
POLICY ISSUES

A BOLDER, SIMPLER, FASTER UNION: THE 2025 COMMISSION WORK PROGRAMME

The Commission has adopted its 2025 work programme, outlining its ambition to boost competitiveness, enhance security, and bolster economic resilience in the EU.

- It builds on the commitments set out in the [Political Guidelines](#) and the mission letters.
- The proposed initiatives are laid out in a dedicated annex together with fitness checks.
- A Communication on Implementation and Simplification accompanies the work programme.
- It sets out how the Commission plans, over the next five years, to make implementation of EU rules easier in practice, and to reduce administrative burdens and simplify EU rules. It contains targets and tools to help lighten the regulatory load, boost competitiveness and resilience, and deliver fast and meaningful improvements for people and businesses. Article [here](#)

Source: European Commission 12/02/2025

EU CLEAN INDUSTRIAL DEAL GETS SERIOUS ABOUT WASTE

The circular economy is pitched as a central pillar of the new Commission's industrial policy, the Clean Industrial Deal. The text — which is still subject to change and will be presented on Feb. 26 — proposes measures to get industry reusing its waste, and a plan to limit exports of critical raw material waste.

- Doubling the circularity target: the EC is introducing “key performance indicators” (KPIs) to monitor the implementation of the Clean Industrial Deal.
- The Commission wants to make sure it addresses the social impacts of the green transition and that everyone has access to clean products.
- Critical chemicals: The text also expands on the Chemicals Industry Package — set for adoption in Q4 2025 — which it says will recognise the strategic role of the chemicals sector as “industry of industries” and of “critical molecules” with a “targeted initiative to enhance the sector.”
- Bioeconomy: The draft states bioeconomy represents a “significant growth potential” and the updated strategy for the sector (expected by Q4 2025) will “lay down priorities for manufacturing and using biomaterials, and for retaining them as long as possible in the economy.”

Source: Politico 19/02/2025

ECHA TAKES ON NEW ROLE TO IMPROVE SAFETY OF PACKAGING MATERIALS

The European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) will identify harmful chemicals in packaging and, when requested, propose restrictions on their use. These responsibilities come from the new Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation, which entered into force Feb. 11.

- The first task for ECHA is to support the European Commission by preparing a study identifying chemicals of concern in packaging and related components, assessing how these chemicals affect their safety, reuse and recycling. ECHA is to provide its input to the Commission by end of September 2026.
- Based on this report, the Commission will then consider appropriate follow-up measures, including possible restrictions on the use of substances in packaging materials that pose health or environmental risks. These restrictions will follow the existing REACH restriction process. Link to article [here](#)

European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) 12/02/2025

EUDR – INFORMATION SYSTEM TRAINING SESSIONS

The European Commission published additional dates for virtual training sessions on the EUDR Information System are now available on the following webpage: [The Deforestation Due Diligence Registry - European Commission \(europa.eu\)](https://eudr.ec.europa.eu/registry/). The primary audience for these training sessions consists of companies obligated under the EUDR to submit due diligence statements into the Information System – specifically operators, traders, their authorized representatives, and relevant associations representing them.

Source: European Commission 24/02/2025

ECODESIGN - FIRST MEETING OF THE FORUM TOOK PLACE IN BRUSSELS

The Forum is key to implementing the Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation (ESPR) and, where appropriate, related energy labels. Environment Commissioner, Jessica Roswall, opened the Forum [19/02] - read Commissioner's speech [here](#)

Source: [European Commission](#)

THE ECODESIGN FORUM - MEMBER STATES EXPERT SUB-GROUP

The Expert group [agenda](#) held last 21 February, covered several topics, including:

- Methods of Work for the Member States Expert Group
- Consultation on ESPR and Energy Labelling Plan: Reviewing documents related to the first European Sustainable Products Regulation (ESPR) and the Energy Labelling working plan.
- Consultation on [Unsold Consumer Products](#): Discussing disclosure guidelines for unsold consumer products and potential exemptions to the ban on destroying them. Regarding packaging the study investigate what constitutes 'weight'. There is uncertainty about whether the weight of a product should include its primary packaging.

Source: Contexte 07/02/2025

COUNCIL AND PARLIAMENT REACH DEAL ON WFD

During the early hours of 19 February, the co-legislators [struck](#) an agreement on the Revised Waste Framework Directive (WFD), after two rounds of trilogue negotiations.

- The provisional agreement maintains the targets proposed by the Commission on food waste, namely a 10% reduction in processing and manufacturing waste and a 30% per capita reduction in waste from retail, restaurants, food services and households.
- On waste textile, the new rules on extended producer responsibility (EPR) schemes will apply equally to fashion brands and textile producers of all sizes, including microenterprises.
- The Parliament and the Council need to formally adopt the agreement before it can be published in the Official Journal and enter into force.
- The [Commission](#) and [EP ENVI](#) also issued press releases following the deal

Source: OPP, European Commission, European Parliament 19/02/2025

NEW WASTE EXPORT REGULATION, NON-EU COUNTRIES

About 23 countries have expressed interest in importing waste from Europe, and the European Commission is keeping the door slightly open. Under the new regulation on waste exports, third-party countries (outside the OECD) had until [February 21](#) to notify the Commission of their wish to continue importing waste from the EU.

- The Commission will establish the first list of countries authorized to receive waste from the EU by 21 November 2026. This list will be updated regularly and at least every two years.
- In its [press release](#), the Commission points out that it is still possible for third countries to apply, but there is no guarantee that their applications can be assessed in time.

Source: Contexte 25/02/2025

EU TO MAKE MOST COMPANIES EXEMPT FROM CARBON BORDER LEVY

The European Commission will propose exemptions for "the vast majority" of companies covered by the European Union's carbon border levy on the grounds that they produce only 1% of emissions in the scheme, a draft proposal showed.

- The move, due to be proposed this week as part of a package of measures to cut red tape for businesses, would drastically reduce the 200,000 importers covered by the EU's carbon border fee, the world's first such levy.
- A draft of the Commission's proposal, seen by Reuters, outlined plans to change the carbon border levy (known as CBAM) so that it applies only to companies importing goods with a mass-based threshold of 50 metric tons per year. Link to [article](#)

Source : Reuters, 24 /02/2025

FRANCE ADOPTS 'ONE OF THE MOST AMBITIOUS' LAWS ON PFAS

French MPs have adopted a bill to protect the public from the risks associated with forever chemicals. It bans their use in three product categories and imposes a charge on industrial water discharges under the 'polluter pays' principle. Link [here](#)

Source: Le Monde 20/02/2025

PFAS: A FRENCH OBSERVATORY (ATMO)

PFAS: A French observatory (ATMO) measured concentrations of PFAS in ambient air in two urban sites, both near plants producing PFAS.

Source: Food packaging Forum /02/2025

EP'S ENVI COMMITTEE ADOPTS ITS POSITION ON THE EU'S PROPOSED 'ONE SUBSTANCE, ONE ASSESSMENT' PACKAGE

MEPs of the ENVI Committee support simplifying and enhancing transparency in EU chemical safety assessments. MEPs have strengthened the proposal by requiring more information on chemicals in products and safer alternatives. They also emphasise the need for improved early detection of emerging chemical risks through expanded data sources and clearer follow-up actions.

SOURCE: [EP \(ENVI\)](#)

EP DEBATES ON FOREST MONITORING: KEY TAKEAWAYS

On 18 February, the joint EP AGRI / EP ENVI Committee debated its draft report on the Regulation on a monitoring framework for resilient European forests. Key takeaways include:

- Co-Rapporteur Wiesner highlighted the need for a decentralised monitoring policy, but for joint data and information collection and collaboration.
- Co-Rapporteur Sargiacomo further emphasised the need for mutual assistance on this topic and to build on what was already achieved.
- There was a significant disagreement among the Shadow Rapporteurs on the monitoring approach: while some advocated for a centralised, harmonised approach, others emphasised that the national systems, already in place in some MS, were already effective and did not need further instructions from a higher level.

Source: OPP 19/02/2025

COP16 ON BIODIVERSITY HANGING ON THE QUESTION OF FINANCING

COP16 on biodiversity hanging on the question of financing - Interrupted in Cali last November, COP16 is about to resume in Rome. The outcome of the negotiations will depend on discussions on the mobilization of financial resources for biodiversity. But this subject reveals geopolitical balances of power that go beyond the stakes of the event. After the resumed sessions in Rome, the next Conference of the Parties - COP17- will take place in 2026 in Yerevan, Armenia. Link [here](#)

Source: *European Commission and Contexte* 24/02/2025

IEEP 2025 GREEN DEAL BAROMETER'S ANNUAL SURVEY

This IEEP's annual publication gathers the views of sustainability experts on the developments and progress of the Green Deal. The survey is open until 5 March. This year the survey explores the opportunities the Green Deal presents and the problems it poses to third countries. In addition, it contains questions on the spillovers on some policy files, such as the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), the Critical Raw Materials Act (CRMA), and the upcoming Clean Industrial Deal (CID). The survey has been created in collaboration with the Green Economy Coalition and is supported by the Gates Foundation and the Heinrich Böll Foundation. [link](#)

POSITION PAPERS

EUROPE'S PULP AND PAPER SECTOR HAS SHOWN RESILIENCE IN 2024, BUT HIGH ENERGY PRICES AND MACRO-ECONOMIC UNCERTAINTIES REMAIN AN ISSUE

Tracking a global economy still recovering from successive shocks and post-Covid stock adjustments, Europe's pulp and paper sector had a positive year in 2024, as shown by the Cepi preliminary statistics report published today. [LINK](#)

Source: [Cepi](#)

POSITION: CEFIC PUBLISHES 10-POINT ACTION PLAN TO SIMPLIFY REACH

Cefic has published its 10-point action plan aimed at simplifying REACH, the EU's flagship chemicals legislation. As the European Commission prepares for a "targeted revision" of REACH by the end of 2025, Cefic's plan brings forward concrete proposals to simplify rules, streamline processes, and foster innovation, all while upholding robust standards for safety and environmental protection.

SOURCE: [CEFIC](#)

POSITION PAPER: MAKING REACH WORK FOR SMES: SMEUNITED CALLS FOR A MORE BALANCED CHEMICAL POLICY

The new SMEUnited position paper on the revision of the Registration, Evaluation, Authorization, and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH) Regulation highlights the growing challenges faced by small and medium-sized enterprises in the chemical sector. While REACH has significantly improved chemical safety and data quality, its bureaucratic burden disproportionately affects SMEs, limiting their competitiveness and innovation.

Source [SMEUNITED](#)

MPE'S REACTION TO THE 2025 COMMISSION WORK PROGRAMME

Welcomes the European Commissions 2025 Work Programme, which places a strong emphasis on Europe's sustainable prosperity and competitiveness. MPE also calls for strong Industrial and Circular Economy measures

Source: [Metal Packaging Europe](#)

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PREVENTION FIRST: HOW CIRCULARITY CAN PUT EUROPE AHEAD OF THE GAME BY EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENTAL BUREAU (EEB)

As the Commission gears up to deliver a new Circular Economy Act, now is the time to set the course in the right direction. A new set of recommendations published today by the European Environmental Bureau (EEB), Europe's largest network of environmental organisations, helps chart the path.

Source: [European Environmental Bureau \(EEB\)](#)

WASTE FRAMEWORK DIRECTIVE: Zero Waste Europe applauds waste cuts to food and textiles, slams weak EU ambition

Source: [Zero Waste Europe](#)Source: [EuRIC](#)

STUDIES

ASSESSMENT OF THE EU ECOLABEL CRITERIA FOR GRAPHIC PAPER AND THE EU ECOLABEL CRITERIA FOR TISSUE PAPER AND TISSUE PRODUCTS

The Commission performed an assessment to verify the continued suitability and relevance of the EU Ecolabel criteria for graphic paper and the EU Ecolabel criteria for tissue paper and tissue products (Commission Decision (EU) 2019/70). The results of the assessment reports are still up to date. However, the User Manual needs to be updated to clarify some points that appeared unclear to the respondents of a questionnaire on the subject.

- The analysis strongly suggests revising the EU Ecolabel criteria set by Commission Decision (EU) 2019/70 in synergy with the development of the ecodesign criteria, which should be based on the knowledge generated by the BREF for the production of pulp, paper and board.
- The appropriate timing for starting the EU Ecolabel criteria revision will be clearer when the ESPR Work Plan is published (scheduled for March 2025). In the event that pulp, paper and board is not included in the first ESPR Work Plan, the EU Ecolabel criteria could be revised simply based on the knowledge derived from the BREF review.

Source: 7/02/2025 [JRC](#)

CEPI PRELIMINARY STATISTICS 2024

In Cepi member countries, paper and board production increased by 5.2% in 2024 compared to the previous year, according to preliminary figures. This rebound occurred after the sharp decline recorded in 2023 (-13% and -18.3% cumulated since 2021), which was driven by a combination of adverse macroeconomic trends, long-lasting destocking along the supply chain throughout the year and the heavy impact on the industry of high energy and manufacturing costs. Total production in 2024 reached 77.8 million tonnes, with an increase reported in most paper and board grades.

Source: 18/02/2025 [Cepi](#)

MUNICIPAL WASTE DOWN BY SECOND CONSECUTIVE YEAR.

Official statistics on municipal waste provided by Eurostat

In 2023, the amount of [municipal waste](#) generated per person in the [EU](#) amounted to 511 kg, 4 kg less than in 2022 (515 kg) and 23 kg less than in 2021 (534 kg), which represents a 4.3% drop in the course of 2 years. Compared with 2013, the amount increased by 32 kg.

Source: 13/02/2025 [Eurostat](#)

OPEN CONSULTATIONS

European Water Resilience Strategy – [call for evidence](#) - The European Water Resilience Strategy will develop a comprehensive multi-annual cross-sectoral plan with milestones in 2030 or 2040. The aim is to strengthen the competitiveness and innovative edge of our water industry and take a circular economy approach

Food safety – [plastic food contact materials \(FCMs\)](#) (update to quality control rules) Published for information

EVENTS

GO CIRCULAR 2025 (ROTTERDAM, 4 - 6 MARCH 2025)

The Go Circular Summit is a business-focused event where industry leaders come together to address the core challenges for plastics recycling. It covers the entire circular value chain of plastics, from brand owners to recycling companies, including the latest regulatory updates. [link here](#)

Source: European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform

MEASURING CIRCULARITY IN EUROPE (ONLINE, 6 MARCH 2025)

The circular economy is reshaping how we use natural resources, but how far have we come? Are products in Europe truly lasting longer? Is the European economy becoming more circular? This European Environment Agency (EEA) webinar will explore these questions and more, drawing insights from the EEA's latest briefings. [link](#)

Source European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform

ENERGY FROM WASTE CONFERENCE 2025, LONDON [5-6/03]

Key topics include: "The Emissions Trading Schemes, ETS, in the UK and EU", "Decarbonisation – through plastics removal and CCS" and "The future of waste: composition, competition, capacity and how this will affect waste to energy"

Source: [Energy from Waste](#)

2ND WORLD CONGRESS ON RECYCLING & WASTE MANAGEMENT [09-10/06]

Taking place this year in Zurich, Switzerland, this event provides a unique platform for academics and professionals globally. The congress will delve into advanced topics in Recycling and Waste Management, drawing participation from researchers, ecologists, environmental experts, and professionals in Chemical, Mechanical Engineering, Environmental Science, Recycling. Leaders from industries such as paper, plastic, glass, metal, and textile recycling, along with business entrepreneurs, professors, association people and students will share their knowledge at this forum.

Source: [website](#)