



# EU Construction and Demolition Waste Management Protocol

## Executive summary

Based on volume, Construction and Demolition (C&D) waste is the largest waste stream in the EU. In a lifetime, an average European citizen generates not less than 160 tons of C&D waste, an amount which is increasing over time. Where to put all this waste? In our garden? Or in our neighbour's garden? And if we do not have a garden? Perhaps there are better solutions...

Recycling and re-using of C&D waste is the answer. Proper management of C&D waste and recycled materials – including the correct handling of hazardous waste - can have major benefits in terms of sustainability and the quality of life. But it also can provide major benefits for the EU construction and recycling industry, as it boosts demand for C&D recycled materials.

The Waste Framework Directive 2008/98/EC establishes a target of 70% of C&D Waste to be recycled by 2020. However, with the exception of a few Member States, only about 50% of C&D waste is being recycled. The good news is that some Member States have already developed and implemented a framework which leads to a recycling rate of up to 90%. Indeed, there are many good practices in Europe and beyond to learn from.

However, one of the common hurdles to recycling and re-using C&D waste in the EU is the lack of confidence in the quality of C&D recycled materials. There is also uncertainty about the potential health risk for workers using recycled C&D materials. This lack of confidence reduces and restricts the demand for C&D recycled materials, which inhibits the development of C&D waste management and recycling infrastructures in the EU.

This Protocol fits within the Construction 2020 strategy<sup>1</sup>, as well as the Communication on Resource Efficiency Opportunities in the Building Sector<sup>2</sup>. It is also part of the more recent and ambitious Circular Economy Package that the European Commission has adopted.<sup>3</sup> Its overall aim is to increase confidence in the C&D waste management process and the trust in the quality of C&D recycled materials. This will be achieved by:

- a) Improved waste identification, source separation and collection;
- b) Improved waste logistics;
- c) Improved waste processing;
- d) Quality management;
- e) Appropriate policy and framework conditions.

This Protocol has been developed for application in all 28 Member States of the European Union and has the following target groups of stakeholders:

- Industry practitioners; construction sector (including renovation companies and demolition contractors), construction product manufacturers, waste treatment, transport and logistics as well as recycling companies;
- Public authorities at local, regional, national and EU levels;
- Quality certification bodies for buildings and infrastructure;
- Clients of C&D recycled materials.

The Protocol includes good practices from across the EU that can be sources of inspiration for both policy makers and practitioners. It also includes an overview of definitions and a checklist for practitioners.

This initiative has been launched by the European Commission – the DG for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (DG GROW), but the project is built on the active participation and contribution from industry and national government officials according to the tripartite principle of the Construction 2020 initiative.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Strategy for the sustainable competitiveness of the construction sector and its enterprises, COM (2012) 433, see <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2012:0433:FIN:EN:PDF>

<sup>2</sup> COM (2014) 445 final, see <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/eussd/pdf/SustainableBuildingsCommunication.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Adopted 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2015, see [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/circular-economy/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/circular-economy/index_en.htm)

<sup>4</sup> The Construction 2020 initiative is based on the EC Strategy for the sustainable competitiveness of the construction sector and its enterprises (COM(2012)433 final)