



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

*Brussels, 28.06.2016*

*C(2016) 4021 final*

*Dear Chair,*

*The Commission would like to thank the Riksdag for its Opinion on the Communication "Closing the loop – An EU action plan for the Circular Economy" {COM(2015) 614 final}.*

*The Circular Economy 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 the environmental impacts of resource use.*

*These actions will 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 Commission welcomes the Riksdag's support for the transition to a circular economy, particularly as regards the measures foreseen in the action plan supporting enhanced resource efficiency through public procurement measures.*

*The Commission also notes the Riksdag's concerns as regards the ambition of the proposed Circular Economy package, non-toxic cycles, landfill and marine litter. The Commission would like to stress that the new package is more comprehensive than its predecessor as it addresses the whole product life-cycle and not only waste management. Most of its ambition comes from the action plan which foresees concrete actions for this Commission's term of office. These include measures in areas such as fertilisers, food waste, plastics, water reuse, chemicals, green public procurement, consumption and innovation. These actions are backed by operational support, including financially through the European Structural and Investment Funds, Horizon 2020 and the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI).*

*Ms Matilda ERNKRANS  
Chairman of the Environment  
and Agriculture Committee  
SE – 100 12 STOCKHOLM*

*cc. Mr Urban AHLIN  
Speaker of the Riksdag  
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*With regard to the waste legislative proposals, the Commission would like to stress that the revised proposals provide more ambition by putting a greater emphasis on the higher echelons of the waste hierarchy, by reinforcing rules on waste prevention, promoting re-use activities and introducing separate collection of bio-waste. The proposals also provide landfill restrictions to separately collected waste and a binding landfill reduction target. They also include ambitious yet realistic recycling targets as an important contribution to the circular economy, calculated on a clearly defined and consistent basis. At the same time, the new proposals take better account of differences between Member States as regards waste management.*

*In response to the more technical questions in the Opinion, the Commission would like to refer the Riksdag to the annex to this letter.*

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

*Yours sincerely,*

*Frans Timmermans  
First Vice-President*

*Karmenu Vella  
Member of the Commission*

## ANNEX

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

### *On non-toxic cycles and waste and products containing hazardous substances:*

*The Commission acknowledges the Riksdag's view on the need to work on the interface between legislation on chemicals, products and waste with other actions in order to enable a transition to a non-toxic circular economy. Work is already in progress to deliver an analysis in 2017 and propose measures to improve the interface between these sectorial regulations, including ones to reduce the presence and improve the tracking of chemicals of concern in products.*

*Plastics are of a particular concern. Therefore, the action plan envisages the adoption of a strategy on plastics in 2017 addressing the challenges posed by plastics throughout the value chain, in particular their recyclability, biodegradability and the presence of hazardous substances of concern in certain plastics.*

*In the legislative proposals on waste, the Commission envisages to provide a more active role to the competent authorities in determining the end-of-waste status as a result of a recovery operation to promote industrial symbiosis while at the same time safeguarding the objectives of the environmental policy. With regard to hazardous waste, the proposals envisage the establishment of an electronic registry covering its production and management.*

### *On waste landfilling:*

*The Commission's proposals restrict landfilling of all separately collected waste, including separately collected bio-waste, because this waste is suitable for recycling and should, therefore, be subject to recovery operations. The proposals also set a binding landfill reduction target to be met by 2030. The Commission sees the proposed landfill reduction target as an important step to achieve the transition to a circular economy model where the amount of waste that is not fed back into the economy is minimised. The action on landfilling is clearly synergetic with and supportive of the proposed long-term targets on recycling.*

### *On marine litter:*

*The Commission notes that the EU and its Member States have committed to the global target set by the UN Sustainable Development Goals of significantly reducing marine litter. The Circular Economy package includes initiatives which address or will address the main land-based sources of marine litter, in particular plastics. A number of existing instruments are available to help achieve those objectives. For example, the Marine Strategy Framework Directive 2008/56/EC<sup>1</sup> and Regional Sea Conventions include the development of marine litter reduction plans. Moreover, financing is made available through the Fishing for Litter initiatives and Horizon 2020 through the 'The Oceans for Tomorrow' programme.*

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<sup>1</sup> OJ L 164, 25.6.2008.

On the textiles sectors:

*Although the textiles sector is not identified as a priority area, the sector can benefit from many of the actions foreseen in the action plan. Furthermore, in the context of the waste legislative proposals, the Commission recognises the value of keeping these resources in the economy and has, therefore, proposed that Member States take specific measures to promote re-use systems for textiles.*

On reviewing date marking on food products:

*The EU action plan for the Circular Economy envisages numerous measures to improve consumers' access to information about food products, in particular measures on the reliability, accuracy and clarity of such information. Furthermore, the Commission will also examine ways of promoting better use and understanding of date marking by the various actors in the food chain in 2017.*