

# Boosting preparation for reuse rates in Europe

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8<sup>th</sup> November, Brussels  
European Waste and Resource Days

## Presentation outline

- Part 1: Introduction to RREUSE, its members and objectives
- Part 2: Key obstacles to preparation for reuse
- Part 3: potential solutions in EU legislation to help increase preparation for reuse rates



## RREUSE: an overview

- Umbrella organisation of national/regional social enterprise networks in Europe involved in **waste prevention, repair, reuse and recycling activities**
- 24 members in 13 EU countries
- Social enterprises include: Work Integration Social Enterprise (WISE), Social Cooperatives, Associations etc.
- provide local job and training opportunities especially to disabled and disadvantaged persons in real working environment
- In 2010 Members give employment opportunities to around 40,000 permanent job opportunities in addition to 200,000 volunteer /trainee/insertion contracts

# Waste streams

In 2010, RREUSE members diverted  
approximately:

**1 million tonnes**

of WEEE, textiles, Furniture and Biowaste  
from Landfill/Incineration

Paint

Paper

Books

Carpet

matresses

Tyres

## Preparation for reuse activities

Waste Prevention

Includes direct reuse where products, appliances do NOT enter the waste stream

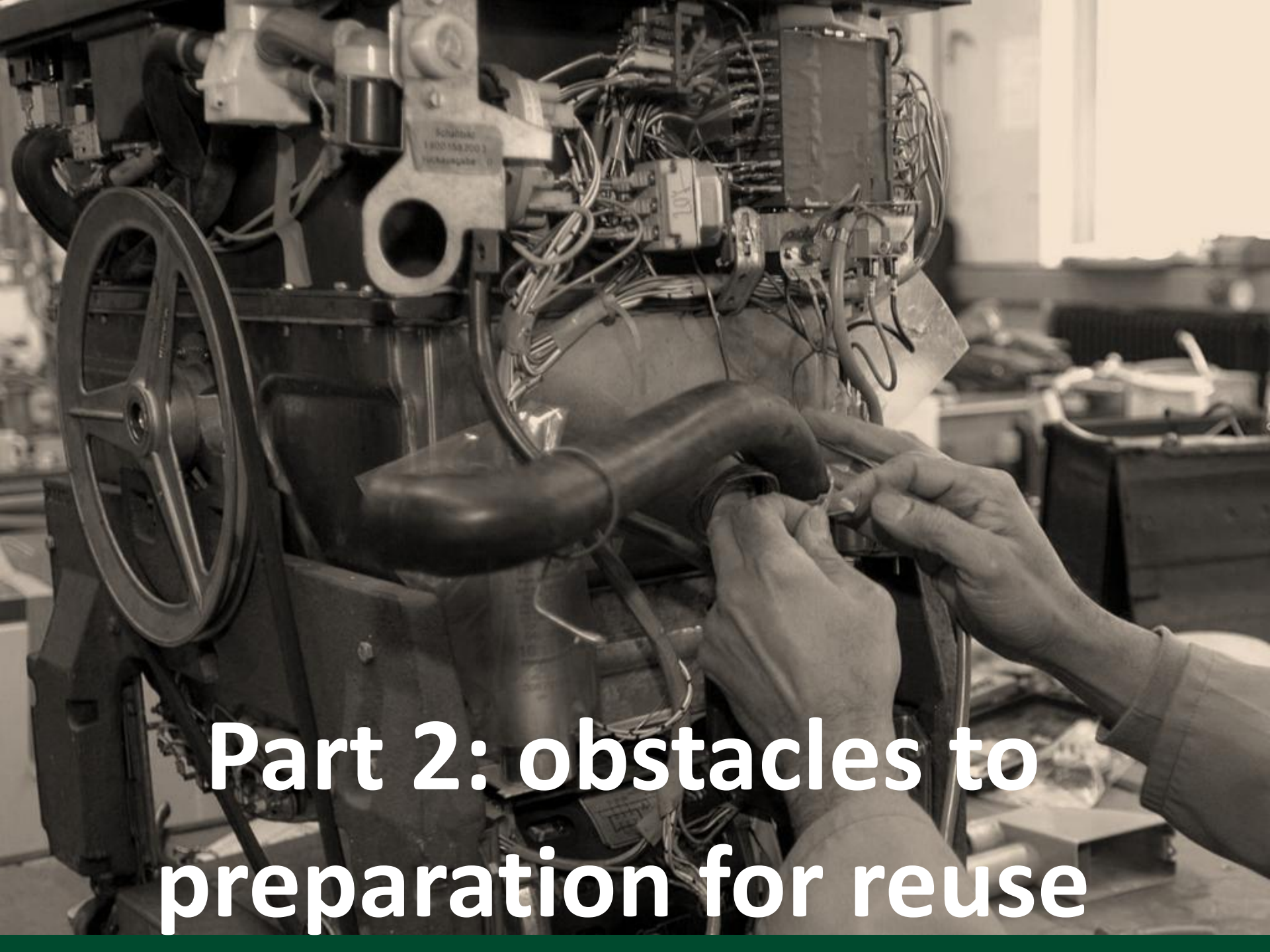
Preparation for reuse

checking, cleaning or repairing recovery operations, by which products or components of products **that have become waste** are prepared so that they can be re-used without any other pre-processing;

Recycling

Recovery

Disposal



# Part 2: obstacles to preparation for reuse



## Access restrictions to the waste stream

- Lots of potentially reusable/repairable products end up in waste stream
- But access to waste collection points often restricted for reuse centres (e.g. lack of legislative incentives, more efficient for LA to contract one organisation to clear collection points;)
- RESULT: Fully functioning/easily repairable products/appliances often recycled, incinerated or landfilled without even being checked for reuse potential
- *Note: due to economic benefits, the mix of actors in the preparation for reuse sector of WEEE for example is changing rapidly, often lacking the socio-economic and integration benefits that the social economy reuse/repair sector provides*

## Differences in reuse practices

- Sham reuse and recycling on the increase casting a negative shadow over the formal reuse + repair sector
  - higher profits expected compared to legal recycling + disposal
  - Detection + reporting of illegal movements inadequate – waste movements not transparent (EEA, 2012)
- reuse and repair activities are at different stages of development throughout Europe
- Lack of data collection and transparency about the sector (recently Eurostat started to report reuse rates of WEEE for a handful of MS but unclear about how this data was gathered)



## Declining product durability

- Declining quality and durability of especially cheap mass manufactured products
- average lifespans of products declining
  - e.g. proportion of textiles collected which can be directly reused in Belgium declined from 60% (2000) to 40% (2005)
- Often difficult/expensive to repair due to product design, lack of spare parts etc.
  - e.g. New Macbook Pro given 1/10 repair score on I-Fixit
- Constant upgrade puts serious strain on natural resources
  - “Recent study by German UBA stated that the environmental impact associated with the production of a notebook is so great that it cannot be compensated in a realistic period of time by its improved energy efficiency during the use phase”

## Social Economy

- Reuse and repair organisations traditionally associated with social economy
- Social economy formally recognised in only a few member states within national legal framework and often benefit from financial support **justified by their values of social and professional integration of vulnerable groups**



# Part 3: legislative solutions

## Set quantitative targets in legislation related to producer responsibility schemes

- Introduce **separate targets/provisions for preparation for reuse activities**

### Reasons:

- Investment at national level in infrastructure to achieve targets
- Improve logistics and facilities at collection points (e.g. shelter from the elements)
- With good sorting procedure and access to collection points a high preparation for reuse rate can be achieved
- Demand is high: 70% of EU citizens willing to buy second hand products (Eurobarometer, 2011)
- Job provision e.g. every 1,000 tonnes of WEEE repaired provides over 250 jobs
- Separate preparation for reuse provisions exist today (Eco-Mobilier, France)

## Approved reuse centres

- Best in practice reuse and repair activities exist with good cooperation between municipalities, retailers and EPR/compliance schemes
- Important that reuse centres are not self proclaimed and abide by certain criteria to create more level playing field for example:
  - reports/records items going in and out of reuse centres, taken and put back at collection points
  - Minimum safety requirements for workers, vicinity and environment
  - Commitment to make available refurbished appliances and reusable parts (sales/donations)
  - For WEEE: minimum standards of electrical safety testing and functionality to make sure equipment is safe and fit for purpose
  - social clauses...(Eco-mobilier, France)

## Increased durability for products

- Create strong durability criteria for energy using and energy related products in Ecodesign Directive implementing measures
- Preliminary results for the key functional parts of a washing machine include (JRC, 2012):
  - These are easy to access<sub>2</sub> and repair through replacement
  - Spare parts to be available for at least 10 years(after the product is sold) and reasonably priced
  - Detailed information on the disassembly and repair of key parts are provided

## Social Legal Framework

- include social considerations into **public procurement** including opening up reserved contracts to social enterprises giving opportunities to disabled and disadvantaged persons
- This would allow for more consideration of social enterprises working in field of reuse and repair



# Many thanks

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