

Brussels, 26 October 2017

Good for the circular economy, good for industry: RoHS amendment outcome a win-win for all stakeholders

By adopting a Directive revising the scope of the 2011 Directive on the restriction of the use of certain hazardous substances in electrical and electronic equipment (RoHS Directive), the EU institutions have this week achieved a win-win outcome that furthers the goals of the circular economy while addressing the practical requirements of industry.

For the companies represented by Orgalime, the European Engineering Industries Association, this is most welcome news. “We extend our warm congratulations and thanks to the European Commission, the European Parliament and Rapporteur MEP Vălean, and the Estonian and Maltese Presidencies that paved the way for the adoption of this deal in record time,” commented Adrian Harris, Director General of Orgalime. “By adopting this Directive, the institutions have demonstrated their ability to efficiently and effectively reconcile an issue of major importance to industry with environmental policy objectives: this is Better Regulation in action.”

The new Directive resolves a shortcoming in the 2011 RoHS legislation, which would have run counter to the goals of a circular economy: it would have prevented the use and repair of used electrical and electronic equipment and forced scrapping of appliances that were still fully functional. This would have obliged manufacturers to declare products previously placed legally on the market as non-compliant as of mid-2019 – something which would have caused serious disruption to inventory and distribution chain management, putting their business at risk.

The adoption of the Directive therefore gives all-important legal certainty to manufacturers, while remaining consistent with the aims of a circular economy. “The three EU institutions have done a good job here on clarifying an area where regulatory overlap and inconsistency were causing headaches for companies,” concludes Adrian Harris. “Moreover, it sends a reassuring signal that legislators have the foresight to balance economic and environmental objectives, as we look ahead to other ongoing debates such as the question of the legislative interfaces between product, chemicals and waste legislation.”

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Notes for Editors:

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Orgalime, the European Engineering Industries Association, speaks for 41 trade federations representing the mechanical, electrical, electronic, metalworking & metal articles industries of 23 European countries. The industry employs nearly 11 million people in the EU and in 2016 accounted for some €2,000 billion of output. The industry represents over a quarter of the output of manufactured products and over a third of the manufactured exports of the European Union.

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