

P R E S S R E L E A S E

Waste shipments vote: Members of European Parliament request EU responsibility for waste exports

Brussels, 1 December 2022: “The European Parliament’s Environmental Committee has today sent a clear message: Europe must take responsibility for the environmental and social footprint of its exported waste. This is crucial to delivering a Circular Economy for our twin transitions and their strategic raw materials”, said Guy Thiran, Director General of Eurometaux (European metals association), welcoming the European Parliament’s Environmental Committee vote on the revised waste shipments regulation.

MEPs have confirmed the European Commission’s proposal that non-OECD overseas facilities receiving European waste will need to be audited by a third party to certify they operate according to internationally recognised standards. In the future, Europe’s waste would only be treatable by companies in non-OECD countries demonstrating they meet equivalent conditions.

Guy Thiran continued: “Recycling will be Europe’s key long-term driver in improving local supply of the metals needed in our energy and digital transitions. Our recycling companies are state-of-the art, but they need a level playing field to compete fairly with operators in less regulated regions. The waste market will always be global, and within that it’s right that Europe acts to ensure responsible recycling of its waste electronics, batteries, vehicles, metals scrap, and more”.

Elsewhere, MEPs have taken common-sense steps to reduce the bureaucracy for shipping waste across European borders, for example by allowing English as an acceptable common language across documents.

The metals industry’s one concern is that MEPs have endorsed the European Commission’s proposal to bring higher volumes of non-hazardous waste into the hazardous waste category, based on thresholds for contamination. These new conditions would be counterproductive and undermine the meaning of the Green List of waste risking that they may require the complex notification procedure.

The ENVI proposal needs to be now voted by the European Parliament’s Plenary to confirm the final position. Member States will continue discussions into 2023, before triologue negotiations eventually begin.

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About Eurometaux: Eurometaux is a trade association representing the collective European non-ferrous metals industry, including miners, smelters, refiners, fabricators and recyclers. The industry employs 500,000 people across over 900 facilities, with an annual turnover of €120bn.

