



STATEMENT

Call for the new EU Recovery and Resilience Funds to finance the transition to an economy that prevents products from becoming waste

9 DECEMBER 2020

We, the undersigned civil society organisations, call on the EU institutions and member states to explicitly dedicate the NextGenerationEU Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) to financing the transition towards a circular, carbon neutral, zero pollution economy, to which the EU already committed, with a clear emphasis on waste prevention and reuse.

THE CONTEXT

Expected to be launched early 2021 and with a total firepower of €670 billion, the RRF will be one of the key financial levers that can help the EU deliver on the objectives of the European Green Deal (EGD) and the Circular Economy Action Plan (CEAP).

Last November, a most welcome agreement was established between the Parliament and the Member States on the next long-term EU budget and the RRF. While it was agreed that 30 percent of the funds will be spent to fight climate change, no explicit mention was made to the EU's commitment to a circular, carbon neutral, zero pollution economy. Because many solutions to design out waste, also reduce carbon emissions, this transition is of paramount importance to achieve our climate objectives. As civil society organisations, it is therefore our duty to monitor the overall coherence and alignment at the EU and national levels on this front, and make sure there are no contradictions or perverse incentives that could undermine this transition.

CALL TO ACTION

Genuine green solutions are needed to build long-term resilience and bring structural responses to the systemic problems that are at the root of the current crisis. Therefore, available (grants) or raised (loans) funding in the framework of the EU's RRF should be invested in creating the enabling conditions for these circular, carbon neutral and zero pollution solutions to thrive across Europe, with a clear emphasis on waste prevention and reuse. Not only will it make our societies more shock-proof for future crises, it will also help create the quality and meaningful jobs we need for a sustainable future.

Ahead of implementing the Recovery and Resilience Facility, the organisations signing this statement consequently urge the EU and member states to:

- Ensure that the RRF funds are fully aligned and contribute to the EU environmental policies and instruments, particularly the EU Taxonomy Regulation which already provides clear criteria on what

activities can be considered sustainable (since RRF funds are expected to contribute to the EU's sustainable development, they should be considered as 'sustainable finance'). Hence, **no RRF money should be invested in end-of-pipe technologies** such as waste incinerators, facilities to produce refuse-derived fuel (RDF), plastic-to-fuels or landfills. Such investments would only delay and harm the transition to a circular, carbon neutral, zero pollution economy.

- Use the CEAP to guide their policy dialogue in the preparation of national recovery and resilience plans. The Commission's RECOVER task Force and DG ECFIN should use this existing legislative tool as a compass for member states to ensure their plans meet the EU's circular economy, zero emissions and pollution objectives.
- Invest in infrastructure and systems for waste prevention, product reuse and preparing for reuse. Waste prevention and reusing products (incl. packaging) must have priority over recycling. It has been proven that well-designed reuse systems perform indeed way better than single-use ones, in terms of both their market-value preservation and overall environmental footprint*. The EU should therefore urgently introduce legislation on reuse to help it become mainstream, accompanied by an appropriate level of funding for its implementation, as well as legally binding minimum targets for refillables, reuse and preparation for reuse that are separate from recycling targets.
- Give priority access to funding for circular SMEs and social economy actors with business models focusing on waste prevention and reuse in the national resilience and recovery plans. This will help reuse systems and circular practiCes to become the new normal, hence contributing significantly to waste prevention and pollution reduction. In the end, this will also reduce waste management costs for public authorities and generate much-needed local jobs.

* <https://zerowasteeurope.eu/2020/12/press-release-independent-analysis-reveals-reusable-packaging-up-to-85-more-climate-friendly-than-single-use/>

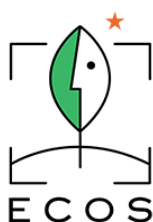
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