

ECN RECOMMENDATIONS

BIO-WASTE ASPECTS IN THE WASTE FRAMEWORK DIRECTIVE

EU waste legislation proposals in the Circular Economy Package:

A unique opportunity to use the untapped potential of bio-waste

23 November 2017

As part of the ongoing discussions on the Waste Framework Directive in the interinstitutional negotiations, the European Compost Network (ECN) would herewith like to inform you on several issues we think are priority matters related to bio-waste. We hope you take these points into consideration.

In general, ECN would like to stress the need for **an ambitious compromise text** which would allow Europe to reap the benefits of **a more circular economy**. This needs to be expressed by a clear commitment towards the **separate collection and high-quality recycling of bio-waste**. Unnecessarily delay or inclusion of broad exemptions to these principles will ensure that valuable materials will be lost, wasting both natural resources and economic opportunities. As ECN research shows, separate collection and recycling of bio-waste results in products which can replace less sustainable alternatives (for instance compost substituting mineral fertilizers) by creating green jobs and economic growth.

Therefore, in order to benefit most from the potential of bio-waste, ECN calls on the negotiators to consider the following recommendations on articles currently under discussion and of high relevance to this topic:

- **Art. 22 Bio-waste, Part 1:**
ECN favours the EC compromise with regards to calling for a **specific date** from which time forward **separate collection for bio-waste** would take place in all MS. However, we suggest have this date be **31 December 2022**. This will give MS who have not yet implemented separate collection of bio-waste sufficient time to take the required steps, but also prevents the extended unnecessary loss of valuable resources. Additionally, we agree with the European Commission that by giving MS sufficient time to implement separate collection, this **eliminates any need for general derogations or exemptions** from this principle (similar to the TEEP-conditionality) which ECN opposes. Only in narrowly defined circumstances of sparsely populated rural/administrative districts and following notification to the European Commission, should exemptions be possible for a limited period of time.
- **Art. 22 Bio-waste, Part 2:**
ECN stresses that it only supports the **inclusion of biodegradable plastic bags**, so far as these **are used for the collection of food and kitchen waste**, as liners in containers for bio-waste collection. To be accepted in biological treatment, the compostability has to be certified under European standard EN 13432 / 14995. Otherwise at this stage composting and biogas plants would risk to be loaded with high amounts of non-compostable/digestible plastic packaging due to misunderstandings of consumers. Also biological treatment should not be misused for "cheap" recovery/disposal of all sorts of packaging.
- **Art 11a Rules on the calculation of the attainment of the targets laid down in Article 11, Point 4a:**
ECN is **against the inclusion of the output of MBT in counting towards recycling**, as the quality of the output is significantly lower than that which is the result of separate collection of bio-waste, and can't be used for most applications in fertilising crops and soils. ECN therefore does not regard output of MBT as being part of a more circular economy. If this compromise would nonetheless be included in the text, ECN recommends the deadline to be aligned with our proposal for the separate collection of bio-waste, and thus be 1 January 2023.



- **Art.11 Re-use and recycling:**
ECN stresses that there are currently **no EU guidelines on the quality of recycling, or a definition on what constitutes high quality recycling**. Therefore, ECN is calling on the European Commission to develop such guidelines, in particular for bio-waste, as ECN wants to ensure that the bio-waste recycling leads to high quality secondary raw materials with product-status for which there is a common market.
- **Art. 11a Rules on the calculation of the attainment of the targets laid down in Article 11, Point 8:**
ECN looks towards the European Commission to provide additional guidance to MS through implementing acts on bio-waste related issues.

We would be pleased if the Council and Parliament, as well as the European Commission, would take these points into consideration during the ongoing interinstitutional negotiations.

We would look forward to provide you with more detailed (technical) information on our positions. Please let us know if this information would be helpful for you by contacting info@compostnetwork.info.

About ECN

The **European Compost Network (ECN)** is the leading European membership organisation promoting sustainable recycling practices by composting and anaerobic digestion of organic resources and guarding over the quality and safe use of the recovered organic fertilisers/soil improvers.

The European Compost Network is a membership organisation with 67 members from 27 European countries. Members include all European bio-waste organisations and their operating plants, research, policy making, consultants and authorities. ECN represents 20 bio-waste organisations from 13 European countries, 26 companies producing bio-based products, 6 environmental NGOs, 11 academic (research) institutes in environmental, agricultural and natural sciences and three environmental agencies. Through its member organisations, ECN represents more than 3,000 experts and plant operators with a biological waste treatment capacity above 30 million tonnes.