

ITALY

2025 EU waste recycling targets STATE OF PLAY

Turning waste into resources is key for the transition to a cleaner, climate neutral and circular economy. Re-use and recycling create local jobs and boost innovation, alleviate pressures on natural resources and reduce dependencies on imported raw materials.

The Commission issued an early warning report on the progress of Member States towards the 2025 preparing for re-use and recycling target for municipal waste, the 2025 recycling targets for packaging waste, and the 2035 municipal waste landfilling reduction target. Reaching these targets is instrumental in creating well-functioning markets for recycled materials in the EU.

KEY FINDINGS

Italy is on track to meet the 2025 targets for the preparing for re-use and the recycling of municipal waste and for the recycling of all packaging waste. The 2035 target for the landfilling of municipal waste is likely to be met, albeit there are significant differences among regions. In view of recent increases in recycling rates and implemented actions and investments, additional progress is expected.



In 2020:

Municipal waste recycling rate was 51.4%

51.4%



EU 2025 target >55%

55%



Municipal waste landfilling rate was 20.1%

20.1%



EU 2035 target <10%

10%



In 2020:

Packaging waste recycling rate was 72.8%

72.8%



EU 2025 target >65%

65%



The recycling of plastic packaging is of concern: in 2020, the recycling rate of Italy was **43.8%**, below the EU 2025 target of 50%.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Italy should continue to pursue policies that **maintain and further improve performance levels** in waste prevention, preparing for re-use and recycling.

The coverage of **pay-as-you-throw schemes** should be expanded: only 10.8% of the population is covered by different categories of such schemes based on taxes and fees.

A mandatory **deposit refund scheme** for packaging could boost re-use and increase further the capture of recyclable waste.

Some **irregular and substandard landfills** continue to operate in Italy and their closure must be completed to ensure they no longer threaten human health and the environment.

A higher **landfill and incineration tax** ('*ecotassa*') would support recycling

more efficiently. There are also disparities between regional landfill taxes across the country: since its introduction over 25 years ago, the level of the landfill tax has not been adjusted and no adjustment mechanism is currently planned.

Excessive landfilling in the least developed and transition regions, as compared to the most developed regions.

EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICES FROM ITALY

- **Bio-waste collection in a large city** – Milan implemented an ambitious scheme for **separate collection of bio-waste**⁽¹⁾. Thanks to its comprehensive approach to collecting food waste, the city went from a separate collection of 28 kg of bio-waste per inhabitant in 2011 to **95 kg in 2021**, and successfully **increased its overall collection rate from 35% to 62%**.
- **Combined door-to-door separate collection and Pay-as-you-throw scheme** – Parma established a strategy for improving waste management that led in only 4 years to an **increased separate collection rate**, from 48.5% to **72%**, and a decrease by **15%** of waste generation.⁽²⁾

- ▶ The Commission supports Member States to improve their performance in waste management with European funds, technical assistance, guidance and other instruments.
- ▶ The early warning report for Italy is a result of an assessment of all Member States carried out by the Commission in accordance with the EU rules on waste, based on a collaborative and transparent process involving the European Environment Agency and national authorities.
- ▶ This assessment identified 18 Member States at risk of missing the 2025 preparing for re-use and recycling target for municipal waste, 10 of which are also at risk of missing the 2025 recycling target for all packaging waste. The reports for all Member States are available at https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/waste-and-recycling/implementation-waste-framework-directive_en.

(1) <https://zerowastecities.eu/bestpractice/the-story-of-milan/>

(2) <https://zerowastecities.eu/bestpractice/best-practice-the-story-of-parma/>

