



# THE DUTCH WEEE FLOWS

WHERE DO  
WEEE GO  
FROM HERE

2011 DUTCH E-WASTE QUANTIFICATION

STUDY COMMISSIONED BY

**Wecycle**

NVMP   
107-11110



## **Conclusions of the report**

**Speaker: Etienne Hendriks, Kyocera**

*\*\*\* Alleen de uitgesproken tekst geldt \*\*\**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Netherlands has been a leader in responsibly tackling e-waste. In nineteen ninety-nine, the world's first national system for the collection and recycling of discarded electrical appliances in Europe started here and producer responsibility was put into practice.

The Netherlands has been doing this within a European framework since the "Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Directive" took effect in two thousand and six. This WEEE directive followed the line that started here. The Netherlands has always been able to amply satisfy the uniform rules and objectives of the European Union. That is going to change, as was extensively noted today. The directive revision procedure, the so-called WEEE Recast, has reached its final stage and is expected to take effect in the next two years. The WEEE Recast sets ambitious objectives for the collection and recycling of e-waste, objectives that are just as far out of reach for the Netherlands as trailblazer as they are for almost all European countries.

Oddly enough, we don't know exactly how big a challenge lies before us. We understand the minimum percentages of e-waste that each member state must collect. But we have no exact insight into the amounts to which these percentages refer.

The directive offers a choice of two criteria for determining the volumes to be collected. In the first instance, it is the number of new appliances put on the market, designated as Put on Market. We can measure this volume based on the reports that producers must give to the national organisations for statistics in each

member state. The reports will still need to be revised for imports, exports, or return of new products, for example, but universal measurement throughout the entire European Union is within reach.

Put on Market, however, is a poor measuring tool. It measures the recent store sales and not what we really want to know: the number of appliances that are now actually being discarded. The comparison doesn't line up because we sell more electronics every year. In addition, these appliances are in many cases smaller, flatter and lighter than their predecessors. Innovation also skews the comparison: at the moment, for example, the sales of new LED lamps is just taking off, but it will be decades before these lamps are disposed of in large numbers.

For that reason, the directive offers an alternative criterion for the collection objectives: the amount actually discarded – WEEE Generated. In this case the comparison is good, but our offices of statistics can't tell us the number of discarded appliances. This requires study and a calculation model. That model has been developed by the United Nations University in the last few months and we are proud to be able to present this calculation model, along with the benchmark for the Netherlands, to you today.

The UNU model makes a connection between sales, possession and disposal at the end of the operational life. It also looks at the real disposable income in a country, which affects spending and investments and as a result, the expected number of discarded electrical appliances. The model can be further refined with information from other sources, but it already provides a very useful instrument for measuring the flow of e-waste produced.

When appliances are disposed of, that does not necessarily mean that they are also accessible to the collection system in the European member states. For example, some of the discarded appliances are legally exported for re-use abroad. In addition, some of the e-waste disappears underground and is exported illegally. A

third flow of appliances is disassembled or destroyed without any registration and is then no longer traceable.

For these three inaccessible flows, we need to make a correction in order to come to a fair and realistic starting point . Our performance in collection and recycling needs to be compared to what can actually be accessed: WEEE Generated within Reach.

*Slide projection:*

*Collection rate = accounted (and verified) collection*

*WEEE Generated -/- legal export -/- illegal export -/- unrecognisable*

In order to properly measure it, our collections must be registered and verified – you can see it in our calculation.

But that isn't as simple as it sounds. The individual and collective collection systems deliver their required report to the national monitoring institute each year. It is extremely important that this institute adopts an active position, checking the collection information received, revising it and asking for the completion of missing information where necessary.

E-waste collected by commercial parties and processed by recycling companies, however, escapes the watchful eye of even the most active monitoring institute. And this processing is only partially documented. Hidden beneath the non-documented flows lies a portion of illegal or inaccessible flows and the remainder consists of the appliances and energy-efficient lamps that disappear into the waste flow and are ultimately incinerated.

Slide projection:

Reported **7.5**  
 Documented **6.6**  
 Not (yet) documented **± 4.6**



Waste > incineration **2.3** Source: UNU

The UNU has traced these flows in the Netherlands and quantified the inaccessible flows as well as possible. We're pleased with this achievement, but only for lack of a better achievement. We would much prefer a system where much less is left to tracing and detecting and where electronic waste is registered and verified as much as possible. That would not only be a more transparent system, but also a more efficient and effective system.

We could achieve that system if all of the parties concerned worked together, from municipalities, shopkeepers and scrap dealers to recycling companies. According to the 'all actors' principle, each party should take responsibility for their own actions.

If that doesn't happen voluntarily, the responsibility should be incorporated in the law.

The WEEE Recast leaves room for this. On a number of points, the member states can further detail the rules and requirements in the implementation of the directive in national regulations. I'd like to give the legislators six recommendations to consider:

First of all, we recommend mandatory delivery, as has already been advocated by Eelco Smit this morning. If municipalities, retailers and other collectors are required to deliver all of the e-waste that they collect to a recognised collection system, all of this e-waste will also be registered and we will be able to recycle with the highest environmental efficiency.

If mandatory delivery is not considered feasible, then we advocate the alternative: mandatory registration. Every collector, trader and processor must register what happens to the waste flow and report this to the government. This will at least make the waste flows more visible and traceable.

Our third recommendation is an expansion of the collection by retailers. Currently, they are only required to accept old appliances when a new one is purchased. The new directive requires that large specialty shops with a retail area of more than 400m<sup>2</sup> accept old appliances without reservation. But the directive leaves room to apply the expanded mandatory collection more widely, not just to the large shops. This would create more collection points where the consumer can easily deposit discarded small electronics while shopping. Increasing the ease of delivery for consumers means less e-waste in the rubbish bin.

Fourth recommendation: we support the argument for a qualified export prohibition. Anyone wanting to export electrical consumer appliances to developing countries for re-use will need to possess a certificate indicating that the appliances

still work. A declaration for each appliance would be preferable, because this would best limit illegal exportation of e-waste. In addition, care must be taken that this prohibition has no negative effects on the re-use and refurbishment programmes for professional equipment, such as medical equipment, servers or telecom equipment.

Our fifth recommendation is to strictly enforce the rules. An efficient system is made or broken by disciplined execution and is undermined by illegal practices and free riders. It is the national government's responsibility to guard against this.

Our sixth and final recommendation concerns harmonisation within Europe. If all of the member states employ a single set of standards for monitoring, collection, transport and processing, they can compare their practices and performance and learn from each other. This encourages states to collect as much e-waste as well as possible, resulting in maximum recovery of raw materials and avoidance of emissions and pollution.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In the months ahead, we will, hopefully, take great strides towards a transparent, efficient electronics cycle. We are also assured of new insights in that cycle, such as those found in the report by the United Nations University. I would now like to offer the first copies to Ellen Brinksma, Stéphane Arditi, Hiroyuki Furukawa and Jason Linnell. Please come forward.

Thank you.