



umweltbundesamt

STUDY ON QUALITY STANDARDS FOR THE TREATMENT OF WEEE - OVERVIEW

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ENVIRONMENT AGENCY AUSTRIA **umweltbundesamt**

STUDY ON QUALITY STANDARDS FOR THE TREATMENT OF WEEE

- **Conducted on behalf of the European Commission by**
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CONTENT

- **Background and objectives of the study**
- **Tasks performed**
- **Main/selected outcomes**

BACKGROUND – MINIMUM TREATMENT REQUIREMENTS FOR WEEE

- **EU minimum treatment requirements remained unchanged since the original WEEE Directive**
- In 2013 the **Commission mandated CENELEC** to develop European standards for WEEE treatment to assist implementation of uniform WEEE treatment conditions
- However, still evidence of **inconsistent implementation of WEEE treatment requirements** throughout the EU, e.g. the “WEEE compliance promotion initiative”
- The WEEE Directive (Article 8(5)) provides the option for the Commission to **adopt implementing acts laying down minimum quality standards for the treatment of WEEE** based in particular on the European standards, in order to ensure uniform conditions for the implementation of the Directive.

OVERALL OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

To assist the European Commission in the:

- 1) **possible preparation of an Implementing Act** laying down **requirements for the quality treatment of WEEE in the EU** complementing those in the WEEE Directive, or any other policy option to be identified
- 2) preparation of a **Delegated Act** laying down the **criteria for the assessment of equivalent conditions for the treatment of WEEE outside the EU** based on a re-assessment of the options identified in a study carried out in 2013.

OVERVIEW ON MAIN TASKS

- 1 - Analysis of the **European Standards for the treatment of WEEE** prepared by CENELEC, EN 50625 series, EN 50614) in relation to the requirements of the WEEE Directive
- 2 - Analysis of the **situation and experience** as regards the implementation of the WEEE treatment requirements **in all Member States**
- 3 - **Analysis of different options for implementing the requirements for treatment of WEEE in economic, environmental and social terms**
- 4 - Analysis of the options for the assessment of equivalent conditions for WEEE treatment taking place outside the European Union
- 5 - Organization of **seminars in 6 Member States** (GR, DE, NL, CZ, SE, ES)

OUTCOME OF THE ANALYSIS OF THE CENELEC STANDARDS IN RELATION TO EU (WEEE) LEGISLATION

- The relevant provisions of the WEEE Directive are **addressed adequately** in the standardisation deliverables under the mandate M/518 in most cases
- Most requirements in the EN 50625 series are considered **specifications** of provisions of the WEEE Directive or other EU law.
- But also a substantial amount of requirements are considered **going beyond the WEEE Directive**, examples are:
 - requirements for specific types of equipment, which are not explicitly laid down in the WEEE Directive, such as PV panels
 - requirements concerning methodologies for sampling, sample preparation and analyses
 - requirements concerning documentation
- Overall, the standards do **not distinguish** between requirements derived directly from the WEEE Directive or other relevant EU law, and requirements that go beyond these requirements

IMPACTS OF SETTING ADDITIONAL EU WEEE TREATMENT REQUIREMENTS BASED ON CENELEC STANDARDS

Scenario 1 Business-as-usual

Maintaining EU WEEE treatment requirements as set out in Directive 2012/19/EU, certain share of facilities working in compliance with the provisions of the CENELEC standards or advanced national requirements

(12 MS have introduced specific treatment requirements in addition to those specified in the WEEE Directive, including obligatory compliance with CENELEC/WEEELABEX standards, several Member States where PROs request compliance)

Scenario 2 Setting additional EU wide WEEE treatment requirements

Requiring compliance with those elements of the CENELEC standards expected to have highest environmental, health and social impacts, all facilities working in compliance

CONCLUSIONS AS REGARDS SETTING ADDITIONAL EU WEEE TREATMENT REQUIREMENTS BASED ON THE CENELEC STANDARDS

- **Significant positive impacts on the environment and human health. Some specific requirements have the potential to create new jobs.**
- **Improving collection and handling of specific WEEE categories could contribute substantially to avoiding releases of pollutants during waste management and to increasing preparing for re-use possibilities**
- **Treatment not corresponding to CENELEC standards is currently found more often for small and large equipment than for processing lamps, temperature exchange equipment and screens. → Highest impacts, both as regards costs as well as environmental and social benefits.**
- **In particular for requirements that could be associated with „high“ costs (removal of BFR plastics, removal of blowing agents from insulation foam of TEE), EU-wide requirements have to be as clear as possible to avoid divergent implementation/unfair competition.**

2 GENERAL OPTIONS AS REGARDS POSSIBLE ADDITIONAL EU WEEE TREATMENT REQUIREMENTS

Option 1

Require, in substance, compliance with the complete CENELEC standards. In principle, this would correspond to the (full) content of the standards to be “taken over” in the EU WEEE legislation or derived act(s).

Option 2

Lay down specific/selected additional minimum treatment requirements for WEEE in the European WEEE legislation both based on the CENELEC standards and also taking into account provisions of national legislation identified as particularly relevant in the context of the present study.

Proposed Approach

Option 2

Lay down specific/selected additional minimum treatment requirements for WEEE in the European WEEE legislation both based on the CENELEC standards and also taking into account provisions of national legislation identified as particularly relevant in the context of the present study.

→ Outline of specific/selected additional minimum treatment requirements for WEEE, which could be laid down in the European WEEE legislation

EXAMPLES WITH RELEVANCE FOR (PREPARING FOR) RE-USE

- **Training of staff: must include information on how to identify WEEE potentially fit to be prepared for re-use**
- **Collection, handling and transport:**
 - No crushing or compacting of any kind of WEEE prior to treatment.
 - No transport in bulk containers in a loose form of specified WEEE types/categories.
 - No tipping of containers. Obligation to use robust containers, stacking WEEE in a stable manner.
 - Obligatory weatherproof covering
- **Record taking at collection and treatment facilities - including recovery and recycling/preparing for re-use facilities - shall be performed in accordance to the provisions in EN 50625-1: 2014, clause 4.4 and Annex G.**
- **Operators of collection points must not carry out any form of treatment or preparing for re-use of WEEE, except for the removal of lamps, batteries etc., unless the site has a permit for treatment of WEEE.**

EXAMPLES WITH RELEVANCE FOR (PREPARING FOR) RE-USE

- **Preparing for re-use activities/facilities**
 - **Minimum contents of an obligatory management system**
 - Details of the visual inspection procedures including criteria for segregation of WEEE / reusable EEE
 - Details of the electrical safety tests
 - Details of testing energy consumption and criteria for segregation of WEEE / reusable EEE
 - Details of functional tests including criteria for segregation of WEEE / reusable EEE
 - Details of data erasure procedures
 - Requirements related to quality assurance of the preparing for re-use process and the equipment intended for re-use
 - Details related to repair and harvesting of components
 - Specifications as regards user information (labelling of used EEE for remarketing etc.)

OUTLOOK

- **Publication of the study report**

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