



Compliance with EN 50625

CECED, DIGITALEUROPE, EERA and the WEEE Forum call on the European Commission to take appropriate measures to make compliance with the EN 50625 Series mandatory

Final
4 February 2016

I. Introduction

The playing field in Europe regarding treatment of WEEE is not level, both among and within Member States. Depollution performance, the extent to which raw materials are recycled, safety measures and monitoring and control procedures differ substantially. Currently, more than half of the WEEE generated in the EU¹ is not treated in accordance with requirements of Directive 2012/19/EU on WEEE, which results in a lower quality of recycling of WEEE within Europe. The EN 50625 Series of standards² that is nearly completed at CENELEC, addresses that challenge, and is meant to become the reference standard for WEEE treatment in Europe. Adherence to the normative requirements in the EN 50625 Series provides assurance that WEEE is collected, transported and treated in compliance with the Directive.

II. Make compliance with EN 50625 mandatory

Pursuant to Article 8(5) of Directive 2012/19/EU on WEEE, and mandate M/518 of the European Commission, CENELEC is currently developing a series of European standards for treatment, including recovery, recycling and preparing for reuse, of WEEE, reflecting the state of the art in recycling. CECED, DIGITALEUROPE, EERA and the WEEE Forum have always been supportive of the development of these standards.

Encouragingly, certain Member States, such as the Netherlands, Ireland and France, have already put legislation in place that legally requires WEEE treatment facilities to comply with the EN 50625 standards when they are published. Some other Member States are considering this too, while the majority of Member States prefer not to take any action in this regard as long as it is not an obligation at EU level. The trouble is that, when a Member State or region decides to make compliance to the EN 50625 standards mandatory, certain quantities of WEEE 'leak' to other Member States or regions where compliance with the standards is not legally required. This situation creates a distortion in the recycling market in the EU, and consequently results in a lower, sub-standard recycling quality throughout Europe.

In other words, if compliance with the EN 50625 suite of standards remains voluntary, or mandatory in only a couple of Member States, a significant part of the WEEE stream in the EU will continue to be treated in a sub-optimal manner, both within and outside the EU. In order to create a true level playing field in the EU, compliance with the EN 50625 Series should be made mandatory for all WEEE treatment facilities in the EU. Treatment of WEEE outside the EU should take place in conditions that are equivalent to those applicable in the EU³. This will significantly increase the quality level in the recycling of WEEE and will have a positive impact on the EU's ambitious goals of a circular economy.

¹ See Huisman, J., Botezatu, I., Herreras, L., Liddane, M., Hintsu, J., Luda di Cortemiglia, V., Leroy, P., Vermeersch, E., Mohanty, S., van den Brink, S., Ghenciu, B., Dimitrova, D., Nash, E., Shryane, T., Wieting, M., Kehoe, J., Baldé, C.P., Magalini, F., Zanasi, A., Ruini, F., and Bonzio, A., Countering WEEE Illegal Trade (CWIT) Summary Report, Market Assessment, Legal Analysis, Crime Analysis and Recommendations Roadmap, August 30, 2015, Lyon, France. See www.cwitproject.eu.

² "EN 50625 Series" refers to both the suite of Standards and the accompanying Technical Specification documents

³ See upcoming Commission Regulation on the equivalent conditions for the treatment of WEEE outside the Union.

III. Enforcement and Market Surveillance

As provided for in Article 16.4 of the Directive, reporting the quantities of EEE placed on the market, of WEEE collected, treated and exported through all routes is the responsibility of Member States. Member States are required to put in place appropriate measures to ensure that their individual obligations are fulfilled. To do this all actors handling WEEE, irrespective of whether they fall under the coverage of a scheme set by producers or on their individual capacity, should be subject to the same requirements in terms of reporting collected and treated quantities.

In parallel, collection, storage, transport, recovery and treatment requirements should be applied to all WEEE flows, regardless of whether the WEEE was treated by a recycling system managed by producers, by other WEEE actors or recyclers. In order to ensure proper treatment, according to the recycling and recovery targets as prescribed by the Directive, there is a clear need for all actors to comply with the EN 50625 Series, which set the requirements for reaching the targets. Nevertheless, simply making the application of standards mandatory is not enough: Only proper enforcement will deter actors who may otherwise opt for sub-standard treatment in pursuit of mere profit. Otherwise, competition within the WEEE market in Europe may be seriously violated.

We therefore call on all Member States to establish and enforce uniform measures at national (and/or regional) level for all WEEE actors. As what should constitute “proper treatment” is now contained in the EN 50625 Series of standards, it is now possible to protect the environment in all Member States in a uniform manner.

Compulsory compliance to the EN 50625 Series must be enforced by Member States, however, achieving harmonised enforcement across all Members will be difficult. We suggest that WEEE treatment facilities can be incentivized to voluntarily seek independent recognised 3rd party certification if this would reduce their enforcement burden in some tangible way. National certification bodies are controlled by international bodies to ensure the value of the certification is maintained, and thus the method of assessment is “harmonised”. Facilities outside of EU cannot be “certified” to a standard that is not adopted by their national Standardisation regime, however they can voluntarily seek 3rd party “verification” of adherence to the EU standards, or a recognised equivalent standard, in order to win business from European customers.

IV. Conclusion

We therefore call on the European Commission, following the completion of the remaining CENELEC documents and an appropriate Impact Assessment study, to prepare an Implementing Regulation in accordance with the provisions laid down in article 8(5) of the Directive, that would oblige Member States to adopt a fair and consistent requirement of mandatory compliance to the EN 50625 Series for all WEEE treatment facilities in the EU. Ideally, WEEE treated outside the EU should be required to take place in equivalent conditions regardless of whether the exported WEEE volumes were intended to count towards national WEEE targets or not.

* * * * *

About CECED

CECED represents the home appliance industry in Europe. Direct Members are Arçelik, Ariston Thermo Group, BSH Hausgeräte GmbH, Candy Group, Daikin Europe, De'Longhi, Dyson, AB Electrolux, Gorenje, Indesit Company, LG Electronics Europe, Liebherr Hausgeräte, Miele & Cie. GmbH & Co., Panasonic, Philips, Samsung, Groupe SEB, Vestel, Vorwerk and Whirlpool Europe. CECED's member Associations cover the following countries: Austria, Baltic countries, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey and the United Kingdom.

More info: Korrina Hegarty, korrina.hegarty@ceced.eu.

About DIGITALEUROPE

DIGITALEUROPE represents the digital technology industry in Europe. Our members include some of the world's largest IT, telecoms and consumer electronics companies and national associations from every part of Europe. DIGITALEUROPE wants European businesses and citizens to benefit fully from digital technologies and for Europe to grow, attract and sustain the world's best digital technology companies.

DIGITALEUROPE ensures industry participation in the development and implementation of EU policies. DIGITALEUROPE's members include 62 corporate members and 37 national trade associations from across Europe. Our website provides further information on our recent news and activities: www.digitaleurope.org

More info: Valentina Bolognesi, valentina.bolognesi@digitaleurope.org.

About EERA

EERA, the European Electronics Recyclers Association, is a non-profit organization that represents the interest of the 36 major recycling companies who are treating waste electrical and electronic equipment WEEE in Europe. The EERA members recycle ± 2.500.000 tonnes of WEEE annually and have more than 100 locations in 22 European countries. EERA aims for the harmonization of international and national regulations for WEEE recycling, in order to obtain a free market (level playing field) for demand and supply of services.

The members are located in the following countries: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Italy, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Poland, Portugal, Romania, The Netherlands, Norway, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. Member companies are: Alba, Aurubis, A.Jansen, Boliden, ClozdLoop, Coolrec, Ekan, Elektrocycling, Elemental Holding, Enviropol, Fundosa Reciclalia, Galloo, Glencore, Green WEEE, HKS Metals, Immark, Indumetal, Jacomij, KMK Metals, Kuusakoski, Müller Guttenbrunn, Noex, Relight, Remondis, Sims, Stena, TXO, Umicore, Veolia, WKR.

More info: Lida Stengs, ls@eera-recyclers.com

About the WEEE Forum

The WEEE Forum is a European not-for-profit association speaking for 32 electrical and electronic equipment waste (WEEE) producer compliance schemes – alternatively referred to as 'producer responsibility organisations' (PRO). It was set up in 2002. The 32 PROs are based in Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Italy, Germany, Greece, France, Ireland, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. It is the biggest organisation of its kind in the world. In 2014, its member organisations reported collection and proper de-pollution and recycling of more than 1.7 million tonnes of WEEE. Members in 2015: Amb3E, Appliances Recycling, Asekol, EAF, Eco-asimelec, Ecodom, Ecolec, Ecoped, Eco-systèmes, Ecotic, Eco Tic, EES-Ringlus, EGIO, ElektroEko, Elektrowin, El-Kretsen, elretur, el retur, Environ, Fotokiklosi, RAEcycle, Recupel, ReMedia, Repic, Retela, RoRec, SENS, SWICO, UFH, Wecycle, WEEE Ireland and Zeos.

More info: Pascal Leroy, pascal.leroy@weee-forum.org