Civil society, consumer organisations and public waste management bodies call for ambitious preparation-for-reuse targets in the revised WEEE Directive to address Europe's electronic waste crisis

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Current patterns of production, consumption and disposal of electrical and electronic equipment (EEE) have severe environmental impacts, deplete scarce resources and contribute to Europe's dependency on imported raw materials. Ever more electronic equipment is being placed on the EU market, resulting in growing quantities of electronic waste: in 2023, more than 14.4 million tonnes of EEE were placed on the EU market – an increase of more than 89% since 2012.

Waste prevention and measures at the higher levels of the waste hierarchy are essential to reduce resource consumption, strengthen Europe's resilience, and build a circular economy within planetary boundaries. The WEEE Directive recognises the waste hierarchy and identifies waste prevention and reuse as its central objectives. Recital 6 states:

"The purpose of this Directive is to contribute to sustainable production and consumption by, as a first priority, the prevention of WEEE and, in addition, by the re-use, recycling and other forms of recovery [...]".

Nevertheless, the evaluation of the WEEE Directive demonstrates that the existing framework has not provided sufficient incentives to prioritise reuse and preparation for reuse over recycling. The latest numbers show that preparation for reuse stagnates currently at well below 2%.

Under the current Directive, preparation for reuse and recycling are combined within a single target. This undermines the waste hierarchy. Similarly, within extended producer responsibility (EPR) schemes, recycling is often prioritised because it is generally easier and cheaper than preparing products for reuse.

As a result, reusable equipment is prematurely recycled, while funding and access to suitable WEEE are diverted away from preparation-for-reuse activities – even though extending the lifetime of electronic equipment generally delivers greater environmental and social benefits.

Our call to EU policymakers

Against this backdrop, the signatories call on the European Commission, the European Parliament and Member States to ensure that the revised WEEE Directive creates strong incentives to prioritise reuse and preparation for reuse over recycling. To facilitate preparation for reuse, policymakers must ensure that the revised Directive:

1. introduces **separate, quantitative, and binding preparation-for-reuse targets**;

2. establishes a **progressively increasing target trajectory** based on reliable and harmonised data; and
3. makes producers/producer responsibility organisations (PROs) responsible for financing and achieving the targets.

1. Establish binding targets separately from recycling

The revised WEEE Directive must introduce binding preparation-for-reuse targets that are clearly separated from recycling and other recovery targets. Preparation for reuse must not be treated merely as an optional contribution towards meeting a combined recycling target.

The targets should apply to Member States and Member States should be obligated to translate these targets into enforceable obligations for producers and PROs. National authorities must be responsible for monitoring and enforcing compliance and missing the targets must lead to effective sanctions for producers/PROs (e.g., an empowerment for the competent authority to withdraw PRO licences) as well as Member States. Targets should be accompanied by local and regional implementation measures consistent with the proximity principle. This would help retain the environmental, economic, and social benefits of preparation for reuse within communities, while avoiding unnecessary transport. Harmonised and binding minimum requirements for EPR schemes should ensure that preparation for reuse is supported consistently across the EU. This should include consideration of relevant quality and safety standards, such as the EN 50625 series and EN 50614 where applicable. They should be reviewed regularly to support consumer trust, product safety, the wider adoption of reuse and high-quality reuse practices.

2. Make targets progressively more ambitious

Targets must increase over time and be subject to regular review. A progressive trajectory would provide long-term certainty, stimulate investment and continuously raise ambition. It would also prevent the initial targets from becoming a ceiling rather than a minimum level of performance.

3. Provide adequate and dedicated EPR financing

Producers and PROs must cover the full costs of activities necessary to achieve the targets, including collection, reuse-first sorting, storage, logistics, testing, cleaning, repair, refurbishment, reporting and awareness raising. EPR financing must be transparent and must ensure equal or preferential treatment for social economy and independent preparation-for-reuse operators. The French Social Reuse Fund and the close cooperation between PROs and social enterprises in Belgium provide valuable examples of how this can be achieved.

Advantages of separate preparation-for-reuse targets and national front-runners

Introducing separate, quantitative, and binding targets for preparation for reuse, distinct from recycling targets, would have various benefits, including:

- prevent reusable products from being prematurely recycled and ensure the practical application of the waste hierarchy;
- provide long-term certainty for investment in collection, sorting, testing, repair, and refurbishment infrastructure;
- strengthen cooperation between producers, PROs, public authorities, waste operators, and preparation-for-reuse organisations;

- improve informed consumer access to affordable, quality-assured second-hand equipment as well as spare parts;
- conserve products, components, and critical raw materials at their highest value; and
- ensure local value retention by creating local, long-term employment opportunities in the reuse sector, including for people at risk of socio-economic exclusion.

Recognising these advantages, a number of Member States, regions and cities have already introduced targets for reuse or preparation for reuse.[1] In the field of EEE and WEEE, Belgium's three regions – Brussels, Flanders and Wallonia – have introduced targets, while France and Spain have established national targets for reuse and preparation for reuse. These frameworks demonstrate that dedicated targets are both feasible and implementable.

The Belgian system also illustrates the importance of cooperation between EPR schemes and the social economy. Partnerships between Recupel and social-enterprise networks help direct suitable equipment towards preparation for reuse, support employment and skills development and have contributed to increasing the reuse rate by 10% compared to 2024. Such cooperation should not depend solely on voluntary agreements, however. The revised WEEE Directive must establish clear access rights, financing obligations and accountability mechanisms.

Existing national and regional approaches provide valuable lessons for the EU. The revised WEEE Directive must therefore build on these experiences by establishing harmonised definitions, calculation methods and reporting requirements, alongside binding minimum targets applicable throughout the EU.

Europe cannot recycle its way out of its growing electronic-waste crisis. Keeping products and components in use for longer must become a measurable and enforceable priority. Ambitious preparation-for-reuse targets, backed by access rights, adequate financing, and reuse-oriented collection systems, are indispensable for bringing the WEEE framework into line with the waste hierarchy and building a genuinely circular electronics sector.

[1] For a comprehensive overview of reuse and preparation for reuse targets implemented across EU Member States, see RREUSE report "Targets for Reuse and Preparing for Reuse in the European Union" (2025)

About the signatories

About the EEB

The European Environmental Bureau (EEB) is Europe's largest network of environmental citizens' organisations, standing for environmental justice, sustainable development, and participatory democracy. It represents over 185 members in over 41 countries.

Website: www.eeb.org

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About DUH

Environmental Action Germany (Deutsche Umwelthilfe – DUH) is a recognised German environmental and consumer protection organization, which has been campaigning for resource conservation and consumer interests since 1975. DUH is politically independent, non-profit and it campaigns on a national and European level. It is for example renowned for its role in uncovering the Diesel Scandal and in establishing a deposit system for non-refillable beverage containers in Germany. Within its Department Circular Economy, DUH promotes waste prevention, responsible consumption, and a sustainable economy.

Website: www.duh.de/englisch

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About ANEC

ANEC is the European consumer voice in standardisation, representing consumer interests in the development of technical standards and policies. ANEC works to ensure consumer safety, protection, sustainability and accessibility. ANEC advocates for standards that support more sustainable consumption and resource-efficient products, while protecting all consumers, especially the most vulnerable. It brings together consumer organisations and experts from 34 countries across Europe.

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About the European Remanufacturing Council

The European Remanufacturing Council (ERC) brings together businesses, trade associations and researchers across Europe's remanufacturing sectors. Through knowledge sharing and policy advocacy, it works to make remanufacturing, refurbishment and reconditioning a normal part of product life cycles, supporting a more circular economy.

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About Fair Resource Foundation

Fair Resource Foundation (FRF) is an environmental organisation working to end the throwaway economy. Through campaigns, research, policy advocacy and circular pilot projects, it promotes waste prevention, reuse and fairer resource use. Its goal is a society where everyone can thrive within the planet's limits.

Website: https://fairresourcefoundation.org

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About Municipal Waste Europe

Municipal Waste Europe is the European umbrella association representing municipalities responsible for waste management and their publicly owned waste management companies. It advocates for public responsibility for waste management as a service of general interest, protecting public health and the environment. Municipal Waste Europe promotes sustainable waste management and resource efficiency, taking local conditions into account.

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About RREUSE

RREUSE is Europe's largest network of social enterprises active in the circular economy, notably in the fields of re-use, repair and recycling.

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About ZWE

Zero Waste Europe (ZWE) is the European network of communities, local leaders, experts, and change agents working towards a better use of resources and the elimination of waste in our society. Zero Waste Europe connects and supports a vibrant network of 41 local and national NGOs from all around Europe sharing common values and objectives and working together for a zero waste future.

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