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Bulky waste in Luxembourg: volumes declining, yet 11% of collected items reusable

The amount of bulky waste in Luxembourg is decreasing, a positive trend confirmed in a recent analysis conducted by the Environment Agency. Between 2020 and 2023, Luxembourg residents generated 3,700 tonnes less bulky waste (7 kg per inhabitant). This development reflects the efforts made in terms of waste management and increased public awareness. However, the analysis highlights that 1,292 tonnes (11% by weight) of the items collected could still be reused (mainly furniture and toys) and that 82% by weight consists of materials that could be separately collected and recycled.

Analysis results

Nearly two thirds of the bulky waste analysed (63.77% by weight) is made up of mattresses, wood, plastic and furniture.

A significant proportion of bulky waste - 82% by weight - contains materials that could be recycled, such as wood, paper, plastic and electronic waste. It is important that these materials are not handed in for bulky waste collection and that they are properly sorted to improve recycling and encourage more responsible waste management.

As mentioned, about 1,292 tonnes of items handed in for collection (11% by weight) could be reused. In particular, furniture and toys in good condition are thrown away when they could be repaired or redistributed. This proportion even reaches 21% for door-to-door collections, compared to 9% for collections brought to the resource centres.

The exceptional floods of 2021 contributed to a temporary spike in bulky waste, especially in municipalities within the SIGRE network (Syndicat Intercommunal pour la gestion des déchets ménagers, encombrants et assimilés en provenance des communes de la région de Grevenmacher, Remich et Echternach).

This analysis highlights the progress Luxembourg has made in reducing and recycling bulky waste. Yet, it also underscores the ongoing need for public awareness and practical, sustainable solutions to further improve waste management.

Tips for reducing bulky waste

Preventive initiatives such as buying second-hand items, repairing items or buying quality furniture can play a key role in reducing waste. By encouraging responsible consumption, these practices not only help to limit waste, but also extend the life of products, thereby reducing the pressure on natural resources and waste management systems.

It is also important to note that certain types of waste have specific treatment processes. Recyclable materials collected separately at resource centres as well as electrical and electronic waste require special treatment and are therefore not considered bulky waste.

By definition, bulky waste is household waste that is too large to be collected in the same containers as other household waste. Residents are therefore asked not to include bags or boxes of mixed municipal household waste in bulky waste. These materials must be recycled properly, with due regard for environmental impact.

A few suggestions:

1. Buy less

- Buy mindfully: Before each purchase, consider whether it's truly necessary.
- Focus on quality: Choose durable products that do not need to be replaced frequently.

2. Repair, donate or sell

- Repair your items: Before discarding furniture or other bulky goods, see if they can be repaired.
- Consider re-use: Consider giving the item to a relative, donating it to a charity or selling it on a second-hand platform. This helps extend the life of objects and reduces waste.

For more information or to consult the detailed results of the study: www.emwelt.lu

Background Information - Context

The Environment Agency regularly conducts surveys on bulky waste. These enable analysis of:

- trends in the volume of bulky waste generated and
- the composition of bulky waste.

The study also evaluates the measures taken by Luxembourg at national and municipal level to improve the management of bulky waste. These measures include prevention efforts, the promotion of recycling and reuse initiatives to reduce the production of unnecessary waste.