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The early warning report for Hungary

Accompanying the document

REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

on the implementation of EU waste legislation, including the early warning report for Member States at risk of missing the 2020 preparation for re-use/recycling target on municipal waste

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1. Introduction

This early warning report is part of the Commission's overall implementation report and aims to assist Member States at risk of failing to meet the 2020 target of 50 % preparation for re-use/recycling of municipal waste set out in Article 11(2)(a) of Directive 2008/98/EC. It builds on previous support provided by the Commission to help Member States comply[1] with EU law in the area of municipal waste management. This resulted in country-specific roadmaps[2] being drawn up for the relevant Member States.

The assessment underpinning the early warning report is based on a collaborative and transparent process involving the Member States concerned and an in-depth analysis of their most recent policy developments. This also involved extensive consultation with the authorities in charge of waste management.

The possible actions identified during this process are based on the existing best practices and aim to help Member States in meeting the 2020 municipal waste preparation for re-use/recycling target; they therefore focus on policy measures that can be taken forward in the short term. These actions should be seen as complementary to those recommended in the roadmaps that were drawn up as part of the preceding compliance promotion activities and to the recommendations made in the Environmental Implementation Review[3].

2. Key findings

In 2016, Hungary's municipal waste recycling rate (including composting) reported to Eurostat was 35 %, while the landfilling rate was 51 %. Based on an analysis of existing and firmly planned policies in the area of waste management, Hungary is considered at risk of missing the 2020 target of 50 % preparation for re-use/recycling of municipal waste.

The assessment[4] that underpins the early warning report concludes that despite the recent major reform of the waste management system in Hungary, the results of this shift in policy are not yet visible. The slow progress is due to a lack of incentives for households to participate in separate collection, and insufficient economic instruments to drive significant improvements in the sector.

The table below lists possible actions to support Hungary's efforts to improve its waste management.

[1] http://ec.europa.eu/environment/waste/framework/support_implementation.htm
[2] Roadmap for Hungary: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/waste/framework/pdf/facsheets%20and%20roadmaps/Roadmap_Hungary.pdf
[3] http://ec.europa.eu/environment/eir/country-reports/index2_en.htm
[4] Eunomia Research & Consulting *et al.* (2018) 'Study to identify Member States at risk of non-compliance with the 2020 target of the Waste Framework Directive and to follow-up phase 1 and 2 of the compliance promotion exercise. The early warning report: Hungary.'

OVERVIEW OF POSSIBLE ACTIONS TO IMPROVE PERFORMANCE

Separate collection

Since it is not yet known how well the newly established municipal waste management system is performing, the longer-term action will depend on the results of the reform. However, in the short term, the following actions could help improve performance:

1) Amendment to the minimum standards in the national waste management service plan to stipulate that a mandatory door-to-door separate collection of paper is required; service operators to provide this service to every street-level property in urban and suburban areas on at least a fortnightly basis.

2) Furthermore, should the national performance data indicate a lower municipal waste recycling rate than expected, introduction of the following additional changes to the minimum standards:
- **a.** a reduction in the available volume for residual waste collected from households; and
- **b.** a reduction in the frequency of residual waste collections from households.

Communication and awareness-raising

3) To maximise the effectiveness of the available budget for communication:
- **a.** Focus of the spending on the areas that already perform reasonably well, with the aim of encouraging them to do better; and therefore
- **b.** Linking investment to the various changes in recycling services occurring in different areas, focusing on those with good logistics where collection services have recently improved.

4) Consideration to be given to making additional funding available for communication activities, should there be a need to provide support at both local and national levels.

Longer-term priority actions

Economic incentives/waste charges

5) Consideration of reforming the service fee so that it serves as a better incentive for recycling. This could be done by introducing an additional performance tier above the current 'minimum standard' in the service fee. Under this scheme, those that achieve the higher standard would receive a higher 'correction fee' than those that reach the current minimum standard — which is set too low to encourage a substantial improvement in performance.

Technical support to municipalities

6) Further development of the evidence base for waste management optimisation in Hungary by Nemzeti Hulladékgazdálkodási Koordináló és Vagyonkezelő Zártkörűen (NHKV). This could be done by collecting from and sharing with municipalities and service operators information on best practice in terms of cost-effective system performance.

7) Use of the performance data to ensure that the variation in waste management systems across Hungary is kept to reasonable levels, with no more than five or six service solutions operating across the whole country.

8) Development of a system at national level that provides technical support for municipalities, specifically in the following areas:

- **a.** choosing collection services;
- **b.** service procurement;
- **c.** service management;
- **d.** communication campaigns;

coupled with active sharing of good ideas and practices that can improve efficiency in terms of cost reduction and improvement in performance.