

# Briefing

## The EU Circular Economy and Clean Air packages under threat

### Don't let them get thrown away

The new EU president, Jean Claude Juncker, is planning to abandon the Circular Economy and Clean Air packages, which are designed to improve resource efficiency and air quality in Europe. This would have a hugely detrimental impact on the environment, people's health and the economy, as well as the future direction of Europe.

The Commission's own estimates suggest that the proposed revised Clean Air package would prevent as many as 58,000 premature deaths from air pollution each year by 2030, and health benefits alone would save society €40-140 billion in external costs. The proposal would add the equivalent of around 100 000 additional jobs due to increased productivity and competitiveness because of fewer workdays lost, and it is estimated to have a positive net impact on economic growth.

The Commission have also estimated that full implementation of the Circular Economy package would create over 580,000 jobs, and generate net savings of €600bn (£475bn). At the same time, it would make business more competitive and reduce demand for and dependency on costly scarce resources from outside the continent.

There is a very broad consensus in Europe and in the UK amongst industry groups and associations, major companies, NGOs and municipalities that the Circular Economy package offers huge potential for green job creation, resource security, environmental protection and economic growth.

### Wrong direction

These developments also represent a wider debate about what Europe is for. The EU must not do less on the environment in favour of cutting regulations for business, or confuse a focus on growth, jobs and competitiveness as a requirement to stop safeguarding the environment and people's health.

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For more than 40 years we've seen that the wellbeing of people and planet go hand in hand – and it's been the inspiration for our campaigns. Together with thousands of people like you we've secured safer food and water, defended wildlife and natural habitats, championed the move to clean energy and acted to keep our climate stable. Be a Friend of the Earth – see things differently.

Friends of the Earth is extremely concerned to hear these plans, and we urge the European Commission to change its mind and retain these packages for the long term benefit to Europe's health, environment, economy and competitiveness.

We also call on MEPs to forcefully oppose these packages being dropped, and on member states – in particular the UK – to speak up and make it clear that this isn't what they want.

### **What's in the Circular Economy package**

[The Circular Economy package](#) covers a broad spectrum of resource-related areas including materials, food, buildings and waste disposal. It includes targets for recycling 70% of municipal waste and 80% of packaging by 2030, and a ban on landfilling of all recyclable and biodegradable waste by 2025. The package also includes “aspirational” goals (not legally enforceable), such as a 30% reduction of waste by 2025 and a 30% reduction in marine litter by 2020.

### **What's in the Clean Air package**

[The Clean Air Policy package](#) proposes a new Clean Air Programme for Europe, a revised National Emission Ceilings Directive and a new Directive to reduce pollution from medium-sized combustion installations. The National Emission Ceilings Directive is the section under threat.

This critically-important section of the Clean Air Policy would extend the time horizon for legally binding emission ceilings to 2030 and is the only way to reduce cross-border pollution in the EU and improve the air we breathe.

### **Further information**

[www.foe.co.uk/page/reducing-consumption](http://www.foe.co.uk/page/reducing-consumption)

[www.foeurope.org/resource-use-in-depth](http://www.foeurope.org/resource-use-in-depth)

Air pollution briefing - [www.foe.co.uk/sites/default/files/downloads/air-pollution-briefing-21993.doc](http://www.foe.co.uk/sites/default/files/downloads/air-pollution-briefing-21993.doc)

Take action at <http://www.foe.co.uk/throwaway>

Contact Becky Slater, Friends of the Earth: [becky.slater@foe.co.uk](mailto:becky.slater@foe.co.uk)

Twitter: [@foeeru](https://twitter.com/foeeru)

### **Media**

BBC - [Clean air and recycling laws at risk in EU](#)

Guardian - [EU plans to scrap clean air and waste recycling laws](#)

Guardian - [European Commission to decide fate of circular economy package](#)