

Waste hierarchy

With respect to the waste hierarchy, for which 13 different amendments have been tabled, FEFCO is of the opinion that it is essential to come to a compromise amendment that puts re-use and recycling on an equal footing.

In this respect we would like to refer once more to the study ordered by the Commission on the implementation of the Packaging and Packaging Waste directive, which clearly states that there are no scientific grounds to favour reusable packaging systems over one-way alternatives that are recyclable (**Pira International Ecolas, Study on the Implementation of Directive 94/62/EC on Packaging and Packaging Waste options to Strengthen Prevention and Re-use of Packaging. Final Report, 21st February 2005 (03/07884/AL).**
http://ec.europa.eu/environment/waste/studies/packaging/050224_final_report.pdf

Besides the individual steps of the hierarchy and their ranking, it is equally important to have proper guidance for applying the hierarchy.
A deviation clause which requires companies to undertake a life cycle assessment (LCA) each time they want to deviate from the hierarchy, in our view is too costly, time-consuming (Member States have to study and approve all these LCA's) and too bureaucratic.

We therefore are of the opinion that the deviation clause should be an application clause, which would have to define what principles Member States have to take into account when applying the hierarchy, such as

- technical and economical feasibility;
- resource protection;
- ecological, economic and social impact.

Reuse

As for the definition of reuse, it is important to take into account not only the environmental impacts caused by the reuse of waste, but also the environmental impacts caused by the reuse of products or their components. Once they have reached the end of their first use, they need further reconditioning before they can be used again.

It is very important that the reuse of products is not covered under prevention, since it is not neutral or merely positive to the environment. For instance the reuse of plastic foldable crates requires a lot of water, chemicals and energy for cleaning after each use and causes CO2 emissions for transporting them over long distances (since they have to go back empty to where they came from).

The same is also true for other sectors, for example for the reuse of electrical and electronic equipment (see attached study).

In the situation that reusable products would fall under prevention, Member States would be inclined to promote prevention and equally the reuse of products, which would have a huge impact on the internal market. The overall result is that non-reusable packaging products that are recycled would be discriminated against for unjustifiable reasons. This would lead to market distortions and, eventually, to a large number of court cases and not to a better environment.



Prevention

Finally, on prevention we believe that Member States have their part to play in tackling prevention. However the prospect of 25 plans and 25 different ways of measuring prevention, would make it very difficult for small and large businesses to operate at optimal efficiency across the EU, and could impair the functioning of the internal market.

Therefore, we would rather support Community Guidelines setting an EU framework for action on waste prevention.

As for quantitative waste reduction objectives, including stabilization targets, these have not worked in the past and we can see no reason to believe in a radically different outcome now.

Differences among the EU Member States, in terms of GDP growth and resource consumption, in many cases, make a "one size fits all" approach unworkable.

Prevention of waste and its impacts must be an integral part of overall resource and waste management planning in a Member State or region.