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ASIA

EU agrees to reduce food waste and set new rules

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The Council presidency and European Parliament representatives reached a provisional agreement on the targeted revision of the waste framework directive, setting EU targets for food waste reduction by 2030 and measures towards a more sustainable and less waste-producing textile sector.

The agreement still needs to be confirmed by both institutions before going through the formal adoption procedure.

The two co-legislators agreed on ambitious yet realistic targets for food waste by 2030:

Reduction by 10 per cent in processing and manufacturing waste compared to the average amount of food waste generated in these sectors in 2021-2023

Reduction by 30 per cent per capita in waste from retail, restaurants, food services and households compared to the average amount of food waste generated in these sectors in 2021-2023

Those targets are the first-ever to be established at the EU level. The agreement also provides for the voluntary donation of unsold food that is safe for human consumption as an important aspect of reducing food waste.

The provisional agreement establishes harmonised rules on the extended producer responsibility of textile producers and fashion brands: they will be made responsible for their waste and will be required to pay a fee to help fund waste collection and treatment, which will be dependent on how circular and sustainable the design of their product is.

The provisional agreement provides for a level playing field, including all companies in the scope of extended producer responsibility schemes. Under this harmonised framework, all companies, including smaller ones, would have access to the necessary resources and infrastructure for proper waste textile treatment.

To reduce administrative burden, microenterprises will have one additional year to comply with these obligations after the extended producer responsibility schemes are established (in total, 3.5 years after the entry into force of the new rules).