FERVER
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Fédération Européenne des Recycleurs de Verre

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POLICY PAPER

Priorities for Glass Recyclers (2024 – 2029)

FERVER is the European Federation of Glass Recyclers. Our federation currently consists of 38 members spread across 15 EU- Member States and 4 other countries. They recycle around 70% of the packaging glass waste collected in Europe.

Executive Summary

This policy paper outlines the four main priorities for glass recyclers from 2024 to 2029, focusing on improving recycling efficiency, enhancing material quality, and fostering economic opportunities within the sector.

The recommendations herein address regulatory frameworks surrounding end-of-life vehicles, glass packaging recyclability, the revision of end-of-waste regulation, and the incentivisation of proper sorting of construction and demolition waste.

By adopting these priorities, stakeholders can significantly contribute to sustainable practices and environmental goals while supporting the circular economy.

1. End of Life Vehicles Regulation: Mandatory Dismantling of Glass Components

Priority description

FERVER strongly supports the proposed pre-dismantling obligation outlined in Article 30 of the Commission's End of Life Vehicles (ELV) Regulation proposal. This regulation mandates the dismantling of glass components—specifically windshields, rear and side windows, prior to the recycling of end-of-life vehicles. It should also include glass roofs and glass light covers.

Rationale

The dismantling of glass components prior to shredding is critical for improving the availability of glass for recycling. Glass that is shredded, even after applying the most sophisticated post

shredder technologies (PST's) cannot achieve the minimum quality standards required for effective recycling. As the demand for recycled glass is consistently high, it allows recyclers to process glass immediately after dismantling ensuring its availability, mainly under End of Waste status, for packaging or flat glass applications, thereby closing the recycling loop.

Moreover, the pre-dismantling obligation will enable the recycling of the Polyvinyl Butyral (PVB) layer present between glass layers in laminated windshields. The PVB fraction holds significant economic potential and contributes to sustainable practices in the polymer's recycling industry. Without the pre-dismantling of the laminated windshields, there is no possibility to recycle the PVB layer.

2. Enhancing Recyclability of Glass Packaging

Priority Description

A critical priority for glass recyclers is the establishment of recyclability criteria under the Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation (PPWR) that reflect the realities faced in glass recycling facilities across Europe and that enhance glass packaging recyclability.

Rationale

FERVER advocates for recyclability criteria that accurately reflect the technical and economic realities faced in glass recycling facilities across Europe. The recyclability criteria must be designed to enhance glass packaging recyclability as from its design (design for recycling integrated in ecodesign) and affirm glass's status as the leading material for closed-loop recycling.

3. Revision of the End of Waste Regulation for Packaging Glass and setup of End of Waste criteria for flat glass.

Priority Description

The current End of Waste Regulation (EU Regulation No 1179/2012) governs the trading and export of glass cullet as Furnace Ready Cullet (FRC) for remelting in glass applications.

FERVER calls for a revision of this regulation to align with advancements in glass production technologies, which now allow the remelting of previously unqualified glass fractions.

Additionally, while revising the regulation for packaging glass, it is important to establish also similar criteria for flat glass cullet. The criteria for an End of Waste status for flat glass should be aligned with those for packaging, integrating the specific requirements applied to the production of high quality flat glass to ensure comprehensive recycling practices.

Rationale

As technology in the glass production sector evolves, it is essential that regulatory frameworks keep pace. Revising the End of Waste Regulation will enable glass cullet that meets updated technological capabilities to be recognized as non-waste, promoting its trade between Member States and enhancing recycling rates.

At the same time, trade should also be promoted of recycled flat glass cullet. Therefore a similar end of waste status should be created.

4. Incentivizing Adequate Sorting of Construction and Demolition Waste

Priority Description

A crucial priority for the glass recycling industry is the creation of a legislative framework that promotes the effective sorting of construction and demolition (C&D) waste, with a particular emphasis on recycling waste glass. At present, only a small fraction of glass from C&D sources is recycled, highlighting a significant untapped opportunity. Together with end-of-life vehicles (ELVs), C&D waste represents one of the most important sources of glass for recycling.

By improving the legislative framework and enhancing the sorting of this material at the source in order to avoid contaminations (for instance through pre-demolition audits, mandatory selective collection targets inspired by the ones in the PPWR, etc.), we can substantially boost the availability of flat glass cullet and advance our recycling goals.

Rationale

Currently landfilling/backfilling and the use of waste glass as aggregates is the most predominant disposal method of construction and demolition waste glass. On the other hand there is a consistent high demand for glass cullet in the market. Given the additional potential for CO_2 reduction of glass cullet, addressing this issue by creating a more supportive EU regulatory environment is imperative to increase the availability of flat glass cullet and help the EU reach its climate mitigation objectives.

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Conclusion

The proposed priorities for glass recyclers from 2024 to 2029 are critical to advancing recycling capabilities, improving material quality, and fostering economic growth in the glass recycling sector. By supporting the mandatory dismantling of glass components from end-of-life vehicles, enhancing packaging recyclability, revising the End of Waste Regulation, and incentivizing the sorting of construction and demolition waste, stakeholders can play a pivotal role in promoting sustainable practices and achieving circular economy objectives.

These initiatives will not only benefit the glass recycling industry but also significantly contribute to environmental protection and climate change mitigation.

This policy paper provides a comprehensive overview of the key priorities and rationales for the glass recycling sector. For further discussion or collaboration on these initiatives, stakeholders are encouraged to engage with FERVER.