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Circular Economy Newsletter

What happened in the past month

From "green steel" to packaging, EoW criteria for plastics, and a wake-up call on Europe's textile crisis—November was packed with action.

| EuRIC's EU policy monitoring



Metals

As the debate on "green steel" dominates Brussels, **EuRIC has released its position** to emphasise that recycled steel, not just green steel defined by emissions reductions, is what truly matters. In our position paper, we argue that recycled steel is Europe's most cost-effective and scalable route to a competitive, low-carbon economy. It drives job creation, enhances strategic autonomy, cuts emissions, and strengthens Europe's industrial base. Read our position paper, where we explore the future of Europe's steel industry and call for bold measures to prioritize recycled steel, ensuring both environmental and economic resilience.

[Read our position paper on recycled steel](#)



ELVs

The Hungarian Presidency has circulated a new compromise text on the End-of-Life Vehicle (ELV) Regulation for discussion at the upcoming Environment Council on 17 December 2024. Key points include:

- **Recycled Content (RC):** No percentage targets for recycled plastics are defined, but a review clause addresses availability, prices, and the potential role of bio-based plastics.
- **PST Requirements:** No updates compared to the previous Council position.
- **Substances of Concern:** New provisions address their presence in vehicles and their impact on recycling.
- **EPR Schemes:** Changes emphasise dialogue between Producer Responsibility Organizations (PROs) and stakeholders rather than mandating representation of waste management in EPR governing bodies.



Construction & Demolition

On 5 November, the Council of the European Union **adopted** the **Construction Products Regulation (CPR)**, which harmonises EU rules for marketing construction products, promotes their free movement within the single market, and supports the circular economy and technological innovation. The new regulation updates existing EU rules, introduces digital product passports for better consumer information, and facilitates green choices. It also enables the adoption of new standards and empowers the Commission to create common specifications when standardisation processes are blocked.

Following the Council's approval, the regulation will be signed by the Presidents of the European Parliament and Council, published in the EU Official Journal, and enter into force 20 days later. Standards-related provisions will apply one month after entry into force, with other provisions becoming applicable one year later. Penalty-related provisions will take effect two years after entry into force.

yet new building materials contain little recycled content. With the upcoming EU Circular Economy Act, we have a unique opportunity to change this. On 6 November, EuRIC together with ANPAR Associazione Nazionale Produttori Aggregati Riciclati and ECOMONDO - ITALIAN EXHIBITION GROUP, highlighted the untapped circularity potential to transform the construction sector through decisive EU action! From setting mandatory recycled content targets to establishing efficient EPR schemes and bringing forward green public procurement and taxation measures, our event delivered a strong policy message.

Read the key takeaways



Packaging

On 25 November, ENVI lawmakers rubber-stamped the **preliminary agreement** on the Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation (PPWR), marking a major step toward achieving true circularity—a development wholeheartedly welcomed by EuRIC. The PPWR corrigendum text has also officially received the European Parliament's endorsement and will now be transmitted to the Council of the EU for final ratification at the ministerial level, followed by its publication in the EU Official Journal.



Ships

At the end of their operational life, the vast majority of vessels are today treated outside the EU, most often in countries where environmental and social standards fall short. This practice not only poses serious risks to human health and the environment, but also results in the loss of valuable resources, particularly of steel scrap. To address these issues, **EuRIC's Ship Recycling Group (ESRG) has released a manifesto**, calling for robust measures to strengthen the ship recycling sector in the EU, ensuring more vessels are being recycled in safer and sustainable conditions and contributing to the EU's circular economy objectives



Ecodesign

ESPR Product Priorities: The European Commission's Joint Research Centre published on 12 November the **final report** on potential new product priorities for the Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation. As a result of the analysis, eleven final products (Textiles and footwear, Furniture, Tyres, Bed mattresses, Detergents, Paints and varnishes, Lubricants, Cosmetics, Toys, Fishing gears, Absorbent hygiene products), seven intermediate products (Iron and steel, Commodity chemicals, Non-ferrous, non-aluminium metal products, Aluminium, Plastic and polymers, Pulp and paper, Glass) and three horizontal requirements (Durability, Recyclability, Recycled content) are identified as potential priorities for the next steps of preparation of the first ESPR Working Plan.

The Commission was seeking applications (deadline passed on 5 December) to select members and observers for the group, apart from representatives of Member States' authorities and other public entities. These will include individuals representing common interests and organisations. Member States' authorities and public entities will be appointed directly by the Commission.



Chemicals

Sweden, backed by Denmark, Finland, Luxembourg, and Norway, has urged a REACH regulation revision focused on banning harmful substances in consumer products through a "generic" risk-based approach. Their position, outlined in a **note** shared on 27 November, will be discussed at the Environment Council on 17 December. This contrasts with the European Commission's recent shift toward "simplifying" REACH rather than pursuing a toxic-free environment. Diverging views on the approach were evident during the October Council discussions on the EU chemical strategy.



Textiles

EuRIC Textiles, Decathlon and FEAD have joined forces to urge EU negotiators to swiftly agree on the WFD revision and implement effective EPR schemes, strengthening Europe's circular textile economy. In a [joint position paper](#) we stress that the ongoing revision of the WFD provides a unique opportunity to ensure more harmonisation within the EU and to improve competitiveness within the sector. This is especially important as Europe's textile sorting and recycling industry is facing an unprecedented crisis.

[Read our joint position here](#)

[Read our press release](#)



Plastics

End-of-Waste criteria for plastics: The Joint Research Center has published its long-awaited [technical proposals for EU-wide end-of-waste criteria for plastics](#). It is now time for the European Commission to accelerate the adoption of harmonised EoW criteria for plastics to create a strong single market for recycled materials. The publication is particularly important as the absence of a consistent legal framework on end-of-waste for certain waste streams creates uncertainty for waste operators and for entities trading and using secondary raw materials. The implementation of EU-wide end-of-waste criteria can address these disparities between Member States and across different actors in the value chain, ultimately increasing the uptake of high quality secondary raw materials in manufacturing processes.

Microplastics pollution: The Council of the European Union has published a [revised Presidency compromise text](#) aimed at preventing plastic pellet losses and reducing microplastic pollution. The compromise, proposed by the Hungarian Presidency, emphasises the need for safe and responsible handling of plastic pellets throughout the entire supply chain to prevent environmental losses. It outlines requirements across various stages, including production (including recycled materials), processing, master

Plastics Recyclers Roadmap: EuRIC's plastics recycling branch (EPRB) has issued a roadmap guiding policymakers on exactly what's needed to save the industry and protect circularity, as the latter is grappling with low demand and unfair competition from third countries.

[Read our roadmap](#)



Other EU files

New EU Commission gets the EP's nod: Ursula von der Leyen's new European Commission was approved by Parliament on 27 November, with 370 votes in favor, fewer than in 2019. Key priorities include ecological transition and competitiveness. The Commission's first major initiative, a "compass for competitiveness," is planned for early 2025, including a "clean industry pact" within the first 100 days, von der Leyen told the Parliament. Simplification of EU legislation will also be addressed through "omnibus" legislation to streamline compliance and reduce complexity.

Polish Presidency of the Council: Poland will hold the Presidency of the Council of the EU starting on 1 January. The [provisional schedule](#) of meetings published by Contexte includes two Environment Council meetings: one on 27 March in Brussels and another on 17 June in Luxembourg. Additionally, Poland plans to host an informal meeting of EU ministers on 28 and 29 April.

Highlights



How will the EU Waste Shipment Regulation (WSR) impact the future supply of recovered paper from Europe? Julia Ettinger, EuRIC's Secretary General addressed this critical question at the inaugural 1st ASEAN Pulp & Paper Summit on 13 November 2024 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

The summit provided a key platform for industry leaders to explore market trends, paper and paperboard supply and demand, and the role of recycling in a circular economy. Julia's insights helped shed light on how these EU regulations could shape the future of the paper industry globally.



Highlights from the partner association meeting prior to the Bureau of Middle East Recycling (BMR) Conference in Dubai. A fantastic opportunity to bring together association leaders and BMR board members to discuss the future of recycling.



site visit at the Belgian Scrap Terminal - BST facility in Willebroek with ENVI rapporteur for the EU Vehicles Regulation, Jens Gieseke (EPP).

BST showcased how end-of-life vehicles (ELVs) can be recycled into valuable resources through advanced technologies like magnetic sorting, optical sorting, dry separation, and AI.

Upcoming Events

SAVE THE DATE

FROM VISION TO ACTION:
IMPLEMENTING
EU WASTE LEGISLATION

04 FEBRUARY 2025
EESC - BRUSSELS

HIGH LEVEL CONFERENCE

CCRE CEMR

EURO CITIES

mwe MUNICIPAL WASTE EUROPE

CEWEP

FEAD

EuRIC

European Economic and Social Committee

EuRIC is co-hosting a high-level event, **“From Vision to Action: Implementing EU Waste Legislation,”** alongside **FEAD, CEWEP, MWE, CEMR, Eurocities,** and the **EESC.** This full-day event will take place on **4 February 2025** at the EESC in Brussels and will run from **09:00 to 17:30.**

shared in the coming weeks.

[Register here](#)



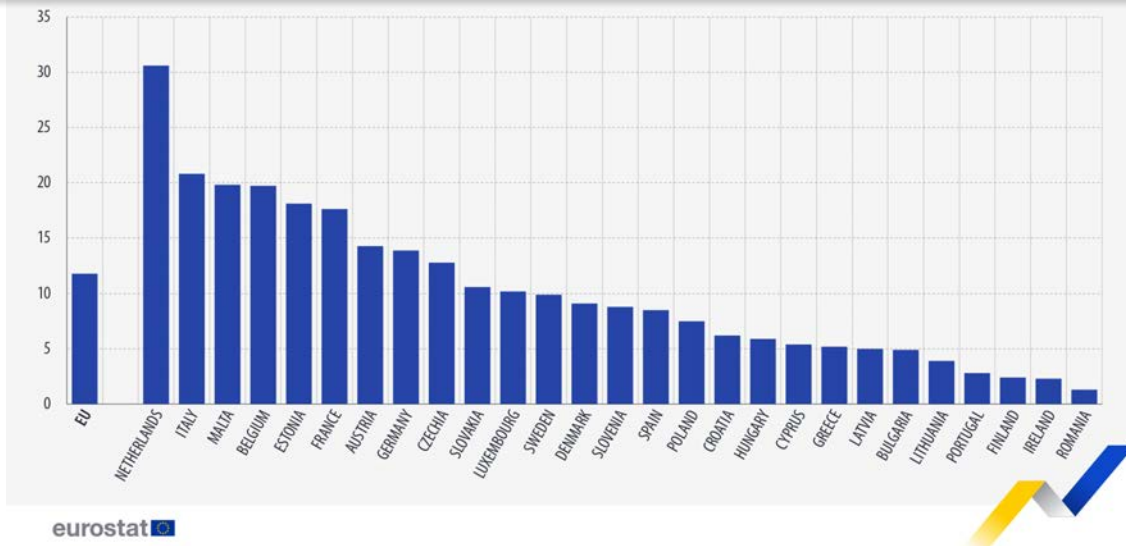
EuRIC Textiles is organising a high-level event on 27 March 2025, in Brussels, focusing on the future of the EU textiles reuse and recycling sector.

This in-person event will bring together new MEPs, European Commission officials, environment attachés from EU Member States, and key stakeholders from the textiles circular value chain. The event will include the formal presentation of the EuRIC Textiles Manifesto and feature discussions on accelerating the transition to a circular fashion system, technological innovation, and improving the EU's second-hand and recycled textiles markets.

Stay tuned for the detailed agenda, and join us to explore how to drive circular solutions and global trade optimisation in the textiles sector!

[More details here](#)

| Interesting reads



Eurostat has **published** its 2023 data on the circular material use rate (CMUR), revealing that 11.8% of materials used in the EU came from recycling—the highest share recorded to date. This represents a 0.3% point increase from 2022.

The Netherlands (30.6%), Italy (20.8%), and Malta (19.8%) achieved the highest circularity rates, while Romania (1.3%), Ireland (2.3%), and Finland (2.4%) had the lowest. Metal ores had the highest circularity rate at 24.7%. The EU aims to double this rate by 2030 under its Circular Economy Action Plan.

OECD Publications • Trade implications of upstream circular economy policies

Trade implications of upstream circular economy policies

Working paper
View all

OECD Trade and Environment Working Paper • October 2024



The OECD has published a **working paper** on the trade implications of upstream circular economy policies, which focus on improving product sustainability through measures like phasing out hazardous substances, enhancing recyclability, and promoting durability and repairability. While these policies are gaining attention, their impact on international trade has been less explored compared to downstream issues like waste trade. The paper examines both potential synergies (e.g., making traded products more recyclable) and unintended consequences (e.g., regulatory fragmentation).

| EuRIC network updates



We're thrilled to welcome **Worn Again Technologies** as EuRIC's new Gold Sponsor! The UK-based company, a key player in advancing the circular economy, has been a valued EuRIC textiles partner. Now, we're entering a new era of collaboration!

Learn more about Worn Again Technologies [here](#).



HUMANA

With over twenty years of presence in Lithuania, Humana Lithuania has become not only leaders in affordable fashion but also a symbol of sustainable and eco-friendly consumption.

Learn more about HUMANA Lithuania [here](#).

| Updates from the CIMPA Project



> **CIMPA Final Event: Advancing the circularity of complex plastic films**

"Advancing circularity of complex plastic films" showcasing its innovative solutions for recycling multilayer plastic films from packaging and agricultural applications.

EuRIC co-hosted this event, as a work package leader in the CIMPA project, which unites 12 other partners from 5 countries, covering the entire value chain. By building on the research and policy insights from CIMPA, we aim to provide practical solutions that support EU efforts in promoting circularity in plastics.

Read the key takeaways



| **Sponsored Content**



Don't forget to register for IERC 2025 ! EuRIC will be there!

IERC 2025 is the leading event in the Circular Economy Electronics world. It brings together up to 500 international professionals from the entire electronics recycling value chain, from materials suppliers, collection organisations, OEMs, competent authorities to recyclers and re-use and repair organisations. An exhibition area with over 60 booths provides the perfect opportunity to reach key industry decision makers and to find out what's new in the global electronics recycling business.

Benefit from the early bird now! Register [here](#).

A dark blue graphic with white and light blue text. It features a circular portrait of Julia Ettinger on the left. The text on the right reads: "ierc2025", "Panel discussion:", "Complying with the Basel Convention from an industry perspective", and "January 22 -24, IERC 2025, Salzburg". At the bottom left, it says "Julia Ettinger (Moderator)", "Secretary General", and "European Recycling Industries' Confederation (EuRIC)". At the bottom right, it says "icm.ch".

ierc2025

Panel discussion:
**Complying with the Basel Convention
from an industry perspective**
January 22 -24, IERC 2025, Salzburg

Julia Ettinger (Moderator)
Secretary General
European Recycling Industries' Confederation (EuRIC)

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