2026-01-15 - WAREG Waste Task Force Minutes

Date: 15 January 2026
Format: Online meeting

Members participating: ARERA (Italy); RAAEY (Greece); VERT (Lithuania); NERC (Latvia); ERSAR (Portugal); MEKH (Hungary).

Participants: Giovanni Taglialatela; Diogo Rosa, Vörös Tamás, Maria Tsakona, Cláudia Videira; Petros Nikolaou, Maria Zografaki, Ināra Teibe, Sós Ildikó, David Alves, Christina Tsouti, Vittorio GRAZIANO, Matas Taparauskas, Aida Anthouli, Matthew Dacoronias-Marina.

1. Recap and context from Giovanni Taglialatela (ARERA – Italy – GT)

GT recalled that the Municipal Waste Regulators Group's ("the Group") relationship with the Commission has become more operational, notably following the 3 December 2025 meeting. The Commission welcomed the Group's earlier inputs (including the position paper and participation in the CEA consultation) and asked for more *practical, applicable proposals* as the Commission is now drafting the first CEA text.

GT underlined the need to move from policy statements to operational proposals and suggested establishing a drafting setup to translate the Group positions into implementable measures (without attempting to "draft legislation" in full legal form).

2. Proposed workstreams for the TF contribution to the CEA

2.1 Demonstrating regulators' contribution to efficiency/effectiveness in municipal waste

GT reported that the Commission asked the Group to demonstrate how regulators contribute to the efficiency and effectiveness of municipal waste systems. GT referenced initial academic work (a recent Italian study) suggesting that tariff regulation contributed to measurable efficiency improvements in the sector (an indicative figure of +14% was mentioned, with a note that methodology should be reviewed).

2.2 More effective and efficient EPR schemes

GT recalled the Commission's "homework" on proposing more concrete measures to improve EPR performance and governance. The TF's prior convergence on minimum transparency obligations at EU level was reiterated as a realistic entry point to enable comparability, oversight, and future regulatory intervention if needed.

Additional conceptual options were introduced for discussion (as ideas to test, not immediate positions), including:

- considering whether EPR design should remain *product-based* or move towards *material-based* approaches (noting political sensitivity and feasibility constraints);
- linking recycling system incentives to economic principles such as marginal cost/benefit (acknowledging potential tension with binding targets).

3. Working method and timeline

GT proposed a more intensive working method, with weekly meetings over the next 3–4 weeks, to produce a draft contribution rapidly.

A timeline was highlighted:

- **Mid-February 2026:** target for a first robust, internally agreed draft TF contribution.
- **End of February 2026:** ambition to hold a restricted follow-up exchange with the Commission to test receptiveness to THE GROUP's proposals and ensure the effort results in tangible influence.

GT stressed that, given constraints, the TF should prioritise a small number of strong, well-supported examples rather than collecting comprehensive country-by-country narratives. The key requirement is rapid convergence and internal alignment on wording and recommendations.

4. Members' interventions and reactions

4.1 RAAEY (Greece)

RAAEY expressed full availability to support the work and proposed to engage once initial drafting steps are initiated by GT. RAAEY indicated they would review the key documents (position paper and GT's briefing note) and revert on how they can contribute. Contact details for the newly invited colleague (Matthew) will be shared to enable briefing and coordination.

4.2 MEKH (Hungary)

MEKH welcomed the cooperation with the Commission and supported setting up a drafting approach. MEKH indicated it would contribute in a reactive manner (reviewing/commenting on drafts). MEKH's waste department indicated that their current work is at an early stage and does not yet yield conclusions, but technical expertise can be provided indirectly through internal coordination.

GT acknowledged MEKH constraints and reiterated that the TF primarily needs aligned positions and timely reactions, and that a limited set of examples can be sufficient.

4.3 NERC (Latvia)

NERC confirmed readiness to work in a format similar to the previous year: GT drafts, and Members actively react and enrich the text with experience and comments. NERC noted a substantive point: focusing only on "valuable" materials may conflict with binding recycling targets; marginal costs will increase over time as easier fractions are already captured. NERC remained available to contribute to drafting and refinement.

4.4 VERT (Lithuania)

VERT signalled interest in issues around sorting performance and sorting quality, including how economic regulation can influence incentives and outcomes. VERT noted that EPR competence may sit primarily with the Environment Ministry at national level, but confirmed willingness to participate and react to the TF work.

4.5 ERSAR (Portugal)

ERSAR confirmed availability to participate and contribute with several regulatory examples, notably:

- investment oversight/approval (avoiding non-useful investment and controlling impacts on tariffs),
- monitoring of operational costs and efficiency levers.

GT welcomed the offer and suggested that ERSAR's experience could support the development of criteria/principles to assess "useful investments" at EU level, framed as practical and politically feasible guidance.

5. Information shared (ARERA governance update)

GT informed participants that ARERA's new Board took office on 1 January 2026. The GT highlighted that the new President is Nicola Dell'Acqua, and that the Board includes members with strong water and waste expertise, alongside other members with energy transition orientation. The GT indicated ARERA would meet the new Board the following week.

6. Decisions and next steps

1. Weekly TF working meetings will be organised over the next weeks to accelerate drafting. Next Meeting will be on Thursday 22nd from 12.30 until 13.30.
2. The TF will develop a practical contribution to the Commission on the CEA, centred on:
    - regulators' contribution to efficiency/effectiveness (with selected evidence/examples), and
    - EPR governance improvements, starting from feasible minimum transparency obligations and other implementable options.
3. The GT will circulate the referenced Italian efficiency study and related slides to the TF (as requested by participants).
4. RAAEY will share contact details for the legal colleague (Matthew) so the GT/Secretariat can transmit the core TF documents and coordinate.

7. Meeting's documents

- 3 December meeting follow-up
- IT Study on efficiency gains in the Italian municipal waste system
- Presentation of the new ARERA Board as from 1st January