Circular Economy in EU policy
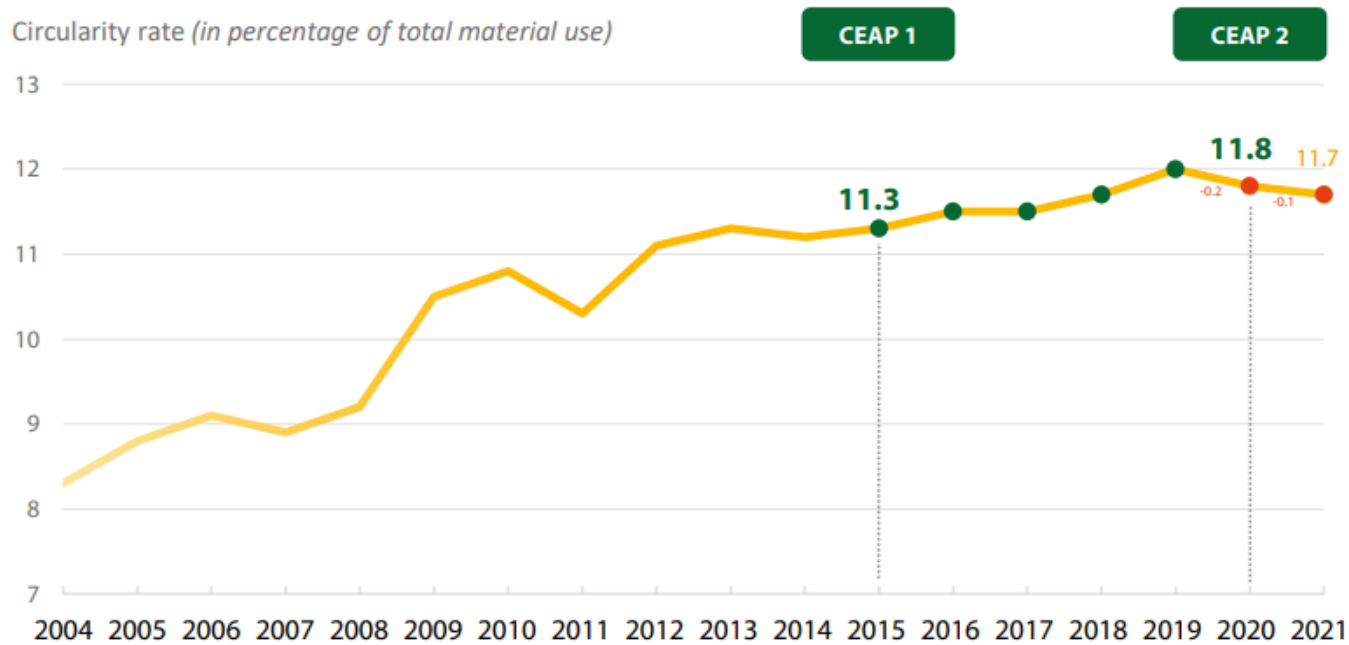
Florian FLACHENECKER | European Commission | DG Environment

Joint OECD/UNECE Seminar on Implementation of SEEA | 18-20 March 2024

Need for action
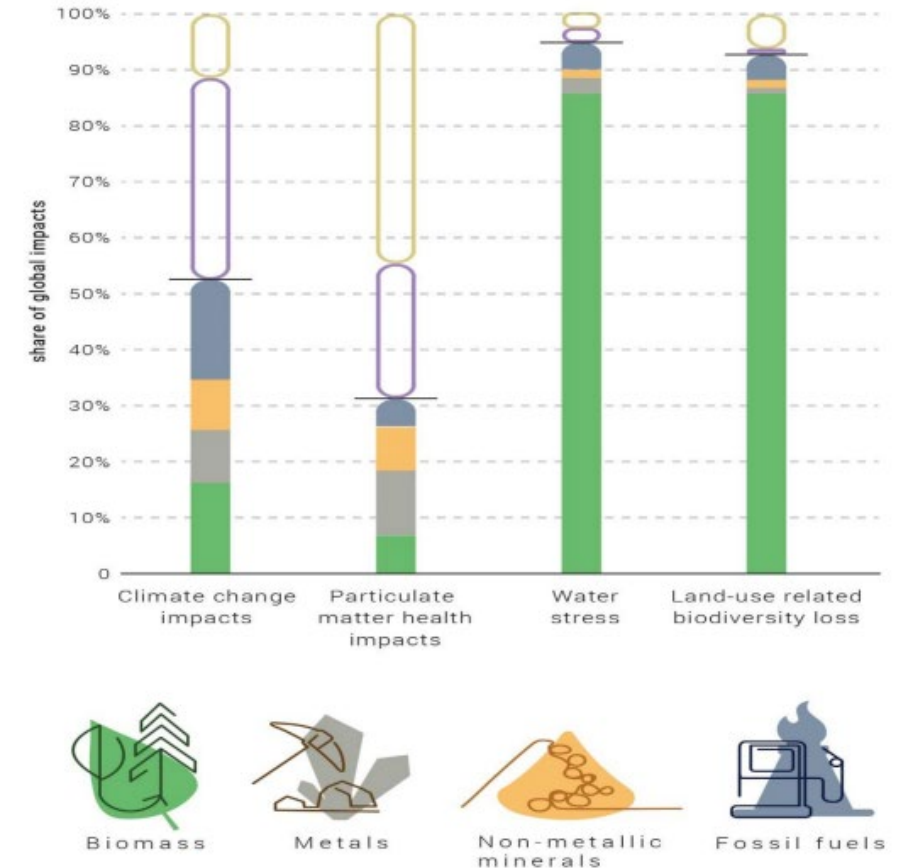
Closing the loop – slow progress

Source: European Court of Auditors (2023). Circular economy Slow transition by member states despite EU action
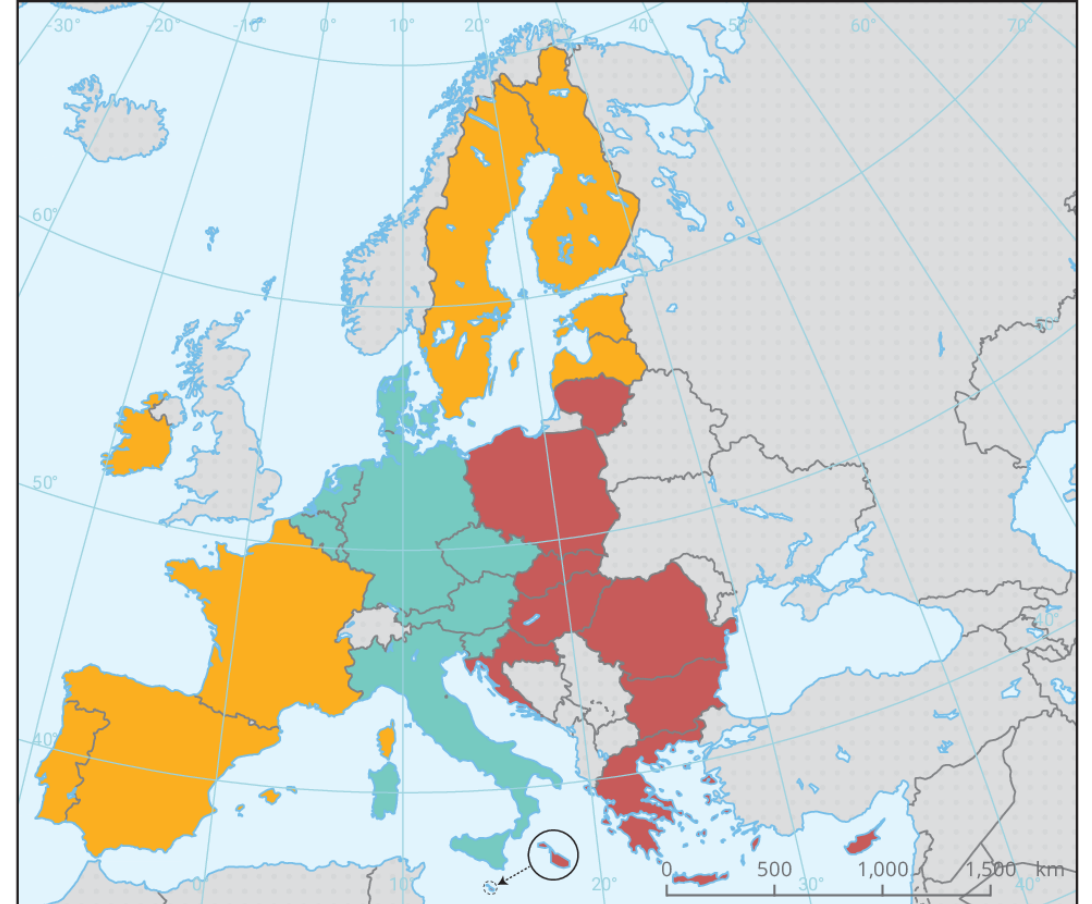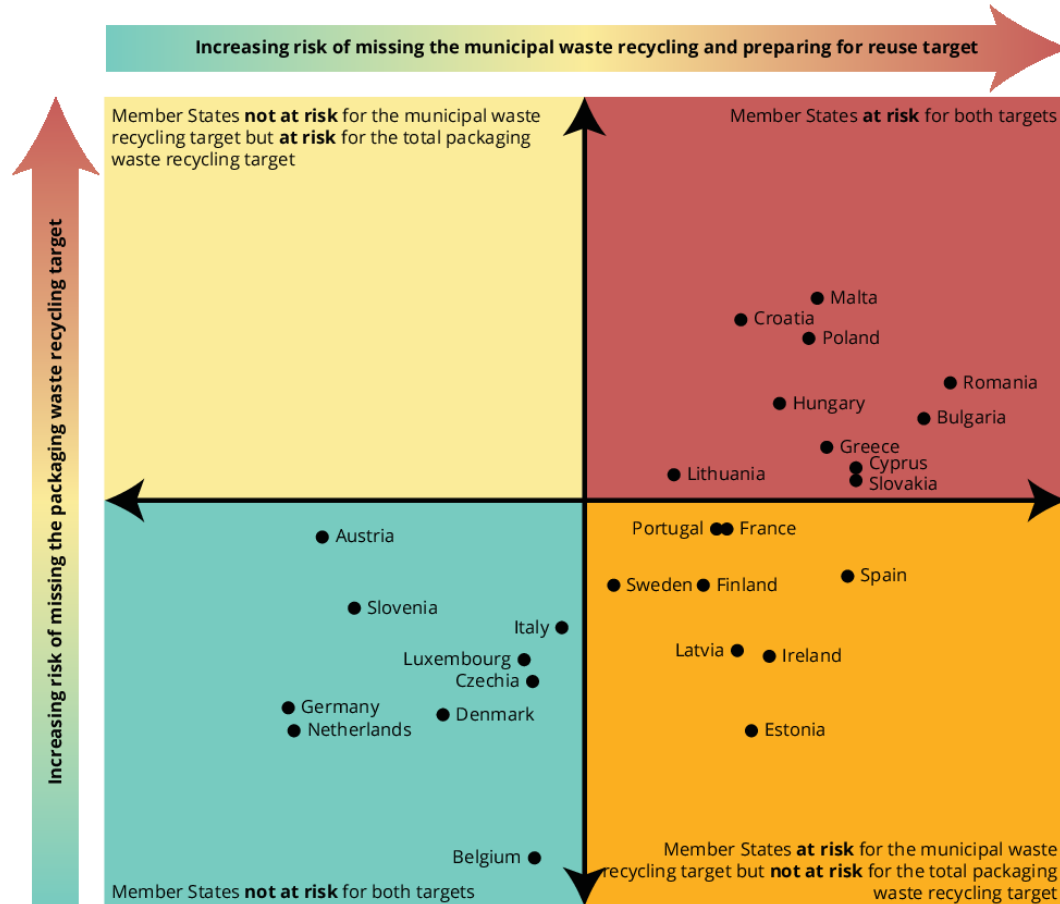
| Competitiveness | Resilience | Social/health |

Global impact by material resource type

Source: IRP (2019), Global Resources Outlook 2019. Summary for Policymakers

Increasing risk of missing the municipal waste recycling and preparing for reuse target

Increasing risk of missing the packaging waste recycling target

Member States **not at risk** for the municipal waste recycling target but **at risk** for the total packaging waste recycling target

Member States **at risk** for both targets

- Malta
- Croatia
- Poland
- Romania
- Hungary
- Bulgaria
- Greece
- Cyprus
- Lithuania
- Slovakia

- Austria
- Portugal
- France
- Slovenia
- Sweden
- Finland
- Spain
- Italy
- Luxembourg
- Latvia
- Ireland
- Czechia
- Germany
- Denmark
- Netherlands
- Estonia

- Belgium

Member States **not at risk** for both targets

Member States **at risk** for the municipal waste recycling target but **not at risk** for the total packaging waste recycling target
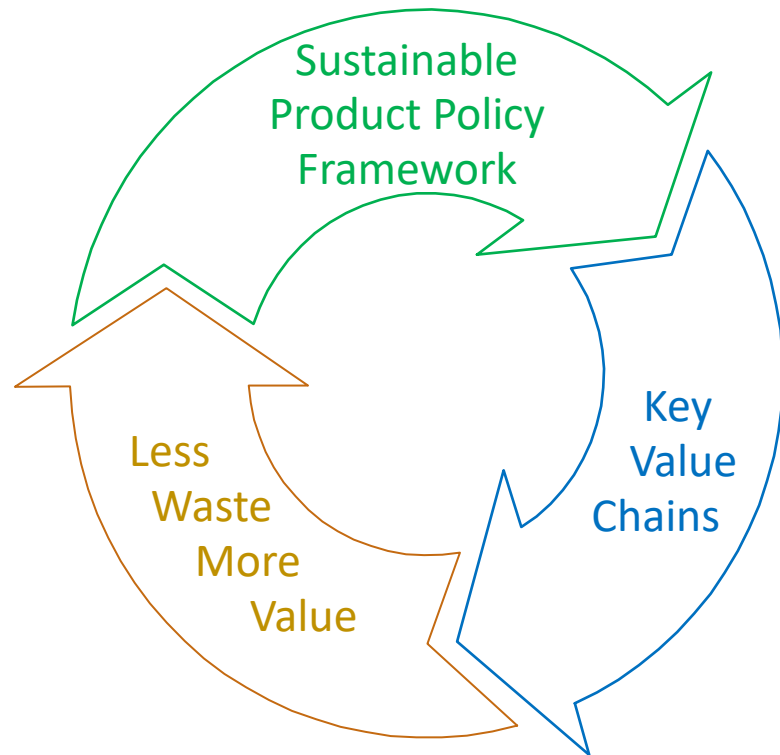
Reference data: ©ESRI

Prospects for EU Member States of meeting the recycling targets for municipal waste and packaging waste

Risk score

- Member states not at risk for both targets
- Member States not at risk for the municipal waste recycling target but at risk for the total packaging waste recycling target
- Member States at risk for the municipal waste recycling target but not at risk for the total packaging waste recycling target
- Member states at risk for both targets
- Outside coverage

3

The European Green Deal

- CLIMATE PACT AND CLIMATE LAW
- INVESTING IN MORE SUSTAINABLE, SMARTER MOBILITY
- MOBILISING INDUSTRY FOR A CLEAN AND CIRCULAR ECONOMY
- ELIMINATING POLLUTION
- ENSURING A JUST TRANSITION FOR ALL
- FINANCING GREEN PROJECTS
- MAKING HOMES ENERGY EFFICIENT
- LEADING THE GREEN CHANGE GLOBALLY
- FROM FARM TO FORK
- PROTECTING NATURE
- PROMOTING CLEAN ENERGY

European Commission

Circular Economy Action Plan

Sustainable Product Policy Framework

Key Value Chains

Less Waste More Value

Make sustainable products the norm
Empower consumers and public buyers
Sustainable production processes

Electronics & ICT
Batteries & vehicles
Packaging
Plastics
Textiles
Construction & buildings
Food, water & nutrients

Waste prevention (re-use, durability)
Reduce problematic waste exports
Markets for secondary raw materials

35 actions & new approach

European Commission

Design phase – Ecodesign for sustainable products

Up to **80%** of a product's lifecycle environmental impact is determined at design stage

The provisionally agreed Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation will address the design of products placed on EU market to support circularity

Key criteria are:
- Durability, reliability, reusability, upgradability
- Reparability, possibility of maintenance and refurbishment
- Presence of substances of concern
- Energy use or energy efficiency
- Resource use or resource efficiency
- Recycled content
- Possibility of remanufacturing and recycling
- Possibility of recovery of materials
- Environmental impacts, including carbon and environmental footprint
- Expected generation of waste materials

European Commission

Use phase – empowering consumers

Consumer choices also depend on receiving adequate information on products

- Introduction of information requirements and a Digital Product Passport
- Introduce rules to strengthen consumer protection against untrustworthy or false environmental claims -> ban greenwashing and practices misleading consumers
- Tackle false environmental claims and create a level playing field for businesses
- Introduce measures to make repair easier and more attractive

European Commission

End-of-life phase – waste management

Waste prevention

- Reduction targets for complex waste streams (e.g. food)
- Extended producer responsibility schemes (e.g. textiles, end-of-life vehicles, packaging)

Re-use & recycle

- Mainstream re-use, preparing for re-use and recycling
- Assess the scope to develop further EU-wide end-of-waste criteria for certain waste streams

Waste exports

- Revise the Waste Shipment Regulation to facilitate/digitalise intra-EU And condition extra-EU shipments
- Facilitate shipments to recovery facilities, which are subject to pre-consents by the competent authorities

Waste hierarchy

PREVENTION — PRODUCT (NON-WASTE)

PREPARING FOR RE-USE

RECYCLING

RECOVERY — WASTE

DISPOSAL

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Delivery

2020

- New Batteries Regulation
- Green City Accord
- Pact for Skills and Revision of the Skills Agenda

2021

- Global Alliance on Circular Economy and Resource Efficiency
- Review of EU rules on concentration limits of persistent organic pollutants (POPs)
- Proposal for a revision of the EU Waste Shipment Regulation

9

2022

SPRING PACKAGE

- Proposal for a Regulation on Ecodesign for Sustainable Products
- EU Strategy for Sustainable and Circular Textiles
- Updated EU consumer rules to empower consumers for the green transition
- Revision of Construction Products Regulation

AUTUMN PACKAGE

- Policy framework on bio-based, biodegradable and compostable plastics
- Revision of the Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation
- Proposal for a Regulation on certification for carbon removals

2023

- Directive on substantiation and communication of explicit environmental claims
- Proposal on common rules promoting the repair of goods
- Revision of Circular Economy Monitoring Framework
- EU Taxonomy for Sustainable Finance criteria for circularity
- Targeted revision of the Waste Framework Directive for textiles and food
- Revision of rules on Circular Vehicles
- Regulation on preventing pellet losses to reduce microplastic pollution

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Information needs & way forward

- Information needs increased significantly for (i) impact assessments, and (ii) monitoring implementation of legislation (including legally binding targets)

- Data needs become (very) granular and specific, often within heterogeneous legal circumstances across EU Member States (e.g. on waste and non-waste status)

- Challenges for data management (Eurostat, EEA, JRC, etc.) and ensuring the quality, consistency and coherence of official statistics

- Information/data need indispensable for policy making, but reporting obligations need to be minimised to reduce administrative burden (assessment of existing requirements, digital solutions)

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Thank you