

EU Policy: Solar panel makers to pay for their waste

Legislative update follows ruling from the EU Court of Justice related to products marketed before 2012.

Waste from solar photovoltaic (PV) panels will be collected, treated and recovered at the expense of manufacturers, following a vote by energy ministers meeting in Brussels today (March 4).

Ministers at the Transport, Telecommunications and Energy (TTE) Council cast their vote on amendments to the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment bill today to align it with a 2022 ruling from the EU Court of Justice declaring the EU's law "partially invalid" due to an "unjustified retroactive application".

Today's vote established that costs of management and disposal of waste from photovoltaic panels placed on the market after 13 August 2012, the year the law was adopted by the co-legislators, rest with the manufacturers.

In addition, producers of electrical and electronic gear that were placed in the EU market after 2018, the year the European Commission adopted a set of guidelines to ease national implementation, will also be responsible for managing waste in an environmentally sound way.

The volume of electrical and electronic equipment placed on the EU market jumped from 7.6 million tonnes in 2012 to 13.5 million tonnes in 2021, according to EU data. Between 2012 and 2021, the total collection of the equipment increased from three million tonnes to 4.9 million tonnes with recycling practices varying at EU level.

Korrina Hegarty, Environment Senior Policy Director at APPLiA, a trade association representing home appliances, welcomed the European Commission review clause due in 2026 and noted the sector is eager to collaborate with the EU executive to investigate the challenges and potential future solutions to improve the level of e-waste collected and treated across the EU.

"Waiting for 2026 to kick off the process would mean wasting another two precious years," Stéphane Arditi, the European Environment Bureau's director for circular economy, industry and climate told Euronews.

The amended bill on electronic waste will enter into force after being signed by the presidents of the European Parliament and the Council.

Source: [EURONEWS](#)