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SHAM RECYCLING NEEDS TO BE AVOIDED

Only an unambiguous definition of recycling can further promote recycling practices throughout Europe

On 13 February 2007, the European Parliament voted on the proposal to revise the EU Waste Framework Directive. Since the Parliament's vote, the Council has continued the discussion on this issue. EUROFER and APEAL are concerned about the latest position of the German presidency concerning the definition of recycling.

The definition of "recycling" currently proposed by the German Presidency is so broad that some processes which lead to the destruction of a material would be considered as a recycling process. Only a definition based on the concept of "material to material recycling" is appropriate. Recycling implies that the material is maintained in the economy by incorporating it into new products placed on the market. The Waste Framework Directive should clearly differentiate the operations of recycling from the operations of recovery other than thermal energy recovery

A broader definition would undermine the credibility of the European waste policy and would particularly make the Thematic Strategy on the Prevention and Recycling of Waste meaningless. This opinion is shared by the European Environmental Bureau (EEB), which listed among the most important changes to be made in the Commission proposal: "*A clear definition of recycling (separating it from combustion, waste-to-fuel or 'chemical energy processes')...*" (EEB Memorandum to the German Presidency 01/2007).

In order to move towards a "Recycling Society", it is important that the legal definition of recycling matches what is actually perceived as recycling by the European citizen. The definition should also bring sufficient legal certainty to the recyclers. **Only a "material to material recycling" definition would fulfil those requirements.**

Steel being indefinitely recycled back into new steel products is one of the best examples of true recycling, since half a billion tonnes of scrap is being recycled every year worldwide, saving essential **resources in a sustainable and noble way.**

A clear definition of recycling and of all the other waste management options will also play a fundamental role in the implementation of the waste hierarchy.

Only an unambiguous definition of recycling, such as the one adopted in first reading by the European Parliament and which was quoted as acceptable by the European Commission can further promote recycling practices throughout Europe.

Any deviation from that would be detrimental to the credibility of the European waste policy. All processes leading to sham recycling must be excluded.

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