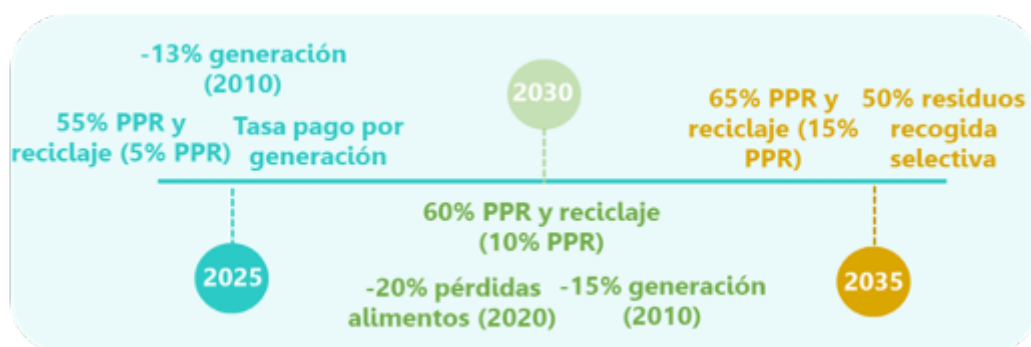


# **EUROPEAN WASTE LAW: A NEW STEP ON THE PATH TO A CIRCULAR ECONOMY, RATHER THAN AN END-GOAL**

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Faced with the imminent risk of not achieving the targets set by Europe for 2025, the long-awaited [Law 7/2022 on waste and contaminated soils for a circular economy](#) (LRSCEC) was born in 2022. This new law aims to bring Member States closer to a circular economy, setting more ambitious targets by 2035.



**Figure 1.** Objectives of Law 7/2022.

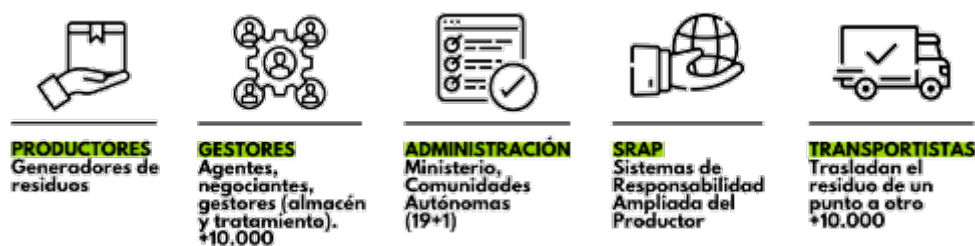
**Source:** Own elaboration

Although the Basque Autonomous Community performs better than the national average<sup>1</sup>, with a [50% separate collection rate](#) and 46% PPR and recycling in 2020<sup>2</sup>, there is still a long way to go.

Thus, the LRSCEC comes to give a **new impetus to the current system of production and consumption**, with particularly ambitious milestones in terms of waste management. On the other hand, it is **somewhat timid in terms of prevention and reduction at source**.

In any case, what seems evident is that something has changed in the paradigm of waste (or resources, if we begin to see them from a new perspective), when from the 56 articles included in the previous Law, we now have an extensive Law that includes 118 articles, in addition to a long list of provisions and annexes. We are faced with a complex and cross-cutting regulatory framework which, in addition to presenting a series of inherent challenges, places its true **transformative potential in numerous regulatory developments** ([around 50, some of which have already been published](#)).

Thus, with the completion of the first anniversary of the long journey that will be necessary for the full deployment of the LRSCEC, new uncertainties arise in the different sectors affected, which are not few. What is certain is that no one is exempt from responsibility, because all of us, to a greater or lesser extent, are waste producers and must assume our role.



**Figure 2.** Sectors affected by Law 7/2022.

**Source:** SimLevante

However, **the correct application of the Law in each territory will depend to a large extent on the local councils and entities**, which must assume a series of important obligations and competences:

- Development of management plans for towns with more than 5,000 inhabitants.
- Drawing up a census of installations with asbestos and a plan for its removal.
- The incorporation of new economic instruments with great transformative potential, such as the municipal generation fee or landfill and incineration taxes.

And the to-do list goes on.

These obligations represent a CHALLENGE (yes, in capital letters) at all levels. The urgency to adapt the waste balance and meet the targets in time does not seem to be an easy task, so the question is, is there sufficient capacity at the municipal level to comply?

Undoubtedly, one thing that seems clear is that local authorities will require both the active participation of citizens and a strong political determination to support the transformation of the current model of production and consumption. **Technical and financial support to local administrations will be crucial** to meet the long list of obligations ahead of them.

There is no doubt, therefore, that Law 7/2022 has left no one indifferent, proposing both important advances and leaving some unfinished business. It is not enough just to be optimistic; **the Law requires the implementation of disruptive measures** that will allow us to achieve the objectives set. Our environment and health are at stake.

<sup>1</sup> According to the [latest MITECO report](#), Spain did not meet the 50% preparation for reuse (RPR) and recycling targets set for 2020, reaching only 21% separate collection.

<sup>2</sup> Considering Construction and House Repair Waste

