

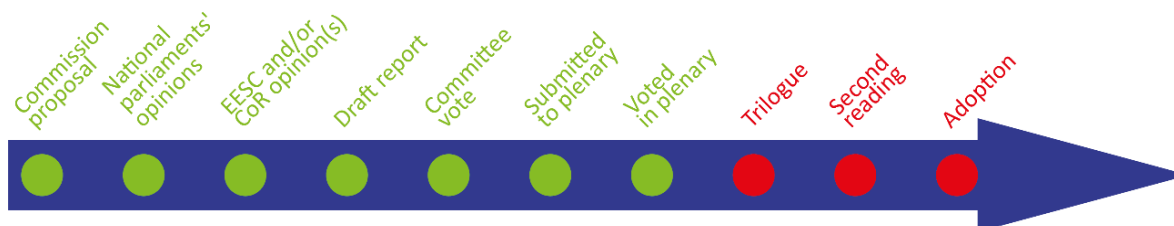
Waste framework directive: A more sustainable use of natural resources

OVERVIEW

Every year, 60 million tonnes of food waste and 12.6 million tonnes of textile waste are generated in the EU. On 5 July 2023, the European Commission tabled a proposal for a targeted revision of EU waste rules. Aimed at accelerating the EU's progress towards United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 12.3 (halving food waste at the retail and consumer level by 2030), the proposal would mean EU countries would have to reduce food waste by 10 % in processing and manufacturing, and by 30 % per capita, jointly at retail and consumption level, by 2030. The proposal also introduces extended producer responsibility requirements for the textile sector. These schemes would have to cover the costs of collecting textiles, shoes and textile-related products for re-use or recycling, along with transport and sorting, while also supporting research and development to improve sorting and recycling processes.

The European Parliament adopted its first-reading position on 13 March 2024, with 514 votes in favour, 20 against and 91 abstentions. Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) confirmed the higher binding waste reduction targets proposed by ENVI – from 10 % to 20 % in food processing and manufacturing, and from 30 % to 40 % per capita in retail, catering, food services and households – to be met at national level by 31 December 2030. However, this vote came too late to complete negotiations with the Council ahead of the European elections in June. It will therefore be for MEPs in the new Parliament to negotiate the final shape of the future legislation.

Proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Directive 2008/98/EC on waste		
<i>Committee responsible:</i>	Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI)	COM(2023) 420 final 5.7.2023
<i>Rapporteur:</i>	Anna Zalewska (ECR, Poland)	2023/0234(COD)
<i>Shadow rapporteurs:</i>	Dace Melbārde (EPP, Latvia) Heléne Fritzon (S&D, Sweden) Róża Thun und Hohenstein (Renew, Poland) Malte Galée (Greens/EFA, Germany) Marisa Matias (The Left, Portugal)	Ordinary legislative procedure (COD) (Parliament and Council on equal footing – formerly 'co-decision')
<i>Next steps expected:</i>	Trilogue negotiations	



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Members' Research Service

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Introduction

Tackling food waste represents a triple opportunity – for the climate, for food security and for the agri-food system sustainability.

Every year in the European Union (EU), nearly **60 million tonnes** of food are wasted. This represents 131 kilogrammes (kg) per person. Over half of all food waste is generated in households (53%). The processing and manufacturing sectors account for the second largest share (20%).

Then Vice-President of the European Commission [Frans Timmermans](#) argued 'If food waste were a Member State, it would be the fifth biggest greenhouse gas emitter in the EU. To waste food at this scale while more than 30 million Europeans cannot afford a proper meal every other day, and while hunger is again on the rise globally, is simply unacceptable'.

The associated market value of food waste in the EU amounts to €132 billion, while the costs of collection and treatment exceed €9 billion. Food waste also has a substantial environmental impact, accounting for 252 million tonnes of CO₂ equivalents or about 16% of the total greenhouse gas emissions from the EU food system (see Figure 1).

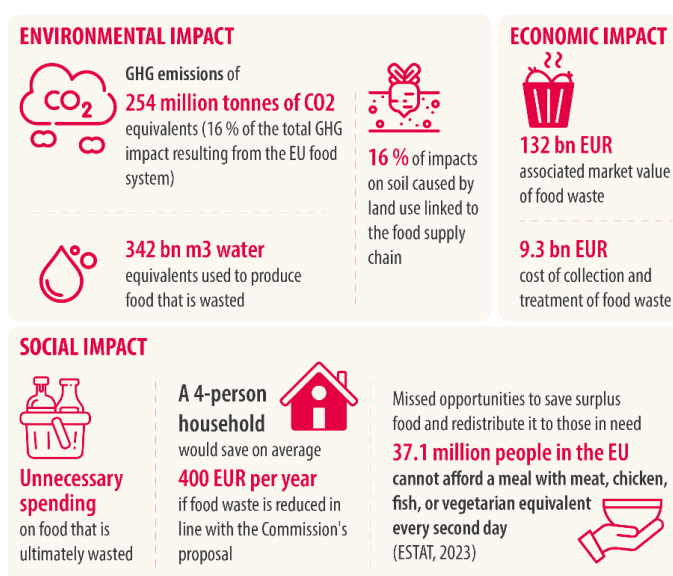
The consumption of textiles in the EU, most of which are imported, [accounts](#) on average for the fourth highest negative impact on the environment and on climate change and the third highest for water and land use. European Commission [data](#) show that the EU generates 12.6 million tonnes of textile waste per year. Clothing and footwear alone account for 5.2 million tonnes of waste, equivalent to 12 kg of waste per person every year.

Currently, only 22% of post-consumer textile waste is collected separately for re-use or recycling, while the remainder is often incinerated or landfilled. Every second somewhere in the world, a [truckload of textiles](#) is landfilled or incinerated.

There is significant potential to reduce textile waste and ensure that it creates further value by boosting its preparation for reuse and recycling (see Figure 2).

Up to 2.1 million tonnes of post-consumer [clothing and home textiles](#) are separately collected each year in the EU for recycling or sale on global reuse markets, representing approximately 38% of textiles placed on the EU market. The remaining 62% are thought to be discarded in mixed waste streams. Making producers responsible for the waste that their products create would be central to decouple textile waste generation from the growth of the sector.

Figure 1 – Food waste impacts



Source: [European Commission](#), 2023.

Figure 2 – Textile waste impact



Source: [European Commission](#), 2022.

Existing situation

Food waste

The [Waste Framework Directive](#) – last updated in 2018 – is the EU's legal framework for waste management. It sets the definitions related to waste management, waste, recycling and recovery. Article 4 of the directive establishes the five-step 'waste hierarchy', which is the foundation of EU waste management (see Figure 3). It builds an order of preference for managing and disposing of waste. The prevention of food losses and waste is a top priority in this hierarchy.

In addition, the directive reaffirmed EU countries' commitment to promoting the prevention and reduction of food waste in line with United Nations' [Sustainable Development Goal 12.3](#) – cutting per capita global food waste in half at the retail and consumer level, and reducing food losses along production and supply chains by 2030.

Importantly, the directive required the Commission to consider the feasibility of establishing an EU-wide food waste reduction target by 31 December 2023, to be met by 2030, on the basis of data reported by EU countries in accordance with a common methodology.

Last but not least, the directive required EU countries to take specific measures to reduce food waste, create incentives for the donation of unsold food that is still edible and raise consumer awareness of the meaning of '[use by](#)' and '[best before](#)' dates.

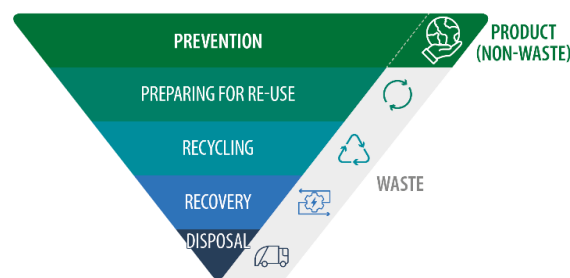
In 2019, the Commission adopted a [common EU methodology](#) to support EU countries in measuring food waste at each stage of the food-supply chain. Based on a common definition for food waste, the methodology aims to ensure coherent monitoring and reporting of food waste across the EU via a [common format for reporting](#) of these data. EU countries started collecting data on food waste in 2020 and reported on national food waste levels for the first time in 2022.

In 2020, the Commission published [guidance](#) on food safety management systems for food retail activities, including [food donations](#) (see text box) on the basis of two scientific opinions from the [European Food Safety Authority](#) from [2017](#) and [2018](#). The guidance provides food business operators with information on how to identify foods eligible for donation and details on the [feed use of food no longer intended for consumption](#). The clarification in the revised [EU hygiene legislation](#) is expected to further encourage the donation of food while also ensuring food safety.

More recently, in June 2022, the Commission provided [additional guidance](#) on the harmonised reporting of food waste and food surplus data collection, as well as on the current methodology for data gathering and calculation.

Sharing best practice and learning from food waste prevention to accelerate progress in EU countries is facilitated through the [EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste](#), the digital [EU Food Loss and Waste Prevention Hub](#) – which includes a section dedicated to EU countries' initiatives to reduce food losses and food waste – and the [European Consumer Food Waste Forum](#), bringing together [practical tools and solutions](#) to support consumer behavioural change effectively.

Figure 3 – Waste hierarchy



Source: [European Commission](#), 2023.

Food donation in the EU

In 2017, the Commission published [EU food donation guidelines](#) to facilitate the recovery and redistribution of safe, edible food to those in need. A 2020 [report](#) analysing national regulatory and policy measures in the EU concluded that the countries displaying the highest level of maturity of food redistribution frameworks are those with specific national guidelines, as is the case in Belgium, Czechia, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Portugal.

Making use of 'ugly' fruit and vegetables

In a bid to reduce food waste, a [delegated regulation](#) revising marketing standards for the fruit and vegetables sector will allow farmers to sell 'ugly' fruit and vegetables – those that do not meet EU marketing standards, because they are misshapen or have external defects but are still edible – directly to consumers from farm shops, roadside stands or local markets, as well as on to the food industry for processing.

The regulation, which will apply from January 2025, will also allow certain products affected by natural disasters or other exceptional circumstances to be sold, if safe to consume. The Commission [argues](#) that valorising 'ugly' produce 'could offer consumers more opportunities to buy fresh fruit and vegetables at more affordable prices and benefit producers active in short supply chains'.

In addition, the marketing standards relative to products for donations were also simplified, to reduce the administrative burden without affecting the quality of products.

Textile waste

The current Waste Framework Directive requires EU countries to set up schemes for the separate collection of textiles, at the latest by 2025. It also requires the European Commission to consider, by the end of 2024, whether targets for textile waste re-use and recycling should also be introduced.

The 2020 [new circular economy action plan](#) identified textiles as a key product value chain where urgent EU action is needed. It announced several initiatives that would help make production and consumption of textiles more sustainable. This vision was presented in the [EU strategy for sustainable and circular textiles](#), adopted in March 2022. The strategy is part of the circular economy package, which also includes a proposal for a [regulation on eco-design requirements for sustainable products](#) and a proposal for a [directive on empowering consumers for the green transition](#).

Recognising that the negative impact of the textile industry is rooted in its linear model with low rates of use, re-use and repair, the EU strategy envisages an ambitious agenda. In line with the strategy, by 2030, textiles on the EU market should be durable and recyclable, made up largely of recycled fibres, free of hazardous substances and produced in an environmentally friendly way while respecting social rights. Fast fashion should be 'out of fashion', and re-use and repair services should be widely available. Textiles should be collected at the end of their lifetime, and their incineration and landfill reduced to a minimum thanks to innovative fibre-to-fibre recycling. The strategy explains how new legislative proposals will help make textiles in the EU more sustainable by 2030.

The eco-design regulation would introduce a mandatory digital passport, which would, in the case of textiles, provide businesses and consumers with information, for instance, on harmful chemicals, repair, and fibre composition. In addition, the regulation would introduce an obligation for businesses to make public information on the destruction of unsold products, while the Commission would be given the authority to ban such practices.

The future [waste shipment regulation](#), proposed in 2021 and still under [discussion](#), closes the loop by restricting the export of textile waste.

More recently, in 2023, the Commission launched a review of the [Textile Labelling Regulation](#), which would, among other things, require better fibre identification to ease recycling.

Raising awareness about fast fashion, the '[Reset the Trend](#)' campaign (#ReFashionNow) encourages the public to take specific action on textile consumption.

Likewise, the [transition pathway for the textiles ecosystem strategy](#) and the [European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform](#) promote and foster cooperation between industry, public authorities, social partners and other stakeholders.

Parliament's starting position

To help EU countries to quantify food waste at each stage of the food supply chain, Parliament supported a [common EU methodology to measure food waste](#) in 2019. Based on a common definition for food waste, the methodology ensures coherent monitoring and reporting of food waste across the EU. More recently, in 2023, Members urged the Commission and EU countries to evaluate the amount of food waste generated by the [school scheme for fruit, vegetables, milk and dairy products](#), identify potential causes and provide guidance on curbing food waste associated with the scheme.

The discussion around the [support for strategic plans to be drawn up by EU countries under the common agricultural policy](#) was the occasion for Parliament to highlight the need to improve the response of EU agriculture to societal demands on food and health, including high-quality, safe and nutritious food produced in a sustainable way, to reduce food waste.

While welcoming the Commission's communication on an [EU strategy for circular and sustainable textiles](#) and the vision it sets out for 2030, Parliament stressed that the transition to sustainable and circular textiles requires a holistic approach, progressively covering the whole value chain of textile products. Members believe that there is an urgent need to ensure that textile products placed on the EU market are sustainable, reusable, repairable, recyclable and free from hazardous substances. Parliament insisted that textile sector growth must be fully decoupled from the use of resources and urged the Commission to propose binding EU targets for 2030 to significantly reduce the EU's consumption footprints.

While reacting positively to the Commission's [new circular economy action plan](#), Members pressed the Commission to propose binding EU targets for 2030 to significantly reduce the EU's raw material and consumption footprints and bring them within global limits by 2050. Parliament stressed that durable, circular, safe and non-toxic products and materials should become the norm in the EU and supported the Commission's proposal for the selection of seven sectors as main value chains, including textiles and food. Underscoring that EU countries should strengthen prevention and preparation for re-use, increase recycling and end landfill while minimising incineration, Members highlighted the key role of consumers in waste prevention and management and the need to facilitate citizen involvement in separate waste collection.

Parliament advocated strongly for textile recycling in the 2017 interinstitutional negotiations on the [Waste Framework Directive](#), as part of the circular economy package. Members [insisted](#) on setting up mandatory separate collection of textiles by 2020. However, while Parliament succeeded in including the obligation for separate collection in the final version of the [directive](#), during negotiations with the Council the deadline was deferred to 2025.

Packaging and labelling at the core of food waste

While packaging has a role to play in protecting food and extending shelf-life, many packaging practices increase wastefulness of both food and packaging. A 2022 [research project](#) show that wrapping fresh products in plastic packaging does not make them last longer, but rather adds to pollution and food waste.

The authors argue that when food products are sold loose, and the best-before dates removed, this could save more than 10 000 tonnes of plastic and about 100 000 tonnes of food from being wasted each year – the equivalent of 14 million shopping baskets of food.

[Packaging](#) often orients purchasing behaviour so that consumers buy more than needed, while oversized packaging and packaging items that are difficult to empty lead to the waste of edible food. Some 37 % of all food sold in the EU is wrapped in [plastic packaging](#).

The European Parliament is currently working on the revision of the [Packaging and Packaging Waste Directive](#), which aims to ensure the reuse and recycling of packaging and limit the use of disposable packaging, including through a ban on disposable paper and plastic containers for use inside restaurants.

Council starting position

In its 2016 [conclusions on food losses and food waste](#), the Council invited the Commission to develop guidelines clarifying EU legislation relating to food waste and to facilitate food donation and the use of by-products from the food chain in feed production without compromising food and feed safety. It also requested the establishment of a common EU protocol that defines food waste and how to quantify it at each stage in the food supply chain. The Council also required that progress made in implementing the measures recommended be assessed periodically, starting in 2018.

Agriculture and fisheries ministers regularly take stock of the progress made in putting their political commitments into practice. These assessments provide an overview of measures taken at national level to reduce waste, such as expanding the list of foods exempt from 'best before' labelling, encouraging food donation, and introducing new rules for waste classification.

They also monitor EU countries' adoption and implementation of the waste management hierarchy. A [first assessment](#) took place in 2018 under the Bulgarian Presidency. A [second periodic assessment](#) was carried out in 2020 under the German Presidency.

Preparation of the proposal

The [impact assessment](#) (IA) was informed by stakeholder consultation activities, including a collection of feedback on the [Commission's Inception IA](#) (1 October to 29 October 2021, 85 contributions), a [public consultation](#) (24 May to 24 August 2022, 731 contributions), a targeted consultation (April to May 2022) and interviews (April to May 2022). The Joint Research Centre provided scientific input throughout the impact assessment stages, including by publishing a [study](#) on textile waste and two studies on food waste ([Outcomes of consultation activities and analysis of efforts on food waste reduction](#) and [model-based analysis](#)).

European Citizens' panel on food waste

As a follow-up to the [Conference on the Future of Europe](#), the Commission announced a 'new generation' of citizens' panels to consult randomly selected citizens before certain key proposals at the European level. Food waste was selected amongst the first topics to be addressed, with the [panel](#) convened for three sessions held from December 2022 to February 2023. The outcome took the shape of 23 [recommendations](#). Although the panel was not part of the consultation activities, these recommendations will continue to support the Commission's work related to food waste prevention and have been considered in the preparation of the legislative proposal. The recommendations take a broad food systems approach, seeking to engage all actors and insist, in particular, on the importance of food education, pressing for its integration in school curricula to help build understanding and appreciation of the value of food from an early age. The recommendations will also serve as a guide to help EU countries achieve the future targets.

The IA consists of two stand-alone sections covering food and textile waste separately, as both issues have different specificities in terms of problems addressed, objectives set and options identified, that could not be tackled through the same approach.

After addressing the comments of the Regulatory Scrutiny Board in its initial [negative opinion](#) of 17 March 2023, and making the necessary modifications and additions, the IA received a [positive opinion](#) with reservations on 26 May 2023.

Concerning **food waste**, the proposed binding targets are expected to be effective in providing a strong policy impulse for EU countries to take action in reducing food waste at national level, while being proportionate and feasible. These targets should thus follow a step-wise approach, starting with a level lower than that set under the UN [SDGs](#), with a view to ensuring a consistent EU country response and tangible progress towards [SDG Target 12.3.1](#).

An interim review of progress made by EU countries, based on the annual monitoring of food waste levels, would allow for a possible adjustment of the targets to strengthen the EU's contribution and further align it with [SDG Target 12.3](#), as well as providing direction for progress beyond 2030.

On **textile waste**, the IA concludes that setting a 50 % target for separate collection would facilitate the concerted action of the textile value chain, re-use operators and waste management operators, to ensure the treatment of the textiles in line with the waste hierarchy, prioritising re-use and fibre-to-fibre recycling. It also highlights that such a target may need to be considered carefully in view of the current large variations in the separate collection rates across the EU and the overarching obligation in the Waste Framework Directive that such waste should be collected separately. In view of these considerations, as well as the strengthened rules on the organisation of separate collection through extended producer responsibility schemes (see next section) and the objective to reduce the administrative burden, the preferred option does not include a separate collection target.

The changes the proposal would bring

On 5 July 2023, the European Commission tabled a [proposal](#) for a targeted revision of EU waste rules to make producers responsible for the full lifecycle of textile products and set binding targets to cut food waste. The proposal also extends an exemption for 'gaseous effluents emitted into the atmosphere' so that it would cover CO₂ intended to be stored permanently underground.¹ The amendment would thus bring the Waste Framework Directive into line with the [Carbon Capture and Storage Directive](#).

Food waste

Food waste prevention measures

EU countries would have to act appropriately to prevent generation of food waste by way of carrying out public information campaigns, instilling behavioural change, encouraging food donation and supporting training.

Binding targets

The proposal would set national targets to cut food waste by 10 % for upstream processing and manufacturing and by 30 % (per capita) for restaurants, retail and households – both by 2030, based on 2020 levels. The measure is inspired by the [Target-Measure-Act](#) evidence-based approach, which helps achieve rapid and concrete results on food waste prevention. EU countries that already have methods for measuring food waste 'comparable' to those established by the 2019 EU [common methodology](#) could use an earlier baseline.

Common methodology

The new provisions would empower the Commission with the drafting of delegated acts setting out a common methodology and minimum requirements for EU countries to measure the amount of food waste generated.

Review

The Commission would have to review progress towards meeting the 2030 targets by December 2027, and could potentially extend them 'to other stages of the food supply chain' or consider setting new targets beyond 2030.

Textile waste

Extended producer responsibility schemes

The Commission is proposing rules to make producers responsible for the full lifecycle of textile products and to support the sustainable management of textile waste across the EU. The revision would supplement the directive's existing generic rules on extended producer responsibility (EPR) with a binding requirement for EU countries to set up EPR schemes for the textiles sector. These schemes would have to cover the costs of collecting textiles, shoes and textile-related products for re-use or recycling, along with transport and sorting, analysing textile content of mixed municipal waste, and providing information on the sustainable use of textiles.

Similarly, EPR schemes would have to support research and development to improve the sorting and recycling processes 'in particular, in view of scaling up fibre-to-fibre recycling' – rather than using textile fibre in lower value applications.

Producer responsibility organisations

EU countries would have to ensure that producer responsibility organisations (PROs) set up a separate collection system and transport of textiles and footwear to 'connected collection points'. The collection and transport containers would be offered free of charge, with a frequency proportionate to the area covered and the volume of products usually collected through those collection points. Similarly, the collection systems should cover the whole territory of any given EU country, taking population size and density and expected volume of waste into account and not just areas 'where the collection and subsequent management of those products is profitable'. Social enterprises would be allowed to continue operating separate systems or take part in the new system. The PROs would have to publish the information on the rate of separate collection of textiles and footwear online, at least once a year.

Eco-modulation

Lower EPR fees would be payable for textiles that meet future eco-design standards – expected by 2025 or 2026 – that could cover durability, reusability, reparability, fibre-to-fibre recyclability, absence of harmful substances and mandatory recycled fibre content. Under the proposal, the PROs would have to base EPR fees on the 'most relevant' eco-design criteria for preventing textile waste and treating it in line with the waste hierarchy. The Commission would also have the power to set criteria for lowering fees through implementing acts.

Register of producers

The proposal would require interlinked national registers for all textile producers selling products in the EU. The format and information requirements would be the same across national systems to allow for easy registration, and would be set by the Commission through implementing acts.

Online platforms

Online marketplaces would have to obtain a registration number in the relevant national register of producers and obtain 'self-certification' from textile producers that their products meet EPR requirements in the consumer's place of residence.

End of disguised and illegal exports

The EU leaves a substantial part of its environmental footprint in countries outside the EU, which receive textile waste that is often dumped or burned. Under the proposal, all separately collected textiles and footwear would have to be sorted before being shipped out of an EU country. Similarly, used textiles would have to carry information showing they are 'suitable for re-use'. The proposal also clarifies what constitutes waste and what is considered re-usable textiles, to put an end to the practice of exporting waste disguised as textiles for re-use to countries ill-equipped to deal with it. This will complement measures under the [proposal for waste shipments](#) (currently examined in [Parliament](#)), which aims to ensure shipments of textile waste would only take place when there are guarantees that the waste is managed in an environmentally sound manner.

Advisory committee

Mandatory consultation of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) and the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) is envisaged under the co-decision procedure. The EESC appointed Zsolt Kükedi (Diversity Europe - Group III, Hungary) as rapporteur. The [opinion](#) adopted at its plenary session on 25 October 2023, suggests that the reduction of food waste should only apply to preventable waste. The rapporteur also pleads for the exclusion from the definition of food waste of mature and unharvested food and proposes that farmers should be able to market less perfect but still edible products in line with [recommendation No 16](#) of the European citizens' panel on food waste.

Concerning textile waste, while supporting the mandatory introduction of an EPR, the rapporteur regrets the protection of micro-enterprises takes precedence over the polluter-pays principle. Other suggestions include setting up incentive/penalty schemes expected to trigger design changes (e.g. incentives to use yarns from fibre-to-fibre recycling processes, penalties for products containing substances of concern) and financing pollution clean-up costs in third countries through the EPR scheme.

The Committee of the Regions decided not to issue an opinion.

National parliaments

No [reasoned opinions](#) were submitted on the grounds of subsidiarity within the given deadline of 23 November 2023.

Stakeholder views²

The deadline for stakeholders' [feedback](#) on the Commission proposal was 22 November 2023. Of the 171 contributions received, over 60 % were from companies and business associations, 15 % from NGOs and nearly the same percentage from citizens.

The **European Consumer Organisation** (BEUC) considers that the food waste reduction targets should apply from farm to fork and therefore should comprise on-farm targets, including crops left unharvested. Similarly, the umbrella body believes the proposed targets are insufficient to reach UN SDG 12.3 by 2030. Stressing that confusion around date marking is one of the causes for consumer food waste and given that over half of food waste occurs in households, BEUC urges the Commission to table a proposal revising the EU food labelling rules. Lastly, the body requires that the role played by consumer organisations in raising awareness and informing consumers on food waste be better recognised and reflected in the proposal, including through access to funding for activities contributing to fighting food waste.

A similar sentiment is echoed by the **Safe Food Advocacy Europe**, which argues that the proposed targets, focusing on middle-chain actors and consumption stages, risk putting more burden on consumers compared to manufacturers and processors. The advocacy further laments 'a narrative in which cutting down food waste relies solely on a change in consumer behaviour' and thus 'falls short on a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics within food systems'.

The EU's largest farm lobby, **COPA-COGECA**, is pleased with the fact that the proposal does not envisage mandatory food waste reduction targets for the primary sector. COPA-COGECA underscores that the pursuit of the food waste reduction objectives should not 'compromise the EU food security or result in the replacement of domestic production with imports'.

Underlining that food waste prevention is an integral part of the internal environmental management system of its members, **FoodDrink Europe** requires that the Commission provide a common methodology and minimum quality requirements for the uniform measurement of food waste, based on the '[Food Loss and Waste Accounting and Reporting Standard](#)'. In addition, the organisation presses policymakers to take account of the adjustment costs for economic operators in the agri-food sector, in particular for small and medium-sized enterprises, and to minimise the negative impact on employment and income in the food-supply chain.

The working group founded by **Paris Good Fashion** and **Vestiaire Collective** (the former is an association gathering professional actors committed to accelerating change and transforming fashion company practices, the latter is Europe's biggest platform selling second-hand luxury fashion) urge policy-makers to set consistent EU-wide criteria for end-of-waste and by-product classification and to enhance the quality and homogeneity of textiles destined for reuse. Other requests include the introduction of quality standards for the composition of textile bales for export, the promotion of stronger accountability among sorting facilities and the need to pool the knowledge of PROs to support capacity building in third countries.

The **European Confederation of the Footwear Industry** argues that footwear re-use should not be recommended given that a 'shoe reflects the anatomy of a specific person as well as the weight (the latter affects specific parts of the shoe), and eventually does not fit with the anatomy of another person'. The confederation further maintains that compared to textiles, the technological maturity of footwear recycling lags behind due to the multiplicity of components, where a more sophisticated technology is required and therefore should not be prioritised at this stage.

Legislative process

European Parliament

In Parliament, the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI) is responsible for the file under the co-decision procedure. The rapporteur – Anna Zalewska (ECR, Poland) – presented her [draft report](#) on 24 October 2023. Parliament's Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development (AGRI) discussed its [draft opinion](#) the following day.

Aiming to extend the scope of the report **beyond food and textile waste**, the rapporteur proposes several major changes to the Waste Framework Directive, 'which pertain to noticeable shortcomings in its current functionality'. The rapporteur notably introduced an obligation for EU countries to put an end to illegal landfills, 'using all means available' and by 'sufficiently empower(ing) local authorities and relevant national authorities' environmental protection inspectorates'. Taking the example of Brussels, where rubbish sacks are left on the streets until collected, the rapporteur creates an obligation for EU countries to 'continuously improve municipal waste collection systems, with particular attention paid to cities'. Similarly, an obligation is imposed on producers of hazardous waste to label that waste in a way that makes it possible to determine the identity of the producer, and consequently, to ensure the producer's liability in the event the waste is abandoned.

The rapporteur also considers a potential broadening of recycling activities through analysis of 'technologies for producing alternative fuels'. Based on such analysis – to be provided by 31 December 2025 – the Commission is expected to put forward a legislative proposal to change the definition of recycling to include the production of fuel products from waste. Similarly, the draft report includes an amendment that would allow EU countries to encourage the use of bio-waste to generate biofuels, biogas, and alternative fuels to avoid food waste generation, provided the waste hierarchy principle is applied.

Concerning the binding **food waste reduction targets**, the rapporteur proposes to push them back to 2035, instead of 2030, as initially envisaged by the European Commission, maintaining them at 10 % for food processing and manufacturing and 30 % for retailers, restaurants and households. Similarly, the rapporteur suggests pushing back the reference year against which the reductions are measured by five years to 2025, arguing that 2020 was the first year of the pandemic, with restaurants and food services largely closed.

The draft report features a new concept – '**food wastage**' – defined as 'food that has been prepared for consumption, but which has instead been discarded and as a result become waste'. Closely linked to this and considering that luxury establishments – such as yachts, cruises, private planes, casinos and hotels – 'disproportionately cause more food waste, whilst having feasible capacities to address this', the rapporteur requires EU countries to set stricter provisions, focusing on 'those establishments with more obvious capacity for change'. In contrast, the rapporteur proposes to exempt farmers from the measures aimed at preventing the generation of food waste, arguably, to prevent them from falling under the processing and manufacturing provisions for an activity that is not their predominant one (for example producing apple juice from own apples).

Concerning **textile waste**, the rapporteur proposes to have separate collection points for used clothes and waste clothes, to strengthen waste prevention and encourage re-use and recovery. Importantly, the rapporteur provides for a 2040 indicative EU-wide textile waste reduction target to be set by the Council by 31 December 2030.

Over 500 [amendments](#) were tabled to the report.

On 14 February 2024, ENVI members [backed](#) more ambitious **food waste reduction targets** in adopting a heavily amended [report](#) by 72 votes to none, with three abstentions. MEPs want to [increase](#) the 2030 binding reduction targets from 10 % to 20 % in food processing and manufacturing, and from 30 % to 40 % per capita in retail, catering, food services and households, compared to the annual average generated between 2020 and 2022. These targets should be achieved at national level by 30 December 2030.

Instead of a review in 2027 to set a target to halve food waste by 2030, the text provides for the Commission to assess the situation and present appropriate legislative proposals to introduce higher targets for 2035 (at least 30 % and 50 % respectively). The report moreover urges EU countries to promote clearer date marking on food so that people do not throw away products that are past their 'best before' date but perfectly safe to eat, because they confuse them with the 'use by' date, denoting a potential risk to health to consume the food after that date.

Concerning **textile waste**, MEPs included in the list of products falling within the EPR scheme some non-household products such as carpets and mattresses, and provided for the monitoring of exported used textiles. MEPs also want EU countries to set up EPR schemes 18 months after the directive comes into force and for Member States to ensure the separate collection of textiles for re-use and recycling by 1 January 2025.

On 13 March 2024, Parliament adopted its first-reading [position](#) with 514 votes in favour, 20 against and 91 abstentions. MEPs broadly backed a raised headline target for reducing food waste by 31 December 2030, by fully endorsing the ENVI committee's stance without further amendments.

However, this vote came too late to complete negotiations with the Council before Parliament's last plenary session of this term ahead of the European elections in June. It will therefore be for the newly elected Parliament to negotiate the final shape of the future legislation.

Council

In the Council, examination of the proposal is being carried out in the [Working Party on the Environment](#). It was presented under the Spanish Presidency on 12 July 2023. During the Agriculture and Fisheries Council meeting of 23 October 2023, ministers held an exchange of views on the proposal. The Belgian Presidency dedicated six technical meetings to detailed discussions of the proposal. EU countries expressed overall positive reactions towards its objectives, with regard to both food and textile waste.

While the European Commission's proposal was welcomed unanimously at the [Environment Council](#) of 25 March 2024, a balance still needs to be struck on a number of points.

It was noted that the proposal does not set a reduction target for primary production. The review due to be conducted by the end of 2027 can look into this issue and extend the targets to other stages of the food supply chain.

Regarding the proposed **food waste reduction targets**, the discussions explored potentially increased or decreased target levels upon various calls made by EU countries. The issue of non-edible food waste, included in the proposed targets, featured prominently in the discussions. Progress on this issue is impossible at this stage owing to the lack of an agreed definition of edible food waste and the lack of the relevant data for 2020 and 2021.

Similarly, EU countries expressed concerns regarding the baseline year, given the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, and have welcomed the possibility to use an earlier or a later reference year, if data are available.

Technical discussions also explored a possible correction factor that takes into account the impact of tourism on food waste levels.

On **textile waste**, EU countries broadly called for microenterprises to be included in the EPR schemes, while acknowledging the need and possibility to alleviate any disproportionate administrative burden on these producers.

According to [press sources](#), France supported the extension of the requirements for textile products from third countries arriving via online markets in order to guarantee the impact of such a measure.

Denmark, France, Austria, Finland and Sweden called on the Commission to launch the process [to amend the Basel Convention](#) – on the control of transboundary movements of hazardous waste – and to include textile waste alongside plastic and electronic waste.

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT SUPPORTING ANALYSIS

Rakstelyte A., [Revision of the Waste Framework Directive](#), EPRS, European Parliament, October 2023.

In facts video: [Food waste in the EU](#), EPRS, European Parliament, November 2022.

Katsarova I., [Countering food loss and waste: From awareness to tangible change](#), September 2022.

OTHER SOURCES

[Waste Framework Directive: Textiles and food waste](#), Legislative Observatory (OEIL), European Parliament.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ The most well-developed approach to [storing CO₂](#) is injecting it underground into naturally occurring, porous rock formations such as former natural gas or oil reservoirs, coal beds that cannot be mined, or saline aquifers – deep geological formations with deposits of very salty water present in the rock's pores and most commonly found under the ocean.
- ² This section aims to provide a flavour of the debate and is not intended to be an exhaustive account of all different views on the proposal. Additional information can be found in related publications listed under 'European Parliament supporting analysis'.

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Second edition. The 'EU Legislation in Progress' briefings are updated at key stages throughout the legislative procedure.