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EUROPEAN COUNCIL ADOPTS WEEE DIRECTIVE RECAST, WITH NEW INCREASED RECYCLING TARGETS

On June 7 2012, the EU Council of Ministers has formally adopted a recast version of the WEEE Directive (PE-CONS 2/12) after the European Parliament's and Commission's decision earlier this year¹. The recast includes new increased targets reaching a peak of 85 percent for the recovery of certain Electrical and Electronic Equipment falling under Annex I, categories 1 or 10. The new WEEE rules are also aimed at reducing illegal exports of e-waste from the EU and seek to improve environmental performance at every stage in the life cycle of EEE.

Once published in the Official Journal of the European Union the new [WEEE Recast](#) will amend Directive 2002/96/EC which entered into force in February 2003. Four years after the directive recast enters into force, member states will have to achieve an annual collection rate of 45% of the average weight of all EEE placed on their national markets. Three years after that, member states will have to reach a 65% collection rate. Some member states that lack the required recycling infrastructure or have reduced rates of electronic products consumption may be granted some delays in achieving these targets. The new legislation will also include steps that harmonize national registration and reporting



requirements across the member states, in a bid to ease the transition to the new requirements.

¹ [European Commission - information on WEEE Recast](#)

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The WEEE recast increases manufacturer responsibility with regard to the environmental performance of their products and encourages improvements in the design and production of EEE that enable quick upgrades, re-use, disassembly and recycling. Large electronics retail stores will also have to accommodate the collection of small pieces of e-waste (no external dimension larger than 25cm) from end-consumers, free of charge.

The scope of the WEEE recast will now cover, in principle, all types of electrical and electronic equipment, including items such as photovoltaic panels, products containing ozone-depleting substances and fluorescent lamps. These will have to be collected and treated separately six years after the WEEE recast comes into force.

The WEEE recast reclassifies EEE into a smaller number of product categories and after a transitional period with 10 categories ([Annex I](#)) their number will be reduced to 6 ([Annex III](#)). Although this means WEEE recast product categories will deviate from the closely linked RoHS 2 directive, which includes 11 categories, the categories covered by both directives overlap in large degrees but have some substantial differences. One example of a deviation is photovoltaic panels which are exempt from RoHS 2 Directive 2011/65/EU Article 2 (i) but covered by WEEE recast annex IV (4.) "Large equipment".

WEEE recast registration requirements for producers or authorized representatives are outlined in Article 16 and Annex X. As the national registration authorities have not been linked closely in the past, now EU Member States need to establish such links to other national registers in order to facilitate registration.



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