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Economic impact of the current waste-related legislation

Motion for a recommendation
presented by Mr MELČÁK and others

This motion has not been discussed in the Assembly and commits only the members who have signed it

Ongoing growth of industrial, agricultural and construction production on one side and public consumption on the other side both create pressure on the environment:

- by exploiting natural resources;
- by consequent growth of the volume of waste from the processed materials and especially by the growing quantity of end-of-life products.

The strategy adopted by the European Commission at the end of 2005, Thematic Strategy on the Sustainable Use of Natural Resources (COM (2005) 670) and Thematic strategy on the prevention and recycling of waste (COM (2005) 666), and other linked documents were inspired by the necessity to revise the approach towards resource management. The newly defined approach is based on the resource life cycle analysis which considers waste as the initial phase of the process. Waste prevention and recycling can limit the impact on the environment in two stages: The negative impact can be prevented at the stage of material extraction as well as during the process of its transformation during production.

The Directive of the European Parliament and the Council 2006/12/ES on Waste of 5 April 2006 is a good grounding for the implementation of the proposed changes. In this respect, Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on the Interpretative Communication on Waste and By-products, dated from 21 February 2007 (COM (2007) 59 final), is a very important document.

However, opening a discussion concerning the adoption of a similar set of measures for secondary resources and materials issued from “end-of-life products” is more complex and more important from the perspective of sustainable consumption, above all when setting framework criteria defining the line between waste and non-waste. Ferrous and non-ferrous scrap metals can serve as examples. Although it is a highly useful commodity, it is ranked as “waste” by the existing legislation and therefore pointlessly overloads waste information systems and renders terms of trade and transportation complicated. Serious litigation concerning interpretation leads to the overlapping of regulatory powers and causes uncertainty among the public authorities and waste-processing industry. This could endanger the flow of investment into this branch of industry although it is crucial for limiting the environmental burden and should also be seen as a source of employment.

The discussion as well as the adoption of necessary measures must be carried out in all member countries of the Council of Europe and the process should be accelerated, without being obstructed by bureaucratic procedures.

Signed (see overleaf)

*Signed*¹:

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