

If we had not thrown away the old washing machine, it would be a great commodity

G7

23 October 2019



If we didn't throw the ruined washing machine on the ditch, it could be a pretty good ingredient

Murat Bayram is a very passionate man, and he will come in handy when he starts a debate at a conference on waste recycling. This is exactly what happened recently in Budapest at a series of gigs organized by the Bureau of International Recycling, a professional organization based in Brussels. A British lecturer elaborated on the regulatory problems of the mattress and mattress processors in England, and participants had already begun to testify when fortunately Bayram came in and delivered a verbal punch to Angela Merkel.

"It is simply outrageous that the peer-reviewed professional paper submitted to the German government, which summarizes environmental goals, never contains the word "recycling," said an otherwise German-based company based in London, and finally everyone woke up. It turned out that the "garbage dumpers" were outnumbered in many ways.

Not only does it hurt the industry that while the tap is flowing into the environment, they are hardly enforceable, but the fact that in the minds of lay people there is still nothing negative about the word waste. Dirty, dilapidated industrial sites, garbage in the mountains and the like. This is no longer true.

"Let's get rid of the word waste because we produce industrial raw materials, and if somebody, then we really reduce carbon emissions, there is not much greener activity on Earth."

Commented strongly.

Perhaps the management of electronic waste really illustrates where technology is today in the field of recycling, which is the raw material that processors can provide to the industry. Electronic waste is a very complex product, with a lot of things we don't want to see in the landfill, even hazardous materials that we don't even want to incinerate.

The graph below illustrates the most important components that can be extracted from electronic waste today by the Austrian Müller-Guttenbrunn Group (MGG), which is also active in Hungary, through rather complex technical processes.

The two components that will not be directly recyclable are marked in red, as 4 percent of the weight goes to landfill and 21 percent becomes (heat) energy, typically going to the incinerator.

However, 75% by weight of the waste may be industrial raw material. Chris Slijkhuis, MGG's public relations director, says that one of the biggest problems in e-waste today is plastics. This is because, on the one hand, they are becoming more diverse and their separation gives up a technological lesson, and, on the other, because operations have to be designed according to ever more stringent rules. All of this requires very serious and continuous investment, which Slijkhuis says is difficult to extract, and as recovery is done by profit-oriented companies, the situation is worsening.

In any case, the 4% end-of-waste rate shows that if the waste goes to the recycling facility, the end result will now be quite good from an environmental point of view. The problem is, in many cases, it doesn't get there. According to an international survey a few years ago, only 34 percent of electronic waste in Europe is known to be properly collected and recycled, which is very little.

In Hungary, since 2011, the Orbán government has taken over the collection, which today is organized by the NHKV, product distributors have to pay a product fee, and the public can take their damaged equipment back to the waste yards or dealer. By comparison, Europe does not generate a lot of electronic waste:

However, the figure below also shows that, according to the latest 2015 data, a significant proportion of electronic waste has not been collected. It seems that there are EU states that do much worse here, but almost half of the waste does not reach the appropriate collection points in Hungary.

<https://g7.hu/elet/20191023/ha-nem-az-arokpartra-dobnank-a-tonkrement-mosogepet-egesz-jo-alapanyag-lehetne-belole/>