

Parliament approves green economy law

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Policy areas

Green public procurement

Other notable provisions

On December 22 2015 the Chamber of Deputies approved a package of measures promoting the green economy and the use of natural resources.

Policy areas

The new bill covers a broad range of policy areas, including:

- environmental impact assessment;
- waste management;
- environmental liability;
- remediation of contaminated sites;
- sustainable mobility;
- green public procurement;
- marine conservation;
- the circular economy; and
- water, energy and soil protection.

The law contains rules promoting recycling and waste reduction (eg, tax incentives for citizens and the best-performing municipalities and the possibility of establishing deposit-and-return systems for water and beer bottles). The re-use, reparation and exchange of goods are also encouraged, and companies which produce, market and sell or purchase goods made with recycled materials could receive government subsidies.

An investment of €35 million is planned to promote sustainable mobility projects, including:

- car pooling;
- bike sharing;
- the improvement of public transport; and
- the creation of cycle lanes.

Special attention is paid to hydro-geological risks and river basin management with the creation of a special fund for the demolition of illegal buildings in risk areas. Further, universal access to water will be granted through the creation of special tariffs for those in economic need. New marine protected areas will also be created.

Green public procurement

An entire chapter of the bill is dedicated to green public procurement. Companies that adopt green standards (eg, the Eco-management and Audit Scheme or Ecolabel) will enjoy competitive advantages in public procurement and new green criteria (eg, product lifecycles and greenhouse gas emissions associated with production) will also be taken into account in tender adjudications.

A fund for the removal of asbestos from public buildings will also be established and tax credits will

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be available for companies that invest in removing asbestos.

Other notable provisions

Other notable provisions that the measures introduce include:

- a ban on the seizure of pets or animals used for assistance or therapeutic purposes;
- amendments to rules on environmental impact assessment to simplify the procedure;
- provisions on the availability of environmental data to public authorities;
- the option for parties obliged to remediate contaminated land or pay environmental damages to reach an agreement with public authorities;
- fines for people who throw small pieces of litter (eg, cigarette butts, chewing gum and receipts) in public places; and
- provision for the creation of a natural capital committee which will draft an annual report on the state of natural capital and ecosystem services in Italy.

The new bill introduces the term 'green economy' to Italy for the first time and will enter into force following its publication in the *Official Gazette*.

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