



Member of the European Parliament

**DR. CAROLINE LUCAS**

**Green Party MEP  
for the South East of England**

Commissioner Stavros Dimas  
Commissioner for the Environment  
European Commission  
Rue de la Loi, 200  
Bruxelles 1049

18 February 2008

Dear Commissioner Dimas,

**Implementation and improvement of EU legislation on electrical and electronic waste**

As you may well be aware, an investigation recently carried out by The Independent newspaper, Sky News and Greenpeace exposed the case of a broken television which was deposited at a civic amenity site in Basingstoke, UK - and tracked by satellite to Lagos, Nigeria. The television was classified as hazardous waste and under the terms of the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Directive, should never have left the UK - yet it formed part of a consignment of waste bought for export.

It has been revealed that up to 15 shipping containers of waste from the EU and Asia arrive every day at Alaba electronics market in Lagos. Much of this waste is transferred to dumps where children and the poor scavenge through the contents, with devastating consequences for both human health and the environment as burning plastics, heavy metals, lead and other chemicals flow into the air and rivers.

While the aims of the WEEE Directive are laudable and clearly intended to avoid the above consequences, it is clear that implementation failures are thwarting these objectives. Reportedly only one third of electrical and electronic waste in the EU is appropriately treated, with the other two thirds going to landfills and potentially to substandard treatment sites outside Europe.

I know the Commission is aware of these problems, and very much welcome the its proposals for revisions to the Directives on the use of hazardous substances in, and subsequent disposal of electrical and electronic equipment, as announced in December 2008.

Please could you advise what the next steps will be in bringing these changes into force and, in the meantime, what plans the Commission has to ensure that the UK government improves its implementation of the existing Directives? As the recent investigation demonstrates, a major issue is the lack of adequate checking at all levels, and of verification that the companies to which the transportation of electronic waste is subcontracted are adhering to the EU guidelines and not simply profiting from illegal export.

Thank you for your attention, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Caroline Lucas', written in a cursive style.

Caroline Lucas MEP