

POSITION PAPER

A Coherent Framework for an Ambitious Circular Economy in Europe

European Recycling Platform (ERP) welcomes the new package of measures from the EU as a further step towards delivering a circular economy. The Commission's proposals include consistent, constructive solutions for tackling resource scarcity without jeopardising the competitiveness of companies already building the circular economy.

ERP, as part of the Landbell group, is the only pan-European producer responsibility organisation (PRO) for WEEE, batteries and packaging. The group has collected more than 7 million tonnes of packaging, more than 2.5 million tonnes of e-waste and over 37,000 tonnes of portable batteries. With offices in 13 EU Member States, and partnerships across the rest of the EU and beyond, ERP is acknowledged in the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) sector as an industry-leading take-back scheme with vast compliance expertise.

PROs implement extended producer responsibility obligations and therefore play a crucial role in meeting ambitious recycling targets. In many EU countries, privately owned compliance schemes ensure waste is transformed into a valuable flow of resources in an environmentally safe way. Clear operating conditions and responsibilities, in a competitive environment, allow PROs to deliver high-quality service. As a truly European company, with more than 10 years' experience operating under various compliance frameworks, ERP makes the following recommendations to EU decision makers:

Fair competition in national waste markets

1. Today, in the EPR sector, a lack of **compliance with and/or lack of enforcement of** EU commercial and competition rules hinders implementation of waste legislation and hampers recycling performance. The new legal package must apply rules more rigorously in accordance with market principles, including free access to waste and fair competition in waste markets.
2. The **EU should publish** a common and harmonised set of **rules defining the roles and responsibilities** of each stakeholder - producers, compliance organisations, waste operators, and local authorities - to prevent individual interests overriding EU environmental principles.
3. A **single national EPR governance authority**, which is impartial and independent, should be empowered to clarify products in scope, register and monitor PROs in a transparent way, and combat free-riding; whilst ensuring fair access to and free movement of waste within each member state and across all EU member states.
4. In order to track recyclable waste streams accurately, a **straightforward and standardised reporting system** should be introduced across EU Member States, monitoring products and waste arising in Europe.

Adequate supervision of EPR schemes

5. We welcome the **minimum operating requirements** that will improve EPR schemes' effectiveness, operational and financial performance, governance and quality of data. However, EPR must not be over-regulated. Only an **open and dynamic market environment** can manage the transition to a circular economy. Furthermore, if some waste streams are allowed to remain outside PRO systems, they must be properly regulated, with the same standards as PRO systems, and their volumes must count towards meeting targets.
6. We propose minimum requirements to ensure PROs are approved in a clear and auditable way. This will ensure a **level playing field among PROs** in different Member States. However, such transparency should not hinder commercial freedom which remains a core principle of a competitive market.
7. As a pan-European company with extensive experience of operating in different regulatory environments, we welcome the Commission's approach to improving the **exchange of best practice** and cross-border cooperation to ensure good governance of EPR systems.