

**Press Release**

## **Ireland joint third for recycling within the EU**

### **Performance reflects Irish householders commitment to recycling – IWMA**

*31 March 2015* Ireland is now joint third for recycling within the EU, and joint fourth among 36 countries across the wider European continent, according to the latest data published by Eurostat.

Commenting on the latest statistics, Kieran Mullins, Chairman, Irish Waste Management Association (IWMA) said; “This is a fantastic performance. Twenty years ago just 7.8% of municipal waste was recycled or recovered, but a commitment by Ireland’s householders to recycling and greater environmental awareness means we have made huge gains since then. Everyone in Ireland should be very proud of these achievements”.

The Irish Waste Management Association (IWMA) is the representative body for companies that collect and manage waste in Ireland. IWMA members collect 75% of household waste and the vast bulk of commercial, industrial and hazardous wastes currently managed in Ireland.

According to Eurostat in 2013, 58% of all municipal waste generated by Irish consumers was recovered and diverted from landfill. However, the IWMA believes that the current figure is closer to 80%, reflecting the increased number of segregated waste bins and the increased investment in waste recovery infrastructure by the private sector waste management companies, at zero cost to the State.

“An additional 150,000 brown bins have been rolled out to households in Ireland since 2012 by IWMA member firms bringing to nearly 50% the number of households with a bin service who are now able to dispose of food and organic waste in a brown bin. Increased composting by householders is also contributing to the improvement in recycling and recovery”, said Mr. Mullins.

“In the past twenty years we have seen government policies introduced which support greater levels of recycling and resource efficiency. The IWMA is supporting the Department of the Environment in the development of new household waste regulations which we expect will lead to further improvements in waste prevention and recycling. Our goal is to support Ireland becoming the best country in Europe for recycling and resource efficiency”.

Ends.

**About the IWMA:**

The Irish Waste Management Association (IWMA) is a trade association for waste management companies in Ireland. Our 34 member companies operate to the highest industry standards and have signed up to the Rules of the Association, that ensure that they provide waste management services to the public and to businesses in a professional and ethical manner. Our member companies employ 4,200 people directly and have a combined annual financial turnover of €645 million.

IWMA members collect 75% of the household waste currently managed in Ireland and the vast bulk of the commercial, industrial and hazardous wastes. Our members processed approximately 3.5 million tonnes of waste at our 65 non-hazardous and 10 hazardous waste facilities in 2013. The bulk of this waste was recycled or otherwise recovered.

### Source of Data:

The report published by the EUROSTAT is available here:

<http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/2995521/6757479/8-26032015-AP-EN.pdf/a2982b86-9d56-401c-8443-ec5b08e543cc>

Further information is available in the Eurostat Environmental Data Centre on Waste:

<http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/waste/overview>

Eurostat, Statistics Explained article “Municipal waste statistics” available on Eurostat's website:

[http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Municipal\\_waste\\_statistics](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Municipal_waste_statistics)

### Explanatory Notes:

1. Ireland recycled 34% of Municipal waste in 2013 according to Eurostat, which is joint fourth in Europe behind Slovenia (55%), Germany (47%) and Iceland (37%). As Iceland is not an EU Member State, Ireland is ranked joint third in the EU, based on this data.
2. The IWMA estimate of 80% recovery is based on an estimate of 2.5million tonnes of municipal waste managed each year in Ireland (similar to previous years) and industry knowledge that currently approximately 500,000 tonnes per annum of this waste is sent to landfill for disposal (c.20%).

The other c.2 million tonnes is recovered, including recycling, composting, use as a fuel in cement kilns and waste to energy incineration in Ireland and abroad. The Poolbeg waste to energy facility is due on stream at the end of 2017 and that is expected to further reduce reliance on landfill.

3. The Municipal Waste Generation figure for Ireland at 586 Kg per capita should not be ranked with other European countries, as it is not comparable, due to different definitions of ‘Municipal waste’.

Municipal waste is not measured in a consistent manner across the EU. In most EU countries, it consists of household waste and other similar wastes that are collected by (or on behalf of) the municipalities/local authorities. This is usually comprised of household waste and often includes institutional waste (schools, hospitals, prisons, local authority offices, Government Departments, etc.), but it rarely includes commercial waste.

In Ireland the definition is different. Municipal waste includes household waste and all commercial waste that is collected in a similar manner to household waste, which is why the figure appears high when compared with other EU Member States.

Household waste generated in Ireland in 2012 was 344 kg per person (latest EPA data), whereas municipal waste generated was 587 kg per person that year. It is difficult to know where exactly we rank when each country has its own interpretation of Municipal Waste and each is reporting it differently. The IWMA has lobbied the EU Commission to standardise this definition across the EU and to differentiate between household and commercial wastes. This is likely to happen in the next few years.