

Press release

Local and Regional Authorities take the initiative in helping clarify the European WEEE Directive

Local and regional authorities have lots of expertise on the collection and recycling of waste, and are now offering their help to the European Authorities in clarifying the WEEE Directive. Today, this legislation has been implemented in a confusing and inconsistent way throughout Europe. In many cases, local authorities are victim to insufficient application of producer responsibility. A newly created group, the WEEE Public Interest Network (WEEE-PIN) will now further gather information on the subject and use this to the benefit of all European citizens.

The WEEE Public Interest Network (WEEE-PIN) held its first meeting on 16th February, in the presence of Mrs Huytebroeck, Environment Minister for the Brussels Region, MM Christof Delatter (INTERAFVAL, B) and Nicolas Garnier (AMORCE), members of ACR+ and co-presidents of this initiative.

The WEEE-PIN was created within ACR+ (Association of Cities and Regions for Recycling and sustainable Resource management) and represents local and regional public authorities on WEEE issues at European level. It aims to help to clarify the WEEE Directive, as the way it has been implemented in Europe is confusing and inconsistent.

For instance, while the collection target set by the EU regulation of 4 kg/inhab/year remains quite low (considering the 20kg per person of Electric and Electronic Equipment put onto the market each year), the average collection rate in Europe was just 3,3 kg/inhab in 2005, while some countries already achieved 15 kg (Sweden).

Even more concerning: there are about 90 different producer compliance schemes for WEEE management in Europe, which collect millions of euros on new Electric and Electronic Equipment in Europe when these are put on the market. Are we sure that all this money is always used for the benefit of the consumers and the environment ?

There are also a range of issues which remain to be cleared up:

- The support of quality reuse and especially of social economy enterprises to be integrated into the systems.
- The costs covered by producers are currently not well identified.
- The different models of producer compliance scheme could be benchmarked according to their environmental, economic and social efficiency.
- The transparency of the functioning of the different systems is put into question in many countries.
- There is a need to develop markets and environmental standards for collection and treatment of WEEE in Europe (in order to avoid eco-dumping and illegal exports).
- Systems dealing with household waste require a specific and different approach from those dealing with commercial or industrial waste.

So there are many questions to which answers must be found during the revision of the WEEE Directive.

This first meeting of the WEEE-PIN gathered about 25 participants, from 7 European countries including 3 networks of cities and 9 cities and regions. The objective is now to get together a

maximum of participating local and regional authorities, as well as other actors (other than producers of equipment and their compliance schemes), in order to involve local authorities in the revision process of Directive 2006/92/EC and make their voices heard in the debates.

For any further information:

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