

# E-waste experts urge public: Stop trashing electronic products with ordinary garbage (International E-Waste Day)

*Consumers urged to collect dead and/or unused electronics and electrical products: give them second life through reuse or repair, or recycle them properly*

BRUSSELS, BELGIUM, October 13, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- To mark the upcoming [International E-Waste Day](#),

Oct. 14, consumers worldwide are urged to collect dead and/or unused electronics and electrical products and give them a second life through reuse or repair, or recycle them properly.

Above all: stop tossing them out in household waste bins.



We know what to do, and we can do better"

*Magdalena Charytanowicz,  
International E-Waste Day  
coordinator, WEEE Forum*

The Global E-waste Monitor 2024, authored by UNITAR in cooperation with ITU, reported almost a quarter of end-of-life electronic waste ends up in home trash, squandering billions of dollars worth of copper, gold and other precious metals, materials critical to the production of such products, along with valuable plastics, and glass.

The 14 million tonnes of e-waste (dead or unused products with a battery or plug) discarded with ordinary household waste equals the weight of ~24,000 of the world's heaviest passenger aircraft – enough to form an unbroken queue of giant planes from London to Helsinki, NY to Miami, Cairo to Tripoli, or Bangkok to Calcutta.

Says Pascal Leroy, Director General of the Brussels-based [Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment \(WEEE\) Forum](#): "Small electronic and electrical goods such as mobile phones, toys, remote controls, game consoles, headphones, lamps, screens and monitors, heating and cooling equipment, and chargers are everywhere. And electronic components embedded in consumer products large and small – even clothing – are now omnipresent. The 844 million e-cigarettes thrown away in 2022 alone contained enough lithium, for example, to power 15,000 electric



cars."

Adds Magdalena Charytanowicz of the WEEE Forum in charge of International E-Waste Day: "We know what to do, and we can do better."

Ms. Charytanowicz says the place to start is the junk drawer, a common feature of homes around the world.

Globally, there are 108 mobile phone subscriptions per 100 people. And earlier surveys have shown that European households alone store about 700 million unused or non-functioning mobile phones – an average of more than two per household.

Why people hoard

She adds that "hoarding is an issue predominantly in wealthier countries. Elsewhere, reasons for keeping appliances are often personal data concerns or a desire to recover some of their value."

A 2022 survey helped explain why so many EU households and businesses fail to bring WEEE in for repair or recycling.

Undertaken by WEEE Forum members – not-for-profit entities that collect e-waste from households and businesses on behalf of manufacturers, and consolidated by [UNITAR's Sustainable Cycles \(SCYCLE\) Programme](#), the survey showed the average European household contains 74 e-products, such as phones, tablets, laptops, electric tools, hair dryers, toasters and other appliances (excluding lamps). The survey sample included 8,775 households across a diverse group of European Union countries – Portugal, Netherlands, Italy, Romania and Slovenia – combined with a UK survey,

Of the 74 average total e-products, 13 were being hoarded (9 of them unused but working, 4 broken).

Top reasons for hoarding in Europe:

Might use it again in the future (46%)

Plan to sell / give it away (15%)

Has sentimental value (13%)

Might have value in the future (9%)

Don't know how to dispose of it (7%)

Others include:

Didn't have time, forgot about it, does not take up too much space (3%)

Planned use in secondary residence (3%)

Presence of sensitive data (2%)

There is no incentive to recycle (1%)

Complementary research reveals what motivates people to recycle e-waste:

Knowledge – understanding where and how to dispose of e-waste and why our actions can make a difference;

Convenient collection points – making it easy for consumers to make the right gesture;

Compensation – some consumers are motivated by financial or other type of compensations;

Social norms – following what others do

Care for the environment – a growing concern for many;

Benefits to charities – doing something good for others, such as offering unused appliances for reuse, is a great motivator

People are often surprised by information about the positive CO2 impact of e-waste recycling or simply happy to have done the 'right thing'. See videos at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QwqZMb95b3Q>

Many Producer Responsibility Organisations (PROs) – WEEE Forum members – organise communication campaigns and provide collection points, now more than 183,000 in all. To date, PROs have collected, cleaned, and recycled or sent for refurbishment 41.6 million tonnes of WEEE, with 3.1 million tonnes collected in 2022.

Great progress is being made but everyone has a role to play as the volumes of e-waste generated grow rapidly, says Ms. Charytanowicz.

Urging people to Join the E-Waste Hunt -- Retrieve, Recycle and Revive -- the WEEE Forum outlined the Five Ws of E-Waste recycling:

What: Any product with a battery or plug.

Where: WEEE Forum members' collection points: [weee-forum.org/members](http://weee-forum.org/members), or any other official e-waste collection point

Why: According to Global E-waste Monitor 2024 (UNITAR / ITU):

Global e-waste management reduces CO2 equivalent emissions by 93 billion kg annually, equivalent to the annual emissions of more than 20 million cars

Proper e-waste recycling avoids leakages of harmful substance such as lead or cadmium to the environment

In 2022, e-waste produced globally contained approximately 4 billion kg of metals classified as critical raw materials, including 3.9 billion kg of aluminium, 34 million kg of cobalt, and 28 million kg of antimony

Recovering and reusing secondary raw materials from e-waste in 2022 avoided the need to mine 900 million tonnes of ore (the weight of 17,200 Titanics)

Who: You

When: Now

Says Cosmas Luckyson Zavazava, Director, ITU Telecommunication Development Bureau:  
“Almost 80% of the world's population today own a mobile phone. Among them, there are those who have several devices, in some cases, each with its own type of chargers, cables and accessories. I call on everyone to ensure the proper recycling of these devices, which is key to reducing their environmental impact and minimizing resource scarcity.”

“We need to keep monitoring the development in the years to come, as the global rise of e-waste generation is outpacing the formal collection and recycling by five times since 2010,” said Kees Baldé, Senior Scientific Specialist at UNITAR SCYCLE, and a lead researcher behind the Global e-Waste Monitor.”

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