



EUROPEAN AGENDA

BUSINESSES URGE EU TO ADOPT AN AMBITIOUS CIRCULAR ECONOMY ACT

A group of leading European and global businesses has called on the European Commission to adopt a bold and ambitious EU Circular Economy Act, urging policymakers to place circularity at the core of Europe's industrial and economic strategy. The joint letter, coordinated by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, was addressed to Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and several key Commissioners.

The companies argue that while many businesses are already investing in circular solutions such as reuse, repair, refurbishment, remanufacturing, and product as a service, progress across Europe is being slowed by fragmented regulation, inconsistent definitions, and financial rules that still favour linear business models. These barriers, they warn, prevent circular solutions from scaling and hinder the creation of a true European single market.

To address this, the businesses call for a harmonised regulatory framework that enables circular products, parts, and materials to move seamlessly across borders. Clear and shared EU-level definitions and performance-based rules are seen as essential to reducing complexity and legal uncertainty, while supporting innovation across different sectors and value chains.

The letter also highlights the need to level the playing field through fiscal and demand-side measures. Proposed actions include coordinated VAT reforms to avoid double taxation on reused and repaired goods, stronger circular criteria in public procurement, and greater alignment of Extended Producer Responsibility systems to reduce administrative burdens and cost disadvantages for circular business models.

Finally, the companies stress that scaling circular solutions will require unlocking private investment and strengthening value chains. They call for financial instruments that reduce investment risk, greater transparency and stability in secondary materials markets, and the development of cross-border circularity hubs to address infrastructure gaps across Member States.

Signed by companies such as Philips, IKEA, H&M Group, SAP, LEGO, and Intesa Sanpaolo, the letter describes the Circular Economy Act as a critical opportunity to make circular solutions the most economically viable choice for businesses and consumers, while strengthening European competitiveness, resilience, and industrial decarbonisation. [Read more.](#)

SOURCE: ELLEN MCARTHUR FOUNDATION 21/04/2026

OCEAN ACT: COMMISSION LAUNCHES PUBLIC CONSULTATION AFTER CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

As it works on drafting its future Ocean Act, the European Commission has once again turned to stakeholders for input. On April 23, the Commission opened a public consultation on the initiative, which is expected by the end of the year, but whose content and structure remain largely undefined at this stage.

Through the consultation, the Commission is seeking views on whether ecosystem protection should become a central priority in marine planning. Stakeholders are also invited to assess the impact of national planning processes on the sustainable use of marine resources, the protection of the marine environment, and the implementation of the objective of achieving good environmental status under the Marine Strategy Framework Directive.

The Commission is additionally asking for feedback on the importance of cooperation between Member States, the effectiveness of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, which is itself expected to be revised, and the relevance of referencing all EU ocean-related objectives listed in the Ocean Pact

presented last June within the future Act. Stakeholders can submit their responses to the consultation until mid-July. [Read more](#)

SOURCE: EUROPEAN COMMISSION 23/04/2026

CIRCULAR ECONOMY

EU ENVIRONMENT OMNIBUS AND CIRCULAR ECONOMY REGULATION: COMMISSION SETS OUT TIMETABLE FOR KEY TEXTS

The European Commission has shared a draft roadmap outlining its proposed legislative calendar for major environmental and climate files, according to reporting by Contexte. The document was sent to Member States and the European Parliament on the evening of April 16 and lays out an ambitious schedule for concluding negotiations on a series of priority texts.

The Commission is seeking to negotiate an interinstitutional agreement with the Council and Members of the European Parliament that would turn this timetable into a politically and operationally binding commitment. In total, forty-two legislative texts are listed, each accompanied by a deadline by which the EU institutions would commit to finalising negotiations.

Among the key files, the environment omnibus package is expected to be adopted by the end of 2026. The Circular Economy Regulation is planned to be finalised in the third quarter of 2027, just one year after the Commission's proposal, which is scheduled for September. The revision of the EU carbon market, known as the Emissions Trading System, is set to move even faster, with a Commission proposal expected in July 2026 and adoption targeted for early 2027.

The proposed timetable was discussed by ambassadors of the twenty-seven Member States on April 17, while the date for discussions in the European Parliament has not yet been confirmed. To support implementation, the Commission plans to set up a steering group bringing together representatives of the three institutions. This group would meet at least every two months to review progress and identify obstacles to the adoption of the priority legislative texts. [Read more.](#)

SOURCE: CONTEXTE 20/04/2026

SINGLE-USE PLASTICS DIRECTIVE: SEVERAL MEMBER STATES ALREADY MEET TARGETS SET FOR THE NEXT DECADE

The European Commission has published its first report on the Single-Use Plastics Directive, offering an initial overview of how Member States are progressing in implementing the legislation. Released in mid-April, the report is required under the directive and establishes a baseline for assessing future progress across the European Union.

Based on data from two thousand twenty-two, the report shows that ten Member States had already met the directive's target for separate collection of plastic bottles set for the middle of the decade. These countries include Germany, Poland, Finland, Denmark, Sweden, Estonia, Lithuania, Croatia, Slovakia, and Belgium. Among them, several had already reached the more ambitious collection rate set for the end of the decade.

According to the Commission, high collection performance is generally linked to the introduction of deposit and return systems, which have proven effective in boosting separate collection rates. At EU level, the average collection rate stands below these frontrunners, highlighting uneven implementation across Member States.

France ranks near the bottom of the table, with a collection rate significantly below the EU average. The report notes that the introduction of a deposit system is still under discussion in the country, which may explain its slower progress compared with other Member States.

The Commission indicates that the data gathered through this report will form the basis for the broader evaluation of the Single-Use Plastics Directive, which is expected toward the middle of the decade. This assessment will help determine whether the current framework is sufficient to meet long-term objectives or whether additional measures may be needed. [Read more.](#)

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CLIMATE POLICY

WWF URGES COMMISSION TO CONSIDER NOT REVISING THE WATER FRAMEWORK DIRECTIVE

The World Wide Fund for Nature has called on the European Commission to include the option of not revising the Water Framework Directive in its upcoming impact assessment. The request comes as part of a broader mobilisation by environmental organisations to safeguard the directive, which they see as a cornerstone of EU water protection policy.

Alongside groups such as ClientEarth, BirdLife, the European Environmental Bureau, France Nature Environnement, Greenpeace, and Surfrider, WWF responded in large numbers to the public consultation that closed in mid-April. The organisations are reacting to the Commission's announcement of a possible revision of the directive by the end of next year, aimed at facilitating the development of mining projects in Europe.

WWF argues that alternatives to revising the directive should be properly assessed, including the development of clearer guidance and increased training for public authorities and the mining sector on permitting procedures and their interaction with existing water protection rules. According to the organisation, boosting mining activities must not come at the expense of public health, water quality, or local communities.

The NGO warns that weakened water protection could lead to higher risks of pollution, contamination of crops, bathing bans, drinking water interruptions, rising water treatment costs, higher water bills, and declining property values in affected areas. These risks, WWF says, must be fully taken into account when assessing policy options.

Greenpeace echoes these concerns, arguing that available evidence does not show excessive regulation as a primary barrier, but rather points to ongoing pressures on water bodies across Europe. The organisation highlights what it describes as a growing gap between the actual state of Europe's waters, the EU's own assessment of environmental challenges, and the current direction of policy choices.

Together, the NGOs are urging the Commission to prioritise enforcement and implementation of existing rules over regulatory rollback, warning that revising the Water Framework Directive could undermine long-standing environmental protections at a critical moment for Europe's water resources. [Read more.](#)

SOURCE: CONTEXTE 24/04/2026

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT CLARIFIES ROLE OF LIFE ACTIVITIES IN FUTURE COMPETITIVENESS FUND

In a draft report published in late April, the European Parliament's co-rapporteurs on the European Competitiveness Fund have clarified how existing Life activities would be integrated into the new funding structure. The rapporteurs remove the Commission's initial reference to Life activities as a standalone element, reflecting the planned discontinuation of the current Life programme in the next multiannual financial framework.

Instead, the report introduces a new category of specific activities under the pillar for sustainable prosperity. This approach brings Life activities back into the framework of the Competitiveness Fund for the 2028 to 2034 budget period, defining their scope more clearly within the fund.

According to the draft, these activities would support innovative solutions for clean transition and industrial decarbonisation, as well as climate and environmental awareness at relevant governance levels. The scope is also broadened to include areas such as the circular economy, climate and water resilience, biodiversity, and the bioeconomy.

While the European Parliament has limited influence over overall EU budget allocations, the report will set its negotiation mandate on the relevant sectoral legislation. The draft is due to be presented to the parliament's industry committee at the beginning of May. [Read more.](#)

SOURCE: EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT 20/04/2026

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