Landfill ban for recyclables is a step forward…

…but the Circular Economy Package misses six essential points

Today the European Commission adopted the EU Circular Economy Package (“Towards a circular economy: A zero waste programme for Europe). The Confederation of European Paper Industries (CEPI) welcomes the inclusion of landfill bans for recyclables by the Commission, but regrets that the package omits six essential points including incineration restrictions.

1. Still no restrictions on incineration of recyclable paper
CEPI welcomes the fact that the Circular Economy Package includes landfill restrictions for recyclables as of 2025, but regrets that incineration for the same materials is not restricted. Despite the existing capacity for reprocessing paper in Europe up to 10 million tonnes of paper is currently being landfilled or incinerated in Europe.

2. Targets based on robust data and robust methods
CEPI is concerned about the way the Commission sets new recycling targets and a new calculation method without having tested them on current recycling performances first. Recycling targets in Europe should not discriminate between competing materials and the level of ambition for recycling targets needs to be set realistically.

“The new recycling targets are based on the best performing EU member states although recycling rates from these states are not comparable. Current calculation methods for recycling vary between countries.” explains Jori Ringman, CEPI Recycling, Product and Environment Director.

3. Collection targets
The paper industry calls for EU-wide minimum collection targets for recyclable materials to support high recycling and re-use targets in Europe. As EU legislation already obliges EU member states to collect at least paper, metal, plastic and glass separately by 2015, collection targets would provide an incentive to fulfil this requirement and secure a constant supply of raw materials for the European economy.

4. Recycling based on proximity
The Circular Economy Package should include a proximity principle to ensure that recycling will take place as close as possible to the consumption and collection points in Europe. This will enhance the circular economy by guaranteeing a faster recycling cycle and delivering more value with less input.
5. Recycling ‘Made in Europe’
To advance the circular economy, the definition of recycling in Europe needs to be revised. At the moment, the definition is vague and does not support good quality data collection nor reprocessing of materials.

6. A stronger focus on renewability
In nature, circularity equals renewability. The European paper industry regrets that the Commission does not acknowledge renewability of materials as a solution for the circular economy.

As the European paper industry is based on renewable raw materials and accomplished a world record paper recycling rate of almost 72% in 2013, it is at the core of the circular economy.

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Note

CEPI aisbl - The Confederation of European Paper Industries
The Confederation of European Paper Industries (CEPI) is a Brussels-based non-profit organisation regrouping the European pulp and paper industry and championing industry’s achievements and the benefits of its products. Through its 18 member countries (17 European Union members plus Norway) CEPI represents some 515 pulp, paper and board producing companies across Europe, ranging from small and medium sized companies to multi-nationals, and 780 paper mills. Together they represent 23% of world production.

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