

## PRESS RELEASE

### **The Commission's early warning report: how well designed EPR systems can support MS performance on packaging waste management and recycling rates' Improvement**

14 June, Brussels - The Extended Producer Responsibility Alliance (EXPRA) expresses its worries over the challenges that 18 Member States (MS) are facing in achieving the targets defined by the Waste Framework Directive (WFD) and Packaging and Packaging Waste Directive (PPWD).

The Commission's early warning report (EWR) published last Thursday showcases that 10 Member States are at risk of missing the targets (65%) for recycling of all packaging waste to be achieved by 2025 and eight Member States are at risk of missing the targets for preparing for re-use and recycling of municipal waste (55%). In total, only 9 MS are on track to meet both targets. Regarding the maximum target of 10% landfilling of municipal waste, 13 MS are still far from reaching it.

We believe that one of the reasons for this was not utilizing the full potential of EPR. We further believe that well-designed EPR systems (for the various relevant waste streams under EPR) combined with a functioning waste management sector have the potential not only to fulfill the various targets but also to drastically reduce carbon emissions and increase resource availability. Of course, this can only be achieved through the joint efforts of all relevant stakeholders.

It should be noted that despite the availability of relevant EU legal framework, as outlined for example in the Waste Framework Directive (Art 8a WFD – minimum requirements for EPR) and/or existing proven best practices provided by respective EPR umbrella organizations (like EXPRA for packaging [golden rules for EPR](#)), we regret to hear that many MS are still struggling to establish the necessary legal framework and the respective infrastructure to meet their targets. It is clear that urgent action is needed.

EXPRA's members, many of which have been operating for over 30 years, have been demonstrating several best practices on how to support and set up the necessary infrastructure in close cooperation with other stakeholders such as municipalities and the waste management sector. A key precondition for this is a stable and reliable legislative and executive framework provided by the government<sup>1</sup>.

In fact, where Producer Responsibility Organisations (PROs) play a role in the design of waste management systems, the outcome is more beneficial for the climate. EXPRA members already save an estimated CO<sup>2</sup> equivalent of a 400-600km trip with a new passenger car per inhabitant per year. Following EPR's best practices will aid MS in reaching their targets, while also allowing for an even greater positive impact on the climate.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.fostplus.be/en/projects/new-pmd-sorting-centres>

Based on their best practices and experience EXPRA and its members are willing and able to support the Commission for the recommendations provided to MS that aim to guide them in the implementation of measures that can improve their performance regarding packaging waste management and improving recycling rates.

To make a first step forward in the necessary discussion, based on front runners' performance, we have identified the following characteristics that are a prerequisite for achieving, and in some MS, overachieving the targets:

- As foreseen in Art 8 point 5 of Waste Framework Directive, the Commission should immediately launch the EU EPR Dialogue Platform, and promote the establishment of EPR Dialogues at MS level, where these are not yet existing. This is vital to facilitate the communication between stakeholders needed for MS to achieve their targets. With its proven wide and thorough expertise on EPR issues, EXPRA is willing to actively support such measures.
- During the ongoing WFD revision, Article 8a of the WFD on minimum requirements for EPR should be amended to ensure that the responsibilities of Packaging Recovery Organizations are matched with their defined roles by EU and National legislation as best practices from several Member States, reaching and going beyond the recycling targets defined in the PPWR and WFD prove. This is the case with the best-performing MS<sup>2</sup>.
- All MS with competing PROs (for one waste stream) should establish a body independent of private interests or entrust a public authority to oversee the implementation of extended producer responsibility obligations as foreseen in the Art 8a, point 5 WFD until the end of 2023, following the existing best practices - German or the Austrian example.
- Obligated industry should speed up the move to recyclable packaging, inter alia by endorsing PROs to spend a minimum percentage of their income on design for recycling services.
- MS that have not yet done so, should ensure that bio-waste, batteries&chargers and textiles are also separately collected and treated as imposed by the WFD, thus ensuring better separate collection of recyclables, respective their sorting and recycling. The introducing of mandatory separate collection of organic/bio waste for example in Malta has increased the separately collected recyclables by 35%.<sup>3</sup>
- In order to support MS lagging in reaching the landfill targets, the Commission could agree on interim targets with the respective MS thus supporting them to achieve the 2035 ones gradually and successfully.

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<sup>2</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Packaging\\_waste\\_statistics#Recycling\\_and\\_recovery\\_targets\\_and\\_rates](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Packaging_waste_statistics#Recycling_and_recovery_targets_and_rates)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.greenpak.com.mt/51-per-cent-increase-in-collection>

- The Commission should provide support to MS at risk also via expanding the Technical Assistance and Information Exchange (TAIEX) program that has proven as highly successful (during the pre-accession process) beyond its current scope to include also current MS in order to provide them with the necessary/concrete technical support on how to improve their performance; A very successful initiative of the Commission were the “Virtuous Circle Missions” to MS (2018-2019) with need for improvement of their waste management systems that we strongly believe should be continued.

By implementing these measures, we believe that EPR systems and the waste management sector will not only meet but actually exceed the respective targets and thus reach its fullest potential. EXPRA is committed to supporting this effort and working towards promoting packaging sustainability, driving innovation, and making real progress towards a sustainable future where we do not waste any resource anymore.

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#### **About EXPRA**

*EXPRA is the alliance for 32 packaging and packaging waste recovery and recycling systems which are owned by obliged industry and work on a not-for-profit basis. EXPRA acts as the authoritative voice and common policy platform representing the interests of all its member packaging recovery and recycling organisations founded and run by or on behalf of obliged industry. EXPRA members provide over 220 million inhabitants with packaging collection, sorting and recycling infrastructure and ensure recycling and recovery of over 22 million tons of packaging per year. For additional information, please visit [www.expra.eu](http://www.expra.eu)*