-listed waste entries can qualify for an exception if requested before the deadline.

The regulation affects major non-OECD destinations for EU waste, and a proactive initiative from these countries is required to maintain export possibilities. However, the European Commission has not sufficiently informed these countries about the regulation's impact on their industries. **EuRIC, in collaboration with BIR**, is working to inform administrations, trade associations, and companies in relevant non-OECD countries, including through a **webinar on 5 February 2025**.

EuRIC has reached out to key non-OECD countries but has received limited responses, though countries like Serbia, Egypt, and Pakistan appear to understand the regulation's importance. The lack of clear updates on the progress of actions by these governments means that additional efforts are needed from EuRIC members to push for concrete actions and better inform non-OECD countries' authorities.

Join our WSR webinar

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## ELVs

**EuRIC has released a guide** to drive automotive circularity and competitiveness. Here's what we're calling for to make the ELV regulation a success:

- ◆ Mandatory recycled content targets for plastics to ensure investment certainty
- ◆ Technological neutrality to maximise recycling efficiency
- ◆ Recycled content targets for steel
- ◆ Fair competition with producers
- ◆ Stronger vehicle collection and export control

[Read our ELV guide](#)

**Copper content:** EU Member States discussed the copper content in steel under the ELV regulations and were expected to submit their final positions by 24 January. Following EuRIC's strong advocacy, Member States are now considering proposing a threshold of either 0.15% or 0.20%.



## Packaging

On 22 January, the Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation (PPWR) was officially **published** in the EU Official Journal! It will enter into force on 11 February 2025, and will apply from 12 August 2026.



## Chemicals

On January 21, the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) added four new chemical compounds to its inventory of substances of very high concern, bringing the total to 247 entries. Among the new additions are perfluamine and octamethyltrisiloxane, both classified as very persistent and very bioaccumulative (vPvB). Perfluamine is used in electrical and electronic equipment, while octamethyltrisiloxane is found in cosmetics, hygiene and pharmaceutical products, cleaners, and coatings. The inclusion of these substances on the "candidate substances" list brings legal obligations for manufacturers, importers, and users, who must notify ECHA within six months. These substances are likely to be included in Annex XIV of the REACH Regulation, making their use subject to authorisation, though this process can take months or even years to implement.

**France wants an Act for chemicals:** France is urging the European Commission to establish a "Critical Chemicals Act," similar to existing laws for drugs and critical raw materials, Contexte reports. The goal is to recognise the strategic importance of certain chemicals for European autonomy, particularly in industries like health, agriculture, automotive, green energy, and batteries. France has identified about 15 key chemicals, including ethylene, propylene, and ammonia, which are essential for these sectors. The proposal aims to improve financing access, provide favorable state aid, and streamline permit processes for manufacturers of these chemicals, all while adhering to European regulations and ensuring health and environmental safety.

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## Textiles

The ongoing trilogue negotiations on the Waste Framework Directive (WFD) focus on several key issues. The European Commission opposes including micro-enterprises in the EPR scheme due to administrative concerns and rejects imposing EPR fees on second-hand operators. While the European Parliament is considering including micro-enterprises, it shares concerns about the burden on them. Both the European Parliament and Council oppose EPR fees for second-hand operators, with the Council supporting micro-enterprise inclusion in the EPR framework.

Regarding Social Economy Entities (SEEs), the European Parliament and Commission are working on a broader definition, but concerns about transparency and reporting burdens persist. The Commission is hesitant to propose 2028 targets for textiles due to data gaps, but the Parliament and Council support the idea. Disagreements also exist on the governance of EPR schemes, particularly regarding stakeholder involvement in decision-making. Negotiations are expected to conclude in February, with technical discussions wrapping up by the end of January.

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## Plastics

A new **JRC report**, published on 17 January, does not establish a clear preference between mechanical and chemical recycling, arguing that the best option depends on the specific plastic waste fraction. It highlights the need for improved sorting to better align

waste streams with suitable recycling processes and calls for greater transparency to enable accurate assessments and inform policy decisions. However, the report is more definitive in comparing recycling and incineration, favouring recycling for its lower climate impact. It suggests supporting the recycling sector to ensure competitiveness, noting that recycling is currently viable for PET and PES but less so for PS, PE, and polyolefins.

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## Tyres

In preparation for the upcoming trilogues on the regulation to prevent plastic pellet losses, EuRIC is preparing its position on rejecting the possible inclusion of rubber granulates in the scope of the Plastic Pellets Regulation. Plastic pellets, the raw material used for producing all plastics, are not used in the tyre and rubber industry. However, rubber granulates and powders exist as secondary raw materials derived from end-of-life tyre recovery and are used to produce a wide range of rubber products. You can find the EU institutions' positions on the matter [here](#).

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## Construction & Demolition

The new Construction Products Regulation (CPR) took effect on 7 January, aiming to modernise the sector to be safer, more sustainable, and digital. By introducing harmonised standards and supporting innovative construction methods, CPR enhances competitiveness across the EU. It also focuses on sustainability by reducing carbon footprints, promoting the reuse of products, and enabling greener buildings. The introduction of Digital Product Passports (DPPs) provides a centralised platform for all essential product information, increasing transparency.

EuRIC is preparing a draft position paper on **End-of-Waste (EoW) criteria for recycled aggregates** following the European Commission's (EC) recent move on 9 December. In a preparatory document for the 18 December CARACAL meeting, the EC had proposed a new approach to the REACH status of recovered aggregates, endorsing ECHA's recommendation to classify RA as a substance rather than an article while acknowledging the administrative burden of REACH registration and the need for legal clarity. To address these concerns, the EC suggests amending Annex V of the REACH Regulation to exempt RA from registration. Member States have until 31 January 2025 to respond, and the

proposal appears favorable for recyclers, as it ensures legal certainty through a regulatory amendment rather than guidance, aligning with past exemptions granted to other industries under Annex V.

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## Batteries

The European Commission has **published** a practical guide on the withdrawal and replacement of portable batteries, including those for electric scooters and bicycles, in the Official Journal of the EU on 10 January. These non-binding guidelines aim to harmonise the application of Article 11 of the Battery Regulation, which requires products with portable batteries to allow easy removal and replacement by end users. The guide clarifies what constitutes an "easily removable" battery and defines the term "independent professional," which was not specified in the regulation. Certain exemptions, such as for medical imaging devices and water-operating devices, allow battery removal only by independent professionals, with the guide outlining the framework for these derogations.

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## E-waste

EuRIC is preparing its feedback on the classification of e-waste and e-waste components and fractions. The suggestions currently under consideration include: i) Adding a column for the Basel code alongside the European waste code, ii) Including mirror non-hazardous entries for the following categories: large household appliances, small WEEE and ICT.

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## Ecodesign

The Commission's Expert Group on Circular Economy and Sustainable Production and Consumption met on 23 January 2025, where the Commission presented updates on the implementation of the Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation (ESPR). The **presentation** outlined the expected Working Plan, identifying priority product groups

for ecodesign requirements. A draft Working Plan is set to be presented to the Ecodesign Forum and Member States from 19-21 February, though its public availability remains uncertain. Following this, the Commission will gather feedback on priority products, measures, and scope, but the consultation is unlikely to be made public.

**EuRIC has been selected as a member of the new Expert Group on Ecodesign for Sustainable Products and Energy Labelling (Ecodesign Forum).**

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**Net-Zero**

On 23 January, the European Commission launched three public consultations on the Net-Zero Industry Act (NZIA), focusing primarily on energy and decarbonisation topics like renewable energy sources (RES), alternative fuels, storage, and grids. The consultations did not distinguish between final products and components made from recycled materials, such as permanent magnets. However, electric arc furnaces (EAFs) were included in the list of transformative technologies for decarbonisation, which is seen as a positive development, especially given ongoing discussions on sustainable steel and sliding scale.

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**Polish Presidency**

On 23 January, the Polish Presidency exchanged with the ENVI meeting. Right-wing MEPs, including those from EPP, ECR, ESN, and PöE, called for deregulation, while centrist and left-wing MEPs from parties such as EPP, Renew, S&D, and Greens emphasized the importance of maintaining the EU's climate ambition. The Polish presidency sought a balanced approach, highlighting the need to strengthen resilience and adaptation to climate change while also focusing on competitiveness.

The Polish Minister provided a timeline for upcoming discussions. The trilogues on the Waste Framework Directive (WFD) are expected to be finalized under the Polish presidency, and negotiations on plastic pallets are set to begin soon. The presidency anticipates smooth negotiations on plastic pallets, given the alignment between the Council and the European Parliament's positions.

Additional points raised during the meeting included a commitment to finding solutions for improving the implementation of the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) and

addressing its impact. Recycling was also highlighted as a key factor in enhancing the EU's competitiveness.

Among the most notable MEP interventions, Yvan Verougstraete (BE/Renew) spoke on critical raw materials (CRMs), advocating for producers to bear the cost of recycling and calling for revisions to End of Waste (EoW) criteria to ensure CRMs stay within Europe. András Tivadar Kulja (HU/EPP) urged for swift adaptation of legislation on plastic pellets. Lastly, Alessandra Moretti (IT/S&D) raised concerns about PFAS and questioned the industry's lobbying efforts on the issue. However, the Polish presidency did not provide a response to her inquiry.



## Sustainable Finance

The European Commission opened a public consultation on 3 January (closing on 31 January) regarding the 2025 Single Market Strategy. This initiative seeks to modernise the EU Single Market by tackling regulatory and administrative barriers, while enhancing cross-border trade. Key objectives include boosting economic competitiveness, supporting SMEs, and enabling the green and digital transitions. The Strategy will focus on simplifying legislation and ensuring consistent enforcement of rules across Member States.

The EU Commission has also published the draft report from the EU Platform on Sustainable Finance regarding the review of the Taxonomy Climate Delegated Act and the addition of new activities to the Taxonomy. You can find the report [here](#).

The European Investment Bank (EIB) fears that new EU sustainable reporting rules could harm its reputation, according to a confidential email from EIB chief operating officer Jean-Christophe Laloux, revealed by The Financial Times on 7 January. Laloux warns of a "major reputational risk" linked to the requirement for financial institutions to report a "green asset ratio" under the European taxonomy of sustainable investments. The EIB may declare a green asset ratio of around 1%, despite estimating its support for climate and environmental action at over 50% based on its own calculations. Laloux suggests persuading the European Commission to amend the taxonomy regulation and delay compliance deadlines. The Commission president Ursula von der Leyen has already pledged a "simplification" of the taxonomy rules in an omnibus text expected at the end of February.

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## Other EU files

**EU Competitive Compass:** On 29 January, the European Commission unveiled its Competitiveness Compass, a strategic roadmap to boost the EU's industrial competitiveness, use its resources effectively, and remove barriers at both European and national levels.

Key initiatives for the recycling sector include:

- ◆ Circular Economy Act (2026) – A single market for waste and secondary materials, pushing recycling capacity and ecodesign.
- ◆ Steel & Metals Action Plan (2025) – Decarbonising energy-intensive industries, improving access to raw materials, and tackling global overcapacity.
- ◆ Clean Industrial Deal (2025) – Aligning decarbonisation with industrial competitiveness through incentives and support for clean tech.
- ◆ Chemicals Package (2025) – Ensuring sustainable access to critical chemicals while balancing competitiveness and environmental goals.

**Omnibus legislation:** On 21 January, European Commissioner for the Economy, Valdis Dombrovskis, highlighted that the "omnibus package" is just the beginning of a broader simplification project initiated by the Commission. Dombrovskis emphasised that every member of the Commission is tasked with reviewing existing European legislation and proposing simplifications. At the same time, Polish Minister Andrzej Domański, whose country currently holds the EU Council presidency, made simplification a top priority, urging "radical" action in this area. He mentioned that after evaluating the first omnibus, further legislation may be proposed if needed. The upcoming omnibus package, expected on 26 February, will revise directives on non-financial reporting by large companies, due diligence, and the green taxonomy, with the possibility of including additional elements.

**Simplification Legislation:** The European Commission plans to publish a communication on 26 February outlining its approach to regulatory simplification, alongside an omnibus regulation on due diligence, extra-financial reporting, and taxonomy. Contexte has leaked a draft version of the document, which emphasises boosting industry competitiveness through clearer implementation processes, including implementation roadmaps for new legislation and implementation dialogues with stakeholders such as SMEs, civil society, and local authorities. Each Commissioner must hold at least two such dialogues per year. The Commission also commits to prioritising infringement proceedings with the greatest impact on citizens and businesses, amid around 1,500 ongoing cases against Member States.

**Single Market & Competitiveness:** The European Commission's annual report on the single market and competitiveness, published on 29 January, highlights obstacles to the

EU's transition to a circular economy. Despite some progress—circularity increased from 8.2% in 2000 to 11.8% in 2023—the shift remains slow. The report identifies key challenges, including high initial investment costs, expensive secondary raw materials, and uncertain returns on investment. It also points to market fragmentation, particularly differing national criteria for waste status, which hinders waste movement and disrupts supply chains.

**EU Commission Project Groups:** EU Commissioners Teresa Ribera, Stéphane Séjourné, and Wopke Hoekstra co-chair the Clean Industry Pact project group, one of fourteen **groups** set up by the European Commission on 10 January. These groups will coordinate work on the initiative, expected on 26 February, and future measures such as industrial decarbonisation legislation and the Circular Economy Act. Ten of the twenty-seven European Commissioners, including Environment Commissioner Jessika Roswall, will participate. The groups are initially established for one year.

**Green Deal:** The ECR group in the European Parliament has accepted Jordan Bardella's offer to collaborate against the "ideological excesses of the Green Deal." Bardella, leader of the far-right Patriotes pour l'Europe (PfE), had reached out to the ECR, ENS, and EPP groups to seek support for a debate on temporarily suspending the Green Deal. While the EPP rejected the proposal on 28 January, the ECR expressed willingness to cooperate with like-minded partners, including PfE. In a letter seen by Contexte, ECR co-presidents Patryk Jaki and Nicola Procaccini welcomed the dialogue between political groups, aiming to shape a "balanced and reasonable future for Europe."

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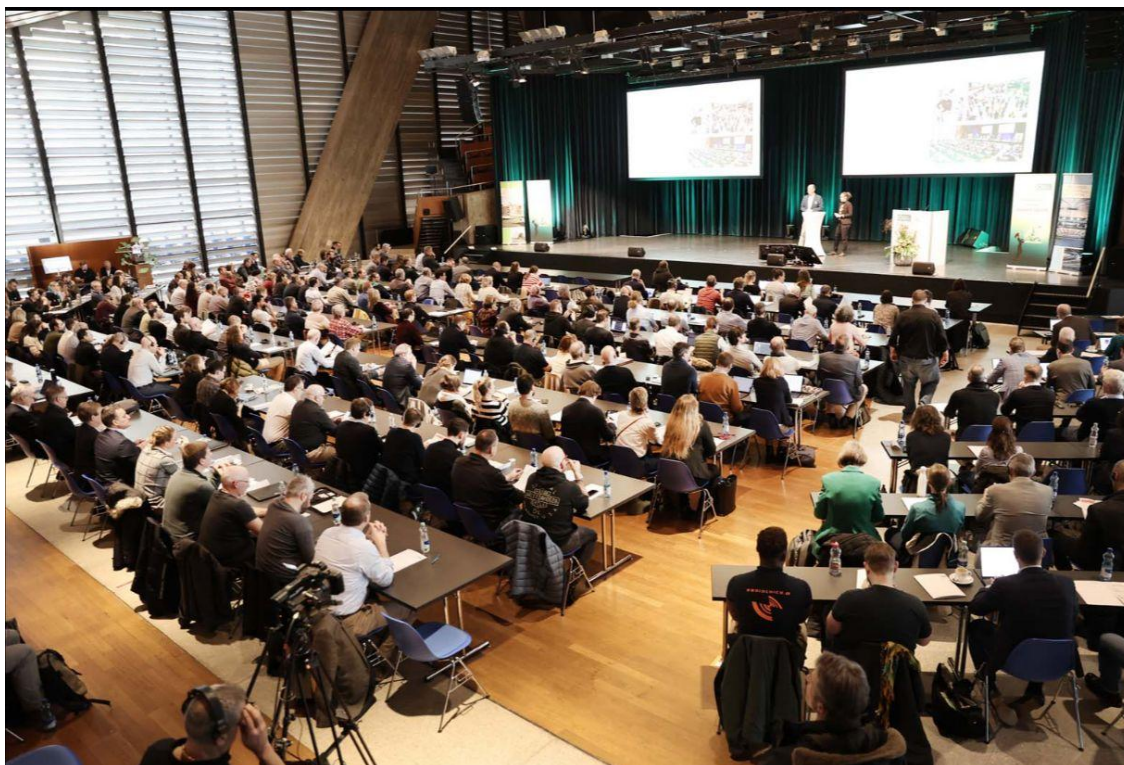
## Highlights



And that's a wrap! IERC2025 has officially concluded, leaving us with invaluable insights into the policy implications of the regulatory changes under the Basel Convention

concerning the transboundary movements of e-waste. EuRIC's Secretary General, Julia Ettinger, moderated the panel discussion on "Complying with the Basel Convention from an Industry Perspective," with contributions from Kamila Slupek, Adam Shaffer, Eric Capps, Daniel Ott, and Jim Puckett.

Held in Salzburg from January 22-24, 2025, this year's IERC was a dynamic event, with EuRIC playing an active role, having Julia Ettinger as a member of the IERC Steering Committee!



On 24 January, EuRIC participated online in the **Recycling Congress 2025**, supported by our Swiss member VSMR Die Schweizer Recycler! EuRIC's Secretary General, Julia Ettinger, explored "how will the new regulations change the recycling industry in Europe", diving into the implications of the new EU legislative agenda, including the Circular Economy Act, Industrial Deal, and more.

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## Upcoming Events

efforts to ensure compliance with the new EU Waste Shipment Regulation, we are delighted to invite you to a **joint EuRIC & BIR webinar** on the implementation of the EU Waste Shipment Regulation (WSR) for non-OECD countries, taking place on 5 February 2025 between 10:00 - 11:30 am CET.

In order to contribute to information and clarification of the new rules, EuRIC will invite representatives from non-OECD countries in Embassies, competent authorities, trade associations and companies.

**Join the webinar**



**18 February** for a roundtable discussion as we dive deep into fire prevention for waste management, focusing on electronic waste! EuRIC's Technical Advisor Veronica Plazinic and Kai Krämer, Managing Director at EARN Elektroaltgeräte Service GmbH and EuRIC representative, will share their insights!

[Free registration here](#)

**EuRIC Textiles is organising a high-level event on 27 March 2025, in Brussels, focusing on the future of the EU textiles reuse and recycling sector.**

This in-person event will bring together new MEPs, European Commission officials, environment attachés from EU Member States, and key stakeholders from the textiles circular value chain. The event will include the formal presentation of the EuRIC Textiles Manifesto and feature discussions on accelerating the transition to a circular fashion system, technological innovation, and improving the EU's second-hand and recycled textiles markets.

Discover the **agenda** and join us to explore how to drive circular solutions and global trade optimisation in the textiles sector!

**REGISTER NOW**



here.

| EuRIC network updates



## Peute

**Group** as EuRIC's newest Silver Sponsor! Founded in 1960, Peute Group has grown from a small local player into one of the world's largest independent paper and plastic recyclers.



**Worn Again Technologies** is now a Gold-Level sponsor of EuRIC!

As recycling innovators, Worn Again is at the forefront of Europe's green industrial evolution. We're proud to have Worn Again deepen their support for EuRIC's mission and contribute to initiatives that unite industries, educate stakeholders, and shape progressive recycling policies. We have issued a **joint press release** announcing the big news.

## | Sponsored Content



### ***Textiles Recycling Expo premiering on 4-5 June in Brussels!***

Join global leaders in textiles recycling at the Textiles Recycling Expo on June 4-5, 2025, in Brussels, Belgium. This free-to-attend, two-day event will bring together industry innovators, recyclers, manufacturers, and sustainability experts to explore the latest technologies, exchange insights, and drive collaboration. With a comprehensive conference program and expert-led panels, the expo is your gateway to the future of sustainable textiles.

**Register for your free ticket today!**



***27th International Recovered Paper Conference by bvse!***

The bvse-Division for Paper Recycling is hosting the 27th International Recovered Paper Conference on Tuesday, 1st April 2025, at the Maritim Hotel in Bonn, Germany. The event will cover global market dynamics, the latest policy developments (including the PPWR), and will offer an evening event with networking opportunities.

The keynote speaker, Prof. Dr. Gabriel Felbermayr, Director of the Austrian Institute of Economic Research (WIFO), will discuss market trends in the context of the current global economic situation.

**A final agenda and registration details will be provided soon.**

[link.](#)

## | Updates from the CIMPA Project



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### > CIMPA Final Event: Advancing the circularity of complex plastic films

That's a wrap 🌱 After 3.5 years, the CIMPA project concluded its journey with an event on "Advancing circularity of complex plastic films" showcasing its innovative solutions for recycling multilayer plastic films from packaging and agricultural applications.

CIMPA project, which unites 12 other partners from 5 countries, covering the entire value chain. By building on the research and policy insights from CIMPA, we aim to provide practical solutions that support EU efforts in promoting circularity in plastics.

**Read the key takeaways**



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