



## WEEE Europe – A Joint Venture from leading European Take-Back Systems for WEEE and Batteries

... and point of contact for producers (manufacturers), online retailers, importers and exporters of electrical goods and batteries

### **Millions of tonnes each year: electrical and electronic devices and batteries are the top imports**

Electrical and electronic equipment (EEE) has permeated into every aspect of our modern life, and our daily lives would be unthinkable without the help of batteries: over 1.2 million tonnes of batteries are imported into the EU annually – including 800,000 tonnes of vehicle batteries. But what happens with waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE) and batteries at the end of their useful lives?

Old electrical devices are a potential danger for humans and the environment. EEE and batteries contain toxic substances – pollutants. The good news is, if electronic scrap and used batteries are sorted and disposed of properly, the negative effects can be curtailed while, at the same time, retrieving raw materials for the production industry. The bad news: we have not yet reached this stage. Catastrophic, when one considers the continuously increasing amounts of waste being produced.

### **What happens with WEEE and waste batteries?**

WEEE is the fastest growing waste stream in Europe – with 3 to 5 percent growth per year. Around 10 million tonnes of electronic scrap are produced each year in 28 EU countries plus Norway and Switzerland. This is the equivalent of 50,000 blue whales. Or 135 million people – approximately the population of Japan.

Only 35 percent of this waste is collected and recycled via take-back systems. The other 65 percent is either exported illegally or – and this applies to the majority of the waste – is recycled under conditions that do not comply with EU standards, or is mistakenly disposed of with general household waste. Batteries are disposed of with equal carelessness, hindering proper collection and recycling.

## **Compliance – responsibility for humans and the environment in a European solution**

Professional disposal is not a question of voluntary commitment or an individual manufacturer's sense of responsibility, but a legal obligation. The EU Commission drafted the first European directive in 1988, covering the introduction, the recovery and the environmentally friendly disposal of electrical and electronic equipment and establishing the obligations of producers.

Based on the polluter-pays-principle and product stewardship, producers are obliged to finance waste collection and recycling – the so-called WEEE costs. Producers are not just manufacturers, but anyone who introduces a product into an EU member state for the first time. According to the directive, producers are therefore also online retailers (when exporting to foreign consumers (both commercial and private end-users) as well as importers.

The current version of the European WEEE directive (Directive 2012/19/EU for Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment) was adopted on 04<sup>th</sup> July 2012. This updated version of the WEEE directive 2012/19/EU specifies, for example, a collection quota from 2016 onwards. This is calculated as 45 percent of the electrical and electronic devices put on the market over the previous three years. By 2019, this collection quota will increase to 65 percent.

The directive provides the legal framework, but each member state has implemented it on a national level in a different manner. The WEEE directive is the basis for the German Electrical and Electronic Equipment Act (ElektroG) from 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2015, which implements the WEEE directive 2012/19/EU into German law. This decentralized legal situation obliges producers to register and fulfil their producer obligations in every relevant country.

### **Do you know what your legal obligations are?**

In the wake of WEEE and batteries legislation (ElektroG and BattG in Germany), many companies are facing a number of questions – particularly important questions, seeing as they could be facing six-figure penalties.

- Which devices have to be registered in which categories and quantities?
- What collection and recycling costs (WEEE costs) will I be paying?
- In which countries does my business need to be registered?
- What are my take-back obligations?
- What information do I have to provide?

Do you know what this legislation REALLY means for your company?

### **WEEE Europe is your central point of contact for advice and action**

WEEE Europe is a pan-European non-profit-organisation based in Munich, Germany. Our current 18 members have successfully established over 66,000 collection points and are currently collecting 1.5 million tonnes of waste annually – that is around 50 percent of the amount collected in the entire EU including Norway and Switzerland.

We provide you with advice and deal with the contracts – your “one-stop partner” – in currently 28 EU countries plus Switzerland and Norway. You can speak to our competent specialists and benefit from our 3-stage model:

#### 1. Assessment:

We are able to advise you once we have analysed your status as a producer and your relevant product spectrum. This provides you with an overview of all obligations and costs in each country. We are also happy to work together with you on deciding in which nations to register.

#### 2. Contract coordination:

We prepare all the necessary contracts for you and register you with the relevant systems and national registers. We also provide access to Authorized Representatives for all countries in which you do not have offices but for which registration (and appointment of a Representative) are required.

#### 3. Classification of your products:

Depending on the legal situation in the country in question, we deal with your Put on the Market declarations and product classification in up to 120 different categories. Your product portfolio must be classified in each country. With the aid of an online platform, we help you with the central collation of quantities put on the market and forward your data to the take-back systems.

### **WEEE Europe – an experienced and competent network**

The structure of the umbrella organization enables WEEE Europe to cost effectively call on any of its members in Europe. Data confidentiality, cost transparency and reliability are paramount. The member take-back systems know the legal situation in each country and, together with you, we compile their contracts to be “ready to sign“. And you always have a single point of contact – giving you more time to get on with your core business.

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