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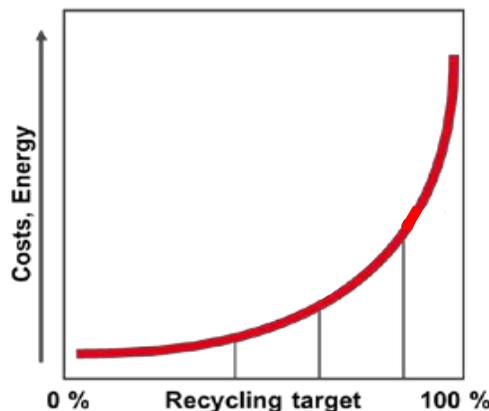
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EU Live Issues

Recycling – the real potential

Resource Efficiency and Recycling are seen as the two main buzz words in the new Circular Economy Package. UEPG supports recycled aggregates as long as economic, environmentally and technically feasible. But following the debate of some European and national decision makers, extraction of virgin raw materials could be deemed redundant if only the recycling rates were to be increased to 100% (closing the gap). This assumption ignores some key aspects such as the fact that the amount of recyclable and locally available construction and demolition waste – if recycled 100% – is not sufficient to substitute more than 20% of the total aggregates demand.

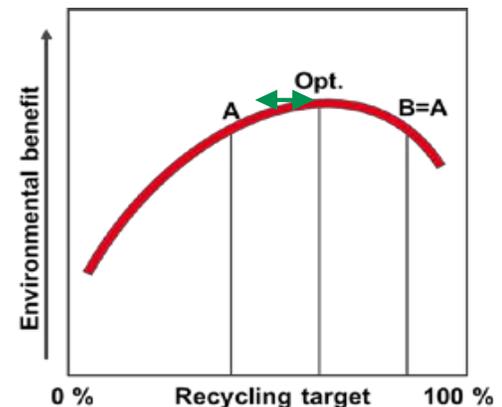


Source: Christoph Scharff, CEC4EUROPE

It also ignores the fact that increasing already high recycling rates costs disproportionately more energy and other valuable resources, thus, makes it usually environmentally and economically unbeneficial.

The real potential and political priority should be in assisting those EU Member States with low recycling rates to better implement existing targets rather than defining new and higher ones. While this is the tendency of the new Circular Economy Package, the political debate at stakeholder events still uses

predominantly terms and references such as harsh reduction of resource use, resource productivity measured in GDP/resource use, resource taxation, ban on landfill, and restriction of backfilling.



Source: Christoph Scharff, CEC4EUROPE

UEPG attended several conferences and workshops to ensure the specifics of the European Aggregates Industry are taken into account when shaping the new circular economy policy for Europe. For that purpose, UEPG has already provided comments to the European Commission, European Parliament and the Permanent Representations feeding into the debate of the Council of the EU.

Next steps

- 4 March Environment Council debate on Circular Economy Package
- 20 June Council Conclusions on the Action Plan of the Circular Economy Package

UEPG News

Recycling and backfilling

On 3 February, Members of the Recycled Aggregates Task Force, chaired by Brian James (MPA, UK), provided Vincent Basuyau and Manfred Fuchs from DG Growth, European Commission and Olga Abramczyk, from the Consultancy Ecorys with UEPG comments on

the Circular Economy Package. In particular, Members discussed the definitions in the Proposal for a Waste Framework Directive, including “backfilling” and proposed [UEPG amendments](#) (available on the UEPG website).



Another important item was the development of the EU Protocol on construction & demolition waste. The document was generally well perceived, and the latest draft took a number of UEPG’s comments on board now with less emphasis on taxation of virgin materials and words of caution should taxation be misused.

Product Category Rule for aggregates

On 19 February, Members of the Working Group on the Release of Dangerous Substances and Environmental Product Declarations (RDS & EPD), chaired by Brian Bone (MPA, UK), discussed the development of a PCR for aggregates, which should allow UEPG to review its EPD. This will be a useful tool as well for aggregates clients (asphalt and concrete).

Another topic of interest was the latest development within the working groups from CEN/TC dealing with the release of dangerous substances, which still required intense lobbying and expert work from UEPG Members, to ensure that the tests could be undertaken in a cost efficient and practicable way. It was noted that attention should be paid to eco-toxicity.

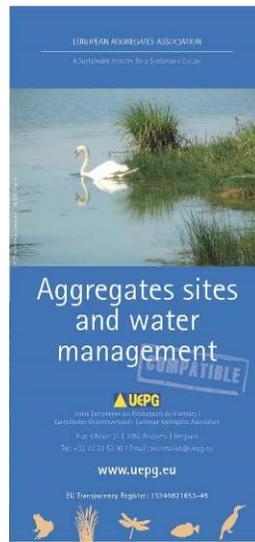
Progressing on biodiversity

On 24 February, Members of the Biodiversity Task Force, chaired by Benoit Lussis (FEDIEX, Belgium), considered that the delay on the Natura 2000 Fitness Check might be an opportunity for UEPG to reflect further on ways to improve the implementation of the legislation. The revision of the Directives becomes increasingly unlikely.

Other initiatives were aiming at financing biodiversity, as this has been identified as one of the key gaps in halting the loss of biodiversity. UEPG stressed the fact that aggregates producing companies already invested in

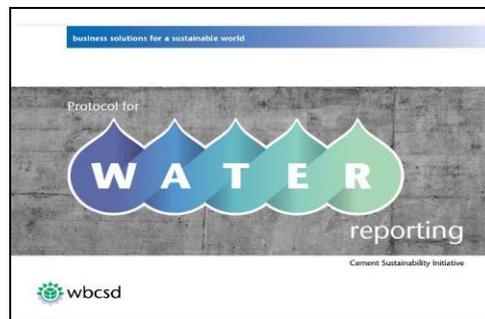
environmental management and restoration projects and wishes to foster the return on the UEPG biodiversity indicators.

Water Management Protocol



On 24 February, Members of the Water Management Task Force, chaired by César Luaces Frades (FdA, Spain) addressed the protocol developed by the Cement Sustainable Initiative of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (CSI) to be tested by a representative sample of

aggregates companies.



The publication of the new Circular Economy Package, with its focus on water reuse, might impact as well the Aggregates Industry especially on water pricing. To demonstrate the positive contribution of aggregates producers, UEPG will publish a dedicated brochure.

UEPG’s PR & Communication Policy

On 24 February, Members of the PR & Communication Task Force, chaired by Robert Wasserbacher (FSKI, Austria), reviewed UEPG’s performance on communicating effectively internally and externally. The Task Force picks up items dealt with by UEPG Committees and Task Forces and serves as a platform to exchange good practice and to brainstorm solutions on how to deal with challenges in social media and how to work with Journalists.

The Next PR & Communication Task Force will address the UEPG Sustainable Development Awards and a renewed UEPG website.

Implementing ‘Track and Trace’ Directive

During a meeting on 18 February of César Luaces Frades, Chair of the Health and Safety Committee, and Miette Dechelle (UEPG) with Federico Musso from the European Commission, UEPG’s leadership of the Explosives for civil uses Task Force towards the implementation of the ‘Track and Trace’ Directive was highlighted positively. The European Commission is currently collecting data and information on the good implementation of the ‘Track and Trace’ Directive, national contact points, national Market Surveillance and on law enforcement.

UEPG proposed an update of the mapping done last year to identify challenges country by country for the implementation of the ‘Track and Trace’ Directive. The results of the updated mapping and proposed measures will be discussed first at a Task Force Meeting in June, and then presented to the European Commission and Members States in October.

UEPG as Social Partner

Is UEPG a fully representative social partner? César Luaces Frades, Chair of the Health and Safety Committee, and Miette Dechelle from the UEPG General Secretariat assisted Marina Patriarka from the [Eurofound](#) Brussels Liaison Office in answering this question; a question which all current social partners had to help answering.

Eurofound is the Dublin based European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions now undertaking a representativeness study to identify representative social partner organisations and map the sectors’ representativeness in Europe. For that purpose, each UEPG Member had been contacted to provide comments on draft national reports. The final Eurofund Report is expected to be published mid 2016.

Upcoming UEPG events

- 10-11 March** Committees Meetings, Amsterdam, Netherlands
- 20 April** NEEIP Forum, Brussels
- 20 April** Board Policy Dinner, Brussels
- 21 April** Board Meeting, Brussels
- 2-3 June** Delegates Assembly, Berlin, Germany