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# Opinion on the Commission's legislative proposals on the Cohesion Fund post-2020

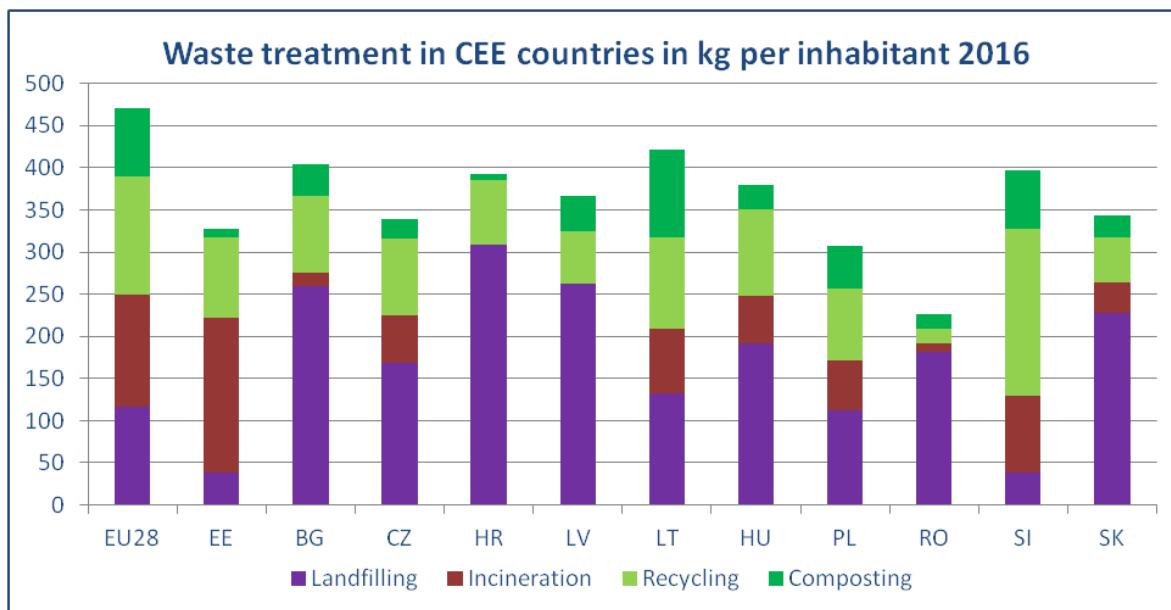
*Policy briefing*

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# Zero Waste Europe's opinion on the Commission's legislative proposals on the Cohesion Fund post-2020

## The Cohesion Fund post-2020: supporting transition to a Circular Economy

Despite of some progress in recent years, the recycling rates in Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries are still relatively low (approx 20%), with landfills remaining the main destination for residual waste. The Circular Economy legislation agreed at the EU level creates an opportunity to be either seized or missed for a long time, and it is key that the Cohesion Fund supports this transition, as the limited funds available will determine the direction that countries are moving to. In this context, CEE countries have the opportunity to invest in resource-efficient systems that prioritise separate collection, waste prevention and recycling as the best way to cut down landfilling.



**The Cohesion Policy post-2020 therefore provides a great opportunity to ensure that EU funds support waste management systems that maximise separate collection and recycling, rather than waste-to-energy.**

Priority should be given to those systems that are **flexible** and **ready to accept increasing amounts of recyclables**, which is expected as a result of the higher recycling targets set by waste legislation for 2035 within the Circular Economy package.

Making the transition to a circular economy a key policy objective for the future Cohesions fund is an important step towards this goal. However, the Commission's proposal presents few incoheneices that need to be addressed during the upcoming co-decision procedure:

1)Although the circular economy already constitutes a key policy objective of the future Cohesion fund, the proposed monitoring framework lacks indicators to capture trends in key areas of the circular economy such as waste prevention and re-use.

Therefore it will be essential to adjust the indicators framework, by adding indicators to ensure the progress towards a circular economy can be measured, as proposed below.

**Table 1: Proposed changes for indicators framework**

<b>RCO 34 - Additional capacity for waste prevention and recycling</b>	<b>RCR X - Waste generation per capita</b>
	<b>RCR X - Per capita waste sent to disposal and energy recovery</b>
	RCR 46 – Population served by waste recycling facilities and small waste management systems
	RCR 47 – Waste recycled
	<b>RCR 47A – Biowaste recycled</b>
	RCR 48 - Recycled waste used as raw materials
	<b>RCR 49A – Population served by waste preparing for re-use facilities</b>
	<b>RCR 49B – Waste prepared for re-use as defined in the Article 11a.1(b) of the Waste Framework Directive (EU) 2018/851</b>
	<b>RCR 49C – Indicators that the Commission has to establish by 31 March 2019 via the adoption of implementing acts to measure the overall progress in the implementation of waste prevention measures (Article 9.7 of the Waste Framework Directive (EU) 2018/851)</b>

2) Although the Commission's proposal excludes financial support to residual waste facilities from the scope of the Cohesion policy (Article 6), the corresponding intervention fields and indicators do include items related to residual waste treatment facilities. Specifically, the intervention field 043 (household waste management: mechanical biological treatment, thermal treatment) and output indicator RCR 49 (waste recovered) are activities that refer to residual waste treatment operations (see Annex 2).

The above mentioned references codes should be removed to ensure that coherence among the general objectives of the fund and the related provisions prevails.

**Table 2: Codes for the intervention field dimension**

<b>042</b> Household waste management: prevention, minimisation, sorting, recycling measures	<b>0%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>043 Household waste management: mechanical treatment, thermal treatment</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>044</b> Commercial , industrial or hazardous waste management	<b>0%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>045</b> Promoting the use of recycled materials as raw materials	<b>0%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>046</b> Rehabilitation of industrial sites and contaminated land	<b>0%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>047</b> Support to environmentally friendly production processes and resource efficiency in SMEs	<b>40%</b>	<b>40%</b>

**Table 3: Common output and result indicators for ERDF (Investment for jobs and growth and Interreg) and the Cohesion Fund**

<b>RCO 34 – Additional capacity for waste recycling</b>	RCR 46 – Population served by waste recycling facilities and small waste management systems
	RCR 47 – Waste recycled
	RCR 48 - Recycled waste used as raw materials
	<b>RCR 49 – Waste recovered</b>

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*Zero Waste Europe was created to empower communities to rethink their relationship with the resources. In a growing number of regions, local groups of individuals, businesses and city officials are taking significant steps towards eliminating waste in our society.*



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