



PRESS RELEASE

Braun, Electrolux, HP And Sony Launch The First Pan-European Recycling Platform

European Business Acts To Promote Safe & Cost-Efficient Electronic & Electrical Equipment Recycling & Disposal In Europe

Brussels, 16 December 2002 – Braun, Electrolux, HP and Sony announced today that they are teaming up to evaluate, develop and operate a common waste management procurement platform, designed to meet the specific needs of the electrical and electronic goods market. This strategic environmental protection initiative opens a new chapter in Europe's move to safeguard the industry, consumers and the environment from the impact of electronic and electrical waste disposal. Against a background of new regulations from the European Union (EU) on Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE Directive), this new initiative promotes cost-efficiency, individual producer responsibility and innovative recycling strategies in the European market. Developed by these four major global companies, the initiative is open to others to join. As an initial step, the partners have notified the Commission's Directorate for Competition (DG Competition) on December 11 in order to ensure that they are able to work together to establish this new initiative.

"Our objective for the implementation of the WEEE Directive is to identify high-quality recycling services on the best terms from the European market to minimise the costs which eventually will be beneficial for the consumer," said Hans Korfmacher, European representative of Corporate Environmental Affairs for Braun. "By introducing the first ever pan-European procurement platform we seek to establish pan-European services and cross-border competition in the European waste management service market," he added.

To date, electronics recycling laws are in place in Belgium, The Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland and Sweden. In each country it has led to the creation of single national consortia, representing the only option for the manufacturers. Braun, Electrolux, HP and Sony will co-operate through this new platform to complement and support the existing consortia or to develop alternative approaches to recycling.

"In view of the "individual producer responsibility" principle established by the WEEE Directive, this co-operation platform is a practical approach to implement and support this new thinking on product take-back," commented Klaus Hieronymi, General Manager, Environmental Business Management, Hewlett-Packard, Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA). "The waste procurement platform under development will benefit from all the planning and logistical management skills of these four multinational organisations."

As well as establishing a common platform for waste procurement, the four companies are committed to developing recycling capabilities and ensuring design accommodation for optimum product recycling. "This initiative will encourage research and development into new recycling technologies and set up new ecological design principles," commented Kieren Mayers, Manager, Environmental Center Europe at Sony International (Europe). "It is predicted that a major beneficial effect of the platform will be significantly increased recycling rates of products, by incorporating new product designs at much more viable and lower cost."

"Effective product recycling and eco design of products benefits the environment, consumers and innovative companies," added Viktor Sundberg, Director of Electrolux Environment & European Affairs. "Through this initiative, Braun, Electrolux, HP and Sony include waste disposal into their business models to ensure that it becomes a core business driver."

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Editor's Notes:

Background to the WEEE Directive and the Initiative Proposed by Braun, Electrolux, HP and Sony

1 – Co-operating Companies

The four companies will be represented by the following parts of their organisations:

- AB Electrolux, Stockholm, Sweden,
- Braun GmbH, Kronberg, Germany,
- Hewlett Packard, Switzerland,
- Sony Europe GmbH, Berlin, Germany.

These organisations will promote the initiative throughout their respective organisations and affiliate companies across Europe.

2 – WEEE Directive

The WEEE-Directive outlines a new legal framework under which all producers are primarily obliged to contribute to or organise the disposal, recycling or recovery / reuse of the goods they put on the market after September 2005 (individual producer responsibility). In addition, producers are obliged to finance a proportion of the waste of products put on the market before September 2005 based on their market share.

The WEEE-Directive obliges electrical and electronic equipment producers to provide support services or have such services rendered to them. The services include logistics (collection and transport of waste), brokerage, financial accounting and analytical as well as administrative and management services.

3 – The Common Waste Procurement Platform

In view of the upcoming obligations of manufacturers of Electrical and Electronic products under the WEEE-Directive, Braun, Electrolux, HP and Sony will co-operate with respect to the evaluation, planning and operation of a European procurement Platform. This will enable them to achieve cost-efficient access to the required waste management services and comply efficiently with their obligations under the WEEE-Directive.

This Platform shall ensure the mutual and joint sourcing on a global or at least European-wide basis. It is intended to jointly set standards for the services to be purchased. However, each company is free to negotiate and conclude respective service contracts at their own discretion.

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