



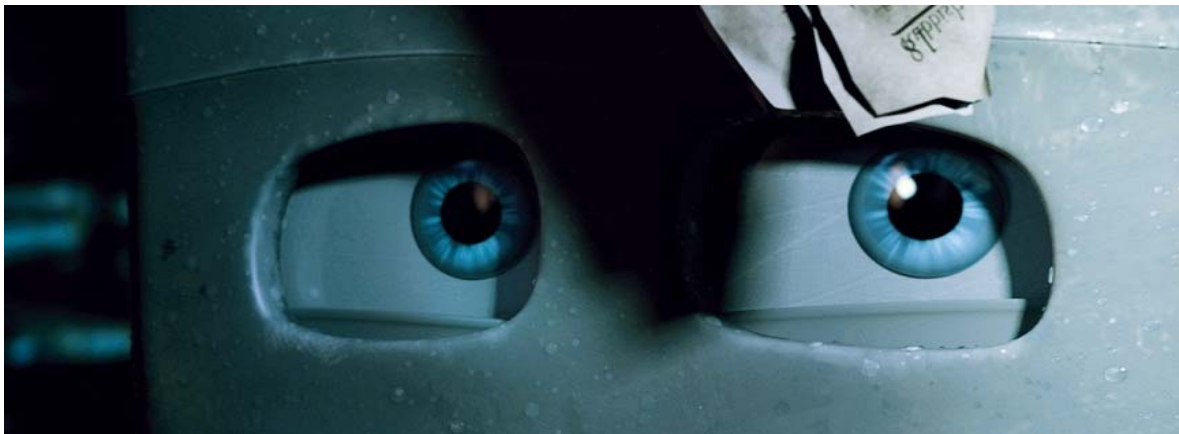
**EUROPEAN COMMISSION**

**PRESS RELEASE**

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## **Environment: Generation Awake says Stop Wasting Waste!**

The latest phase of the European Commission's 'Generation Awake' campaign focuses on the environmental, economic, social and personal consequences of using resources unsustainably. The campaign aims to make consumers aware of the consequences their consumption patterns have on natural resources, illustrating the benefits if they choose to act differently. It centres round a fully interactive [website](#) available in all 24 official EU languages, where cartoon characters show the environmental impact of everyday purchasing decisions.



Despite EU-wide recycling targets and successes in certain areas, Europe's waste is still a hugely under-used resource. A [study](#) prepared for the Commission estimates that full implementation of EU waste legislation would save EUR 72 billion a year, increase the annual turnover of the EU waste management and recycling sector by EUR 42 billion, and create over 400 000 new jobs by 2020.

The Generation Awake website invites visitors to discover the value of waste, showing how it can be reused, recycled, exchanged and repaired rather than being thrown away. A related Facebook page invites citizens to take up challenges like reducing food waste and cutting water use. Anyone can join in, and everyone is encouraged to spread the message: waste which cannot be avoided can become a valuable resource, and saving resources means saving money.

## Background

Behind the light-hearted campaign is a serious message: waste often contains valuable materials that can be reintroduced into the economic system. Today, a significant amount of potential secondary raw material is lost to the European Union's economy due to poor waste management. In 2010 total waste production in the EU amounted to 2,520 million tons, an average of 5 tons per inhabitant and per year. By reducing, reusing and recycling waste we can all contribute to a vibrant economy and a healthy environment. This saves environmental and economic resources, helping push Europe towards a more circular economy, where we get the greatest value out of resources and products by repairing, re-using, re-manufacturing and recycling them.

The campaign, which is translated into all EU languages, targets 25-to 40-year-olds with a special focus on young urban adults and families with small children. Since its launch in October 2011, the campaign website has been visited over 750 000 times, the videos have been viewed by over 4.5 million people, and the Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/generationawake](http://www.facebook.com/generationawake)) has attracted close to 100 000 fans. This new phase of the campaign includes a photo competition for suggestions on turning rubbish into a resource. The winner will be awarded a trip to Copenhagen, the European Green Capital 2014.

### For more information:

Campaign multilingual website: [www.generationawake.eu](http://www.generationawake.eu)

Facebook fan page: [www.facebook.com/generationawake](http://www.facebook.com/generationawake)

### See also:

[http://ec.europa.eu/environment/resource\\_efficiency/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/resource_efficiency/index_en.htm)

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