



turn back the toxic tide

80 Yesler Way, Ste. 300
Seattle, Washington 98104
Telephone: 206.652.5555
e-Mail: inform@ban.org
Web: www.ban.org

The Norwegian Amendments / Summary of Implications for Recyclers

Basel Action Network
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Before the Amendments

Currently there is no listing for hazardous plastic waste in the Basel Convention on Annex VIII (the presumed hazardous listing) and there is no listing for plastic waste on Annex II (wastes requiring special consideration). There is only an entry (B3010) for Annex IX (presumed non-hazardous). One can believe that without a mirror entry to B3010 for hazardous plastics, very few countries would have applied described plastics as being hazardous. Thus, it is likely that unless somebody really scrutinized the plastic exports looking for hazardous characteristics (Annex III), currently and in the past no controls on plastic waste trade have taken place under the Basel Convention. That will change.

When in Force (January 1, 2021)

1. Annex VIII New Listing: A new listing (A3210) on Annex VIII (presumed hazardous) has been created. Such wastes will be subject to the full regime of Basel control procedures and obligations and will be subject to the Basel Ban Amendment when it enters into force (2 countries still needed for global entry into force). The Ban Amendment prohibits all exports of hazardous wastes from developed countries to developing countries for any reason.

2. New Listing on Annex II: With the exception of the 4 categories (a-d) listed below, all plastic waste not subject to the new hazardous waste listing A3210 will be listed on the new Annex II (wastes requiring special consideration) listing (Y48). Annex II will normally be subject to the Prior Informed Consent (PIC) procedure for Basel Parties. The US however is not a Basel Party, and because in the Convention Parties can only trade wastes with one another, Parties will not be able to receive waste from the US legally. Similarly, the EU will not be able to export to developing countries but for a different reason: by EU legislation any wastes appearing on either Annex II or Annex VIII cannot be exported to developing countries.

3. Exemptions: To qualify for an exemption to Annex VIII and II, and thus to be considered non-hazardous and listed on Annex IX (new B3011), the wastes must be non-hazardous, clean, unmixed, uncontaminated plastic waste, going only to an Annex IV R3 (organic compounds recycling) operation (not energy recovery or final disposal, such as landfill or incineration), and can only be wastes described by one of the following 4 categories:

- a. Plastic waste almost exclusively consisting of one non-halogenated polymer. This means that mixed plastics will need to be sorted prior to export to avoid PIC procedure being on Annex II. The one exception to the mixing is found in "d" below. As PVC is halogenated, it cannot qualify for the exemption.
- b. Plastic waste almost exclusively consisting of one cured resins or condensation product. Again, these will need to be sorted or be disqualified. This section is subject to further work by the parties during the next few months and could change.
- c. Plastic waste consisting of one of 6 (listed) fluorinated polymer wastes. Again, these will need to be sorted or be disqualified. This section is subject to further work by the parties during the next few months and could change.
- d. Mixed plastic waste but only consisting of PP, PE and/or PET provided they are destined to be separately recycled upon arrival in the importing country.

4. Party to Non-Party Trade: For trade between Parties where at least one of the countries concerned (export, import, or transit) is not a Party to the Basel Convention (e.g. the US) there will be a ban on such trade absent a special valid multinational or bilateral agreement in place. The US is part of such an agreement reached by the OECD group of countries. Thus the US can only trade in unexempted waste with other OECD countries and only for recycling.

5. National Legislation: For trade between countries where at least one of the countries concerned has listed the plastic waste as hazardous waste on a national basis, the Basel Convention will apply (e.g. PIC procedure). When a country or group of countries have banned the export of Annex II wastes then that ban will apply. Such is the case with the European Union.

6. Halogenated Plastics: For halogenated plastics other than the fluorinated polymers listed in "c" above, like PVC, they are going to be considered as belonging to Annex II and so will be controlled under the Basel Convention.

Take-aways for recyclers:

1. For US (non-party) recyclers all exports except for a-d above will be prohibited to export to non-OECD countries that are Parties to the Basel Convention.
2. For EU recyclers, all exports except a-d above will be prohibited to export to a non-OECD/EU country.
3. All recyclers will now need to carefully sort the different polymers (e.g. HIPs, ABS, PVC) with the exception of mixtures of PE, PP, PET, prior to export and be sure they all such plastics exports are only going to an R3 destination (no final disposal, no energy recovery), and are cleaned of non-target contaminants (e.g. paper, metal) if they wish to avoid the PIC procedure or the prohibitions noted in 1. and 2. above.
4. Halogenated polymers like PVC will be controlled (PIC, or export prohibition to non-OECD in US and in EU).

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