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How to design and develop EPR for textiles in the EU?

Executive summary

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Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) is a central policy tool to address the environmental and economic burdens of the textile sector. This report highlights key points and strategic messages, aiming to serve as a useful guide for EU Member States embarking on the design of textile EPR schemes.

The Waste Framework Directive (after its revision by Directive (EU) 2025/1892) introduces a binding obligation for all Member States to establish textile EPR schemes. These schemes must ensure that producers assume financial responsibility, and, where appropriate, organisational responsibility, for the end-of-life management of textile and footwear products. A certain degree of harmonisation across Member States is essential to avoid market distortions, reduce administrative burdens, and ensure comparable data and performance outcomes across the EU.

This report identifies some key priority areas for policymakers to consider in the design of textile EPR schemes:

- Define a clear product scope and stakeholder responsibilities.** Textile EPR applies to clothing, household textiles, and footwear, with flexibility for Member States to expand the scope based on national needs. This report also clarifies the roles of key actors – producers, Producer Responsibility Organisations (PROs), public authorities, waste operators, and social economy entities – stressing the need for clearly defined responsibilities, transparent governance, and effective coordination mechanisms.
- Align EPR with the waste hierarchy and circular economy objectives.** EPR schemes must prioritise prevention as well as reuse and preparation for reuse ahead of recycling and disposal. Introducing binding targets will be essential to achieve the desired outcomes. Separate collection and recycling targets are important but insufficient unless complemented by reuse and repair measures that preserve the value of products and materials. Strengthening textile reuse systems and preparation for reuse should not only be an environmental priority but also a social opportunity through job creation and skill development in the workforce.
- Ensure the critical role of social economy actors.** Social economy organisations are historically key contributors to the collection, sorting, reuse, and preparation for reuse of textiles. The report highlights the need to protect their access to collected textiles, ensure fair compensation, support their development in the field of textile recycling, and ensure their representation in the policy design phase.

- **Define cost coverage and financial transparency.** Producers must cover the full costs of textile waste management, including collection, sorting, communication, data management, monitoring, enforcement, and the management of textiles found in mixed municipal waste. Transparent financial management and fair cost allocation are essential to ensure system credibility and long-term stability.
- **Safeguard data transparency, monitoring, and enforcement.** Reliable data systems, producer registers, and reporting obligations are identified as foundational elements of textile EPR that must be prioritised in the design of EPR and ongoing implementation. The report stresses the need for strengthened enforcement of obligations at the PRO-level, including sanctions for non-compliance, controls on online sales, traceability of collected textiles, and safeguards against illegal exports.

Textiles EPR, if well-designed and robustly enforced, can be a critical policy lever for shifting waste management and prevention costs from public authorities to producers. The recommendations outlined in this report would strengthen reuse and recycling markets and reduce the volume of textiles ending up in landfills and incinerators, becoming a catalyst for EU Member States to transition towards more circular textile systems.



Zero Waste Europe (ZWE) is the European network of communities, local leaders, experts, and change agents working towards a better use of resources and the elimination of waste in our society. We advocate for sustainable systems; for the redesign of our relationship with resources; and for a global shift towards environmental justice, accelerating a just transition towards zero waste for the benefit of people and the planet. www.zerowasteurope.eu



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Authors: Miriam Galindo Fernández, Gerard Marina Cortés (Boxes), Dr. Ignasi Puig Ventosa (Coord.) (Fundació ENT)
Editors: Andrea Vesela, Theresa Morsen, Nanna Bille Cornelsen, Jack McQuibban (ZWE)

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General information: hello@zerowasteeurope.eu

Media: news@zerowasteeurope.eu

Cities-related topics: cities@zerowasteeurope.eu

www.zerowasteeurope.eu

www.zerowastecities.eu

www.missionzeroacademy.eu

