### Circular Economy

The European Parliament’s Environment Committee and the Council of the EU’s Environment Council are in the final stages of reaching their initial position on the Commission’s waste proposals as part of the Circular Economy Package. These co-legislators have differing positions on some issues and are intensifying their negotiations – with involvement of the Commission - towards agreeing legislative proposals that will be subject to vote and a possible 2nd reading procedure before the legislation is adopted.

The table below outlines recent positions as reported by the European Compost Network (ECN) in December 2016. ECN has circulated to members its position paper on its priority topics and recommended that they engage with they engage with their Member State Government to establish their support for the ECN’s priority issues.

**Co-legislators’ differing positions on topics important to the future management of biowastes in the EU**

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| **ECN priority issues** | **European Parliament’s position** | **Council of the EU’s position** |
| **Separate collection and recycling of biowaste** | A majority of the political groups have agreed on removing existing conditionalities, making it mandatory for Member States (MS) to separately collect biowaste except in sparsely populated areas. | The Council has discussed the possibility of removing the existing conditionalities to separate biowaste collection but this was not supported by a majority of the MS. |
| **Specific target for recycling biowaste (e.g. 65 %)** | While leading Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) from several political groups were in favour of a 65 % recycling target, this target has not been included in a final compromise. A majority of the current political groups currently think that such recycling was already covered by the overall recycling rate for household waste and the mandatory separate collection of biowaste. | There is a majority of MS who feel that this is an ‘unnecessary burden’ given the reduction target for landfilling such waste. |
| **Collection target for industrial biowaste** | The leading MEP (Bonafè) on this topic has asked other political groups to support a review clause which asks the Commission to consider proposing further recycling targets for commercial and industrial waste by the end of 2018. This would include biowaste. | This issue has not yet been addressed in Council discussions on the Circular Economy Package waste proposals. |
| **Incentive scheme dedicated to biowaste** | Several MEPs have tabled amendments supporting these incentive schemes, including the leading MEP Simona Bonafè. | This issue has not yet been addressed in Council discussions on the Circular Economy Package waste proposals. |
| **Biowaste definition allowing for use of biodegradable plastics in collection of biowaste** | A compromise has been reached by a majority of the political groups on the definition of biowaste which would allow for the inclusion of biodegradable plastics for the collection of biowaste. | MS have included the possibility of collecting biodegradable plastic bags alongside biowaste, but in such a way that the final decision is up to the individual MS. The Council’s definition of biowaste does not cover biodegradable plastics. |
| **Final recycling process (need for maximum of 10 % derogation for biowaste due to quality of output)** | A majority of the political groups are not supportive of this 10 % derogation because they prefer measuring ‘real recycling’. They perceive this derogation in the same light as that of other suggested derogations proposed by the Commission, which they feel would create loopholes for MS to take credit for waste that is, in fact, not recycled. | MS proposed that ‘the amount of biodegradable wasete that enters aerobic or anaerobic treatment may be counted as recycled where that treatment generates compost or digestate which is to be used as recycled product, material or substance’. According to the Council working papers this language was proposed to allow for further reprocessing (such as sorting operations after the ‘final recycling process’ has already started) which they thought is needed in some cases of aerobic treatment of biowaste. A 10 % maximum of non-biodegradable material is not included in the Council’s text. |
| **Food waste reduction** | A 30 % indicative reduction target (on EU level) by 2025, and a 50 % indicative reduction target by 2030 are likely to be included in the final text by the Parliament. There are also proposals to include a food waste hierarchy, clarifying the preferred steps to take with regard to food waste (prevention -> food rescue -> composting / recycling -> energy recovery -> landfilling). | This issue has not yet been addressed in Council discussions on the on the Circular Economy Package waste proposals. |