

# Press Release No. 19/2008

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Joint press release with the Federal Ministry for Environment

## **Electrical and Electronic Equipment Act - ElektroG in effect for three years: Federal Ministry for Environment and Federal Environment Agency deliver positive summary High rate of collection of used electrical and electronic equipment**

**The Act Governing the Sale, Return and Environmentally Sound Disposal of Electrical and electronic Equipment (*ElektroG*), which was transposed into law three years ago, has also stipulated for the past two years that used equipment be separated and disposed of. Responsibility for disposal is in producers' hands. Consumers have since been able to dispose of waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE) at municipal collection points and at no charge. Producers must recover and dispose of the accumulated WEEE. The Federal Ministry for Environment and the Federal Environment Agency have reached a positive conclusion on the new legislation that transposed the EU Directive on the disposal of WEEE into German law.**

According to the latest statistics from the public office in charge, the Foundation Elektro-Altgeräte Register (EAR), and the Federal Statistical Office, the per capita volume of WEEE from private households in Germany in 2006 was eight kilogrammes. This far exceeds the four kgs per capita and year required by the EU WEEE Directive.

Some 750,000 tonnes of WEEE from private households and industry were registered in 2006. As some 1.8 million tonnes of new electrical and electronic equipment was put on the market in 2006, a further increase in WEEE volume is expected.

Producer removal of WEEE stored at municipal collection points has transpired without incident, save for a few exceptions—and that is at a volume of roughly 180,000 pick-ups since March 2006. Warnings issued to disposal companies for delayed pick-ups dropped from nearly five percent in January 2007 to under 0.2 percent in February 2008—a sign that logistics are

running smoothly and that the Federal Environment Agency is ensuring that charges are brought against any offenders.

The figures prove that “shared product responsibility” works. Municipalities have taken on responsibility for collecting WEEE from private households free of charge, whereby the collection systems already in place in many regions were expanded upon and provided citizens’ easy means of disposal.

*ElektroG* marks new territory explored by the legislator in 2005 as concerns the economy and cities, making the latter responsible only for the collection and storage of WEEE from private households. The duty to collect and ensure ecological disposal has now been passed to producers.

The Act has proven itself, for there are now some 10,000 producers registered with the producers’ contact point of the Foundation EAR. The number of those not registered—so-called “freeloaders”—dropped sharply, not least of all because the Federal Environment Agency, in charge of following up on infractions against the law, has been rigorous in this regard. The possibility of prosecution of non-registered competitors on grounds of anti-competitiveness has also been a deterrent. Nevertheless, some old equipment continues to be scrapped illegally on its way to the recycler, robbing the cycle of precious raw materials.

Federal Minister for Environment Sigmar Gabriel comments, “Two years after the entry-into-force of the law governing separation of WEEE, we also see in this sector of the waste management industry a high degree of citizen willingness to dispose of WEEE ecologically. This allows for recovery of precious secondary raw materials and saving primary materials. Modern waste management has once again shown what it can do to protect the climate.”

Prof. Dr. Andreas Troge, President of the Federal Environment Agency, summarises it by saying, “Shared product responsibility has proven itself, thanks in particular to the support lent the Federal Environment Agency by the Federal Network Agency in pursuing so-called “freeloaders” and providing UBA with the details of cases registered in retail outlets. This allows the Federal Environment Agency to more effectively pursue infractions against regulations.”

A new edition of the BMU publication, *Elektroschrott vermeiden und verwerten* [Avoiding and redeeming electrical and electronic scrap], is due to be published in early April.

More information on these topics is available at:

<http://www.bmu.de/abfallwirtschaft/downloads/doc/5582.php>

<http://www.umweltbundesamt.de/abfallwirtschaft/elektrog/index.htm>

<http://www.stiftung-ear.de/>

<http://www.duh.de/green-electronics.html>

<http://www.zvei.org/index.php?id=34>

<http://www.bitkom.org/de/search.aspx?SearchString=elektroG>

[http://ec.europa.eu/environment/waste/weee/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/waste/weee/index_en.htm)

Dessau-Roßlau, 28 March 2008