



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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Dear President,

The Commission would like to thank the Senat for its Opinion on the Circular Economy package {COM(2015) 593_594_595_596_614 final}.

The Commission welcomes the Senat's overall support for the package. The package establishes a concrete programme of measures to help European businesses and consumers make the transition to a stronger, more competitive and circular economy where resources are used in a more sustainable way. It provides incentives and tools to 'close the loop' of product lifecycles, ranging from more innovative and efficient ways of producing and consuming to higher levels of recycling and re-use. The transition to the circular economy model has the potential to create many jobs in Europe, while preserving precious and increasingly scarce resources and reducing environmental impacts of resource use.

These actions contribute to a number of EU priorities: job creation, economic growth, investment, industrial innovation, social fairness, climate change and global efforts to secure sustainable development.

The Opinion of the Senat on the previous waste legislative proposal – which was presented in 2014 and withdrawn in 2015 – provided an important contribution to the elaboration of the new Circular Economy package adopted in December 2015. The new proposals include ambitious yet realistic recycling and landfill reduction targets, calculated on a clearly defined and consistent basis. The new proposals also take better account of the differences in terms of waste management across the Member States.

Romania could reap significant benefits in terms of jobs and growth by stepping up its efforts to ensure a separate collection of waste, by expanding its sorting and recycling infrastructure, and from the full implementation of existing EU waste legislation.

In response to the more technical questions in the Opinion the Commission would like to refer the Senat to the attached annex.

The points made above and in the annex are based on the initial proposals presented by the Commission which are currently in the legislative process involving both the European Parliament and the Council in which your government is represented.

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The Commission hopes that these clarifications address the issues raised by the Senat and is looking forward to continuing our political dialogue in the future.

Yours faithfully,

*Frans Timmermans
First Vice-President*

*Karmenu Vella
Member of the Commission*

Annex

The Commission has carefully considered each of the issues raised by the Senat in its Opinion and is pleased to offer the following clarifications.

On recycling and landfill reduction targets:

In its new proposals, the Commission took better account of the differences between Member States as regards waste management. It is recognised that Member States such as Romania, which in 2013 had recycling rates for municipal waste below 20%, face greater implementation challenges. Therefore, the proposals foresee a possibility to obtain a five-year time-extension to reach the proposed recycling and landfill reduction targets.

On the proposed definition of municipal waste:

In response to the Senat's comments on the proposed definition of municipal waste, the Commission would like to stress that the definition is based on the outcome of a wide consultation. The Commission has proposed this definition in order to ensure common interpretation, facilitate compliance and enable more effective monitoring of the progress on the recycling and landfilling targets based on reliable and comparable data. The proposed definition is based on the definition used for statistical purposes by the European Statistical Office and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, on the basis of which Member States have been reporting data for several years.

On the definition of certain terms:

As regards the Senat's observations on the number of definitions used in the proposals to amend Directives 94/62/EC and 1999/31/EC, the Commission has proposed to align these definitions with those in Directive 2008/98/EC in order to ensure greater coherence in EU waste legislation. This alignment does not concern those definitions that are linked to specific substantial obligations in Directives 94/62/EC and 1999/31/EC that differ from those in Directive 2008/98/EC.

On reporting obligations:

With regard to the Senat's suggestion on reporting obligations, the Commission wishes to highlight that the purpose of these proposals is to reduce administrative burdens, notably by repealing obligations on implementation reports. It is also proposed to limit reporting from Member States to statistical data and to introduce a single entry point for all waste data. It should also be recalled that the existing provisions of Directive 2006/66/EC already comply with this objective.