

(English version)

Question for written answer E-001289/25
to the Commission
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(27 March 2025)

Subject: Classification of clippings and prunings as waste

Directive 2008/98/EC, as amended by European Parliament legislative resolution P9_TA(2024)01451 ⁽¹⁾, establishes the legislative framework for waste management in the EU, defining the criteria for distinguishing between waste and by-products. However, clippings and prunings from public and private garden maintenance are still classed as waste, with management and administrative burdens for those working in the sector.

This classification seems to clash with the principles of the circular economy promoted in the same directive, which encourages reuse and recovery where possible. Furthermore, treating clippings and prunings as waste comes at a cost and limits their use for agricultural or landscape purposes, despite the fact that they would not even need any complex treatment to be put to good use.

In view of the above:

1. Will the Commission simplify the management of clippings and prunings to encourage their use in the circular economy?
2. Will it review their classification to take account of the directive's principles of prevention and reuse?

Submitted: 27.3.2025

Answer given by Ms Roswall on behalf of the European Commission
(3 July 2025)

The classification as waste first and foremost ensures traceability and accountability of waste producers and haulers notably to prevent the illegal discard of waste, including dumping in nature or illegally landfilling, of safety issues which could arise by managing waste or certain types of waste.

In parallel, to promote the recovery of recycled and organic materials (such as clippings and prunings), the regulation on fertilising Products ⁽¹⁾ allows material that constitutes waste, as defined in the Waste Framework Directive ⁽²⁾, to cease to be waste, if it is contained in a compliant EU fertilising product.

The regulation provides harmonised conditions for making fertilisers made from such recycled or organic materials available on the entire internal market, to provide an important incentive for their further use.

In all cases, Member States have the freedom to set such end of waste criteria at national level in order to facilitate its further usage, if a number of criteria are met to ensure safety, as set by per Article 6 of the Waste Framework Directive.

To further facilitate the process and in a view of simplification and further harmonisation, the Circular Economy Act which the Commission intends to adopt by end 2026 will propose improvements in the procedures for the adoption of national and EU-level 'end of waste' criteria to facilitate the transition from waste to valuable secondary raw materials.

¹ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2024-0145_EN.pdf

⁽¹⁾ Regulation (EU) 2019/1009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 June 2019 laying down rules on the making available on the market of EU fertilising products and amending Regulations (EC) No 1069/2009 and (EC) No 1107/2009 and repealing Regulation (EC) No 2003/2003, OJ L170/1, 25.6.2019, p 1-114.

⁽²⁾ Directive 2008/98/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 November 2008 on waste and repealing certain Directives, OJ L 312, 22.11.2008, p. 3-30.