



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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*Mr Liviu DRAGNEA
President of the Camera Deputaților
Palace of the Parliament
Str. Izvor nr. 2-4, sector 5
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Dear President,

The Commission would like to thank the Camera Deputaților for its Opinion on the Communication on the role of waste-to-energy in the circular economy {COM(2017) 34 final}.

The Commission welcomes the Camera Deputaților's overall support for the Communication. The transition towards a circular economy should provide Member States with good opportunities for economic growth and jobs while reducing residual waste to a minimum. Functional waste management systems, operating with the optimal amount of waste-to-energy capacity for non-recyclable waste, should contribute to establishing the right market conditions to boost quality recycling while reducing landfilling.

The Commission acknowledges the large differences between Member States as regards waste management performance, particularly with regard to the recycling of municipal waste. The waste proposals¹ under the circular economy package - which are currently in the legislative process - recognise this: Member States which in 2013 recycled less than 20% of their municipal waste, like Romania, should be given additional time to comply with the preparing for re-use and recycling targets established for 2025 and 2030. A range of EU financial support measures are available to Member States and private operators to facilitate the achievement of these objectives.

¹ The proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Directive 2008/98/EC on waste {COM(2015) 595 final}, the proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Directive 94/62/EC on packaging and packaging waste {COM(2015) 596 final}, the proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Directive 1999/31/EC on the landfill of waste {COM(2015) 594 final}, and the proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Directives 2000/53/EC on end-of-life vehicles, 2006/66/EC on batteries and accumulators and waste batteries and accumulators, and 2012/19/EU on waste electrical and electronic equipment {COM(2015) 593 final}.

To help ensure the transition towards a more circular economy and comply with the European Union's waste hierarchy, and in line with the EU Environmental Implementation Review Country Report², the Commission finds it important that Romania considerably steps up its efforts to ensure a separate collection of waste and builds the necessary sorting and recycling infrastructure. Should waste-to-energy capacity be needed for the treatment of non-recyclable waste, the Commission would encourage Romania to seek, within the country or in neighbouring countries, the technical options which can deliver the most amount of energy and materials back into the economy.

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

The Commission hopes that these clarifications address the issues raised by the Camera Deputaţilor and looks forward to continuing our political dialogue in the future.

Yours faithfully,

*Karmenu Vella
Member of the Commission*

² SWD(2017) 55 final.

ANNEX

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

On the need to enable the necessary market conditions for a Circular Economy, the Action Plan on the Circular Economy includes a number of actions that will target market barriers in the following priority areas: plastics, food waste, critical raw materials, construction and demolition, biomass (e.g. wood) and bio-based products, as well as horizontal measures in areas such as innovation and investment.

In the case of wood, the Commission will promote the efficient use of bio-based resources through a series of measures including guidance and dissemination of best practices on the cascading use of biomass and support for innovation in the bioeconomy. As for plastics, the Commission plans to adopt by the end of this year a strategy on plastics in the circular economy, addressing issues such as recyclability, biodegradability, the presence of hazardous substances of concern in certain plastics, and marine litter. In addition, the Commission is proposing, in the legislative proposals on waste, more ambitious targets for the recycling of plastic and wood packaging.

As regards strengthening the separate collection of waste, the Action Plan acknowledges that higher recycling rates are often limited, inter alia, by administrative capacity, and a lack of investment in separate collection and recycling infrastructure. The new legislative proposals on waste take account of these obstacles by combining long-term and interim targets with the possibility for time-extensions for countries that face the biggest challenges in stepping up separate collection and recycling, while requiring an implementation strategy to ensure that progress is made and that implementation gaps are tackled in time.

The Commission is also committed to providing technical assistance to Member States experiencing difficulties in implementation and to facilitating the exchange of best practices with countries and regions that have successfully improved their waste management. The Commission has already launched a number of compliance promotion initiatives to ensure better implementation of EU waste legislation, including on municipal and hazardous waste and separate collection, and to raise awareness at national level. The ongoing close cooperation with Member States will be stepped up in the future and will better link waste legislation with wider actions in support of the circular economy.

Concerning existing incentives for professional training systems at EU level, the Commission would like to inform the Camera Deputaţilor about the Sector Skills Alliances calls under the Erasmus+ Programme. Sector Skills Alliances are transnational projects that aim to identify existing and emerging skills needs for professions in specific sectors and to strengthen the exchange of knowledge and best practices between education, training institutions and the labour market.