

Tackling Waste



Posted by: Zero Waste Europe





[Zero Waste Europe](#)


The Parliamentary term 2014-2019 has been very active on the field of waste. With the transition towards a circular economy at the centre of current environmental debates, the chamber has discussed and set its own position regarding the revision of four waste-related Directives. It has approved several own initiative reports, finalised the trilogies, and approved the so-called 'Plastic Bags Directive', aimed at significantly reducing the use of single-use plastic bags.


Position of EP on Waste framework Directive (March 2017)

Vote Breakdown

 576
For

 95
Against

 27
Abstain

 28
Absent

336 votes required to pass.

On 14 March 2017, the European Parliament approved the [Bonafè report](#), confirming the increased ambition of the Environment Committee on four legislative proposals on waste. Prepared by Italian MEP Simona Bonafè, the text set bold recycling targets for all waste. Read [Zero Waste Europe's press release here](#) and see [details of the vote here](#).

Packaging and packaging waste

Vote Breakdown

 582

For

 88

Against

 28

Abstain

 28

Absent

336 votes required to pass.

Adopted on the same day, [another proposal prepared by Bonafè](#) focuses specifically on reducing the waste from used packaging materials.

Circular Economy Package

Despite its stormy beginning, the Circular Economy Package has been one of the most relevant environmental policy pieces discussed at the European level. It was first proposed in July 2014 by former Commissioner Potocnik and, while praised by Zero Waste Europe and other NGOs, it soon became clear that the newly elected Commission Juncker was planning to ditch it.

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The opposition to the withdrawal by [a wide range of stakeholders](#), the [European Parliament](#), and [all EU Member States](#) managed to force Vice-President Timmermans to promise a more ambitious Circular Economy

Package for 2015.

Indeed, December 2015 brought a [Circular Economy Action Plan](#) including a new proposal to review four waste-related Directives, including the Waste Framework Directive, the Packaging and Packaging Waste Directive, and the Landfill Directive. Along with it, the Circular Economy Package included 54 different policy measures ranging from legislative proposals to voluntary agreements and guidelines.

New momentum

The year between the withdrawal and the new proposal served to gain momentum on the need to transition towards a less wasteful society. The approval of the Plastic Bag Directive in November 2014 showed the way to the prevention of waste, while the Own Initiative Report lead by Sirpa Pietikainen, of July 2015, sent a strong message from the Parliament in favour of a strong circular economy.

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Timmermans did deliver a comprehensive policy package, but both [NGOs](#) and the [European Parliament](#) criticised the reduced ambition on some key areas, such as waste prevention and recycling targets.

The legislative process, however, has been cleverly used by the European Parliament and the rapporteur Simona Bonafè to increase the ambition of the proposal of the European Commission and to raise the importance of issues like waste prevention, food waste or marine litter, which had been forgotten by the Commission.

[After the approval in March of the Parliament's position](#) with an overwhelming majority, negotiations with the Council will determine the final level of

majority, negotiations with the Council will determine the final level of ambition. In any case, all the stakeholders now seem convinced that a transition towards a circular economy is needed and, therefore, the push for proper implementation and for new measures to fill in the gap of current legislation is expected to continue until the end of the mandate and beyond. Among these is the Strategy on Plastics, which will come by the end of 2017, and other potential measures to tackle the increasing problem of plastic pollution in seas and oceans.

Zero Waste Europe, along with other NGOs, will keep proposing and supporting ambitious policies to secure a Europe free from waste.
