



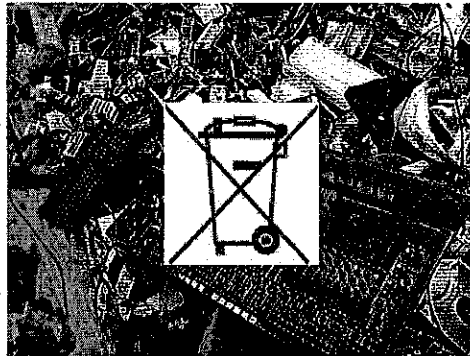
## EUROPEAN COMMISSION Environment

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### Waste Electrical & Electronic Equipment (WEEE)

Waste of electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE) such as computers, TV-sets, fridges and cell phones is one of the fastest growing waste streams in the EU, with some 9 million tonnes generated in 2005, and expected to grow to more than 12 million tonnes by 2020.

WEEE is a complex mixture of materials and components that because of their hazardous content, and if not properly managed, can cause major environmental and health problems. Moreover, the production of modern electronics requires the use of scarce and expensive resources (e.g. around 10% of total gold worldwide is used for their production). To improve the environmental management of WEEE and to contribute to a circular economy and enhance resource efficiency the improvement of collection, treatment and recycling of electronics at the end of their life is essential.



To address these problems two pieces of legislation have been put in place: The Directive on waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE Directive) and the Directive on the restriction of the use of certain hazardous substances in electrical and electronic equipment (RoHS Directive)

The first WEEE Directive ([Directive 2002/96/EC](#)) entered into force in February 2003. The Directive provided for the creation of collection schemes where consumers return their WEEE free of charge. These schemes aim to increase the recycling of WEEE and/or re-use.

In December 2008, the European Commission proposed to revise the Directive in order to tackle the fast increasing waste stream. The new WEEE [Directive 2012/19/EU](#) entered into force on 13 August 2012 and became effective on 14 February 2014.

EU legislation restricting the use of hazardous substances in electrical and electronic equipment ([RoHS Directive 2002/95/EC](#)) entered into force in February 2003. The legislation requires heavy metals such as lead, mercury, cadmium, and hexavalent chromium and flame retardants such as polybrominated biphenyls (PBB) or polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDE) to be substituted by safer alternatives. In December 2008, the European Commission proposed to revise the Directive. The [RoHS recast Directive 2011/65/EU](#) became effective on 3 January 2013 (more information about RoHS is available [here](#)).