

ELVD: ELV Directive (Directive 2000/53/EC), explained

The ELV Directive requires that passenger cars and light commercial vehicles are designed for recycling, contain no lead, mercury, cadmium or hexavalent chromium beyond its exemptions, and can be handed in for treatment free of charge. It had to be transposed by 21 April 2002; Regulation (EU) 2026/1738, in force since 13 August 2026, repeals it from 1 September 2028.

Reviewed 5 October 2026 by Conphora compliance team · Next review 12 March 2027 · Not legal advice

Key facts

Reference	Directive 2000/53/EC	Act type	Directive
In force	21 October 2000	Applies from	21 April 2002
Amended by	Commission Decision 2002/525/EC, Commission Decision 2005/63/EC, Commission Decision 2005/438/EC, Council Decision 2005/673/EC, Directive 2008/33/EC, Commission Decision 2008/689/EC, Directive 2008/112/EC, Commission Decision 2010/115/EU, Commission Directive 2011/37/EU, Commission Directive 2013/28/EU, Commission Directive (EU) 2016/774, Commission Directive (EU) 2017/2096, Directive (EU) 2018/849, Commission Delegated Directive (EU) 2020/362, Commission Delegated Directive (EU) 2020/363, Commission Delegated Directive (EU) 2023/544, Regulation (EU) 2026/1738 (repealing act)	Enforced by	The directive is addressed to the Member States, which transpose it and designate the competent authorities that permit or register treatment facilities, run the deregistration system built on the certificate of destruction and check the substance ban and the targets; the directive is listed in Annex I of Regulation (EU) 2019/1020, so the market surveillance rules of that regulation apply to vehicles and components as products.
CELEX	32000L0053		

Key dates

18 September 2000	Directive 2000/53/EC adopted by the European Parliament and the Council	title
21 October 2000	Entry into force on the day of publication in OJ L 269 of 21 October 2000	Art. 12(1)
21 October 2001	Deadline for the Commission to amend Annex II for the first time; no exemption could be deleted before 1 January 2003	Art. 4(2)(c)
21 April 2002	Deadline for Member States to transpose the directive; Articles 4(1), 5(1), 7(1), 8(1), 8(3) and 9(2) and the detailed rules of Article 5(4) may be implemented through enforceable agreements with the economic sectors	Art. 10(1) and Art. 10(3)
1 July 2002	Free take-back applies to vehicles put on the market from this date: delivery to an authorised treatment facility must be without cost for the last holder, with producers meeting all or a significant part of the cost	Art. 5(4) and Art. 12(2)
1 January 2003	Commission Decision 2002/525/EC applies: first revision of Annex II with the 0,1 % and 0,01 % maximum concentration values per homogeneous material	Art. 1 and Art. 3
1 July 2003	Heavy-metal ban: materials and components of vehicles put on the market after this date must not contain lead, mercury, cadmium or hexavalent chromium other than in the cases listed in Annex II	Art. 4(2)(a)
1 January 2006	First targets: reuse and recovery of at least 85 % and reuse and recycling of at least 80 % by average weight per vehicle and year; Member States could set 75 % and 70 % for vehicles produced before 1 January 1980	Art. 7(2)(a)
1 January 2007	Free take-back extends to vehicles put on the market before 1 July 2002	Art. 12(2)
1 January 2015	Current targets: reuse and recovery of at least 95 % and reuse and recycling of at least 85 % by average weight per vehicle and year	Art. 7(2)(b)
4 July 2018	Directive (EU) 2018/849 in force: the Commission may amend Annexes I and II and set the certificate of destruction and coding standards by delegated act, annual data reporting on the targets replaces the three-yearly implementation reports, and the Commission had to review the directive by 31 December 2020	Art. 1 and Art. 5
5 July 2020	Deadline for Member States to transpose Directive (EU) 2018/849	Art. 4(1)

31 December 2020	Deadline for the Commission to review the directive and report to the European Parliament and the Council, with a legislative proposal if appropriate; the proposal COM(2023) 451 followed on 13 July 2023	Art. 10a
30 March 2023	Commission Delegated Directive (EU) 2023/544 in force: the current Annex II, with 16 numbered entries in 42 lines; transposition by 1 June 2023	Art. 2 and Art. 3
1 January 2024	Exemptions 5(b)(ii) (lead in batteries outside 5(a) and 5(b)(i)), 8(f)(ii) (compliant pin connector systems outside the mating area) and 8(k) (soldering of heating applications to laminated glazing) cover only vehicles type-approved before this date and their spare parts	Annex II, entries 5(b)(ii), 8(f)(ii) and 8(k)
1 January 2026	Exemption 14(b) (hexavalent chromium in the cooling system of absorption refrigerators with an electrical heater of 75 W or more) covers only vehicles type-approved before this date and their spare parts	Annex II, entry 14
13 August 2026	Regulation (EU) 2026/1738 on circularity requirements for vehicle design and management of end-of-life vehicles enters into force; Annex II entries 5(a), 5(b)(i), 5(b)(ii) and 16 (lead and cadmium in batteries) cease to apply and the battery substance rules move to Annex I of Regulation (EU) 2023/1542	Art. 53, Art. 57(1)(a) and Art. 59
14 September 2026	The empowerments for delegated and implementing acts in Regulation (EU) 2026/1738 apply, including those on substances of concern, recycled content, the certificate of destruction and reporting	Art. 59(2)
1 January 2028	Exemption 2(c)(i) (lead up to 0,4 % in aluminium alloys for machining purposes) covers only vehicles type-approved before this date and their spare parts	Annex II, entry 2(c)(i)
1 September 2028	Directive 2000/53/EC repealed and Regulation (EU) 2026/1738 applies, subject to the continued application of the substance ban, the treatment, information, target and reporting provisions listed in Article 57(1)	Art. 57(1) and Art. 59(2)
31 August 2029	End of the continued application of Article 5(4) second subparagraph (producer cost), Article 6(3) second subparagraph, Article 7(1) and Article 8(3) and (4) (dismantling information), of Article 6(3) first subparagraph and Annex I (treatment), and of Article 9(1a) first and third subparagraphs, Article 9(1b) and Article 9(1d) (reporting); the second subparagraph of Article 9(1a) runs until 31 August	Art. 16(1), Art. 49 og Art. 57(1)(b), (c), (e) og (f)

2031. From 1 September 2029 extended producer responsibility, treatment and penalties under Regulation (EU) 2026/1738 take over.

31 December 2030	End of the continued application of the Article 7(2) (b) targets; from 1 January 2030 the 95 % and 85 % targets, excluding batteries, apply under Regulation (EU) 2026/1738	Art. 33(1) and Art. 57(1)(d)
31 August 2032	End of the continued application of Article 4(2) and Annex II; from 1 September 2032 vehicle types type-approved under Regulation (EU) 2018/858 and new parts for them must not contain lead, mercury, cadmium or hexavalent chromium except under Annex IV of Regulation (EU) 2026/1738, and Directive 2005/64/EC is repealed	Art. 5(4), Art. 5(5), Art. 57(1)(a) and Art. 57(2)

Obligations by role

Producer (vehicle manufacturer or professional importer)

- Ensure that materials and components of vehicles you put on the market after 1 July 2003 contain no lead, mercury, cadmium or hexavalent chromium other than in the Annex II cases and under their conditions, within the tolerance of 0,1 % lead, mercury and hexavalent chromium and 0,01 % cadmium by weight per homogeneous material. Art. 4(2)(a) and Annex II
- Track the expiry and review dates of the Annex II exemptions you rely on, in particular 2(c)(i) aluminium alloys for machining (vehicles type-approved before 1 January 2028), 8(f)(ii), 8(k) and 5(b)(ii) (before 1 January 2024) and 14(b) (before 1 January 2026), and note that entries 5(a), 5(b)(i), 5(b)(ii) and 16 ceased to apply on 13 August 2026 in favour of the Batteries Regulation. Annex II; Art. 57(1)(a)
- Expect national measures encouraging you, in liaison with material and equipment manufacturers, to limit hazardous substances from the conception of the vehicle onwards, to design and produce new vehicles so that they can be dismantled, reused and recovered, and to integrate an increasing quantity of recycled material: Article 4(1) obliges the Member States to encourage these things rather than binding producers directly, and the corresponding duties become directly binding under Articles 4 to 7 of Regulation (EU) 2026/1738. Art. 4(1)
- Meet all, or a significant part of, the costs of free take-back, or take back end-of-life vehicles yourself, so that delivery to an authorised treatment facility costs the last holder or owner nothing even if the vehicle has no or a negative market value; in Denmark a producer outside a collective scheme that places more than 20 vehicles a year must let owners deliver to any dealer selling its vehicles or to a storage site or registered treatment operator within 50 km, and may only charge for a missing engine, gearbox or catalytic converter, capped both at the material value of the missing components at the time of delivery and at 300 kr. for a missing engine, 100 kr. for a missing gearbox and 100 kr. for a missing catalytic converter. Art. 5(4); § 29 and § 30
- Use component and material coding standards, in concert with material and equipment manufacturers, so that components and materials suitable for reuse and recovery can be identified, and label or make identifiable the Annex II components marked for stripping before further treatment.
Art. 4(2)(b)(iv), Art. 8(1) and Annex II
- Use component and material coding standards, in concert with material and equipment manufacturers, so that components and materials suitable for reuse and recovery can be identified. Art. 8(1)
- Label or make identifiable the Annex II components marked for stripping before further treatment.
Art. 4(2)(b)(iv) and Annex II
- Provide dismantling information for each type of new vehicle within six months after it is put on the market, identifying the components and materials and the location of all hazardous substances as far as treatment facilities need it, in manuals or electronic media. Art. 2(13) and Art. 8(3)
- Publish information on the recoverable and recyclable design of your vehicles, their environmentally sound treatment, the development of reuse and recycling and the progress achieved, make it accessible to prospective buyers and include it in the promotional literature for new vehicles. Art. 9(2)
- Register in the national producer register where national law requires it; in Denmark the register is kept by Dansk Producentansvar, registration must be completed at the latest 14 days before you first place new or used vehicles on the market, cessation must be notified within four weeks, and placing vehicles on the market without registration is a punishable offence. Prepare for extended producer responsibility under Regulation (EU) 2026/1738 from 1 September 2029. § 47, § 48, § 51, § 52 og § 64, stk. 1, nr. 28; Art. 16(1)

Material, equipment and component manufacturer

- Do not put on the market materials or components for vehicles that contain lead, mercury, cadmium or hexavalent chromium above 0,1 % (0,01 % for cadmium) by weight in any homogeneous material unless an Annex II entry covers the application and the vehicle falls within its scope and expiry date.

Art. 4(2)(a) and Annex II

- Work with vehicle manufacturers to limit hazardous substances from the design stage, to facilitate dismantling, reuse and recovery, and to increase the recycled material in vehicles and other products.

Art. 4(1)(a) to (c)

- Apply the component and material coding standards in concert with producers so that reusable and recoverable components and materials can be identified at treatment. Art. 8(1)
- Make appropriate information on the dismantling, storage and testing of reusable components available to authorised treatment facilities that request it, without prejudice to commercial and industrial confidentiality. Art. 8(4)
- Label or otherwise make identifiable the components covered by the Annex II entries marked for stripping, such as batteries, vibration dampers, solders where the 60 g per vehicle threshold is exceeded, thermoelectric materials, absorption refrigerators and mercury lamps, so that treatment facilities can remove them before shredding. Art. 4(2)(b)(iv), Art. 6(3)(a) and Annex II, third column and notes 5 and 6
- Supply the material data the vehicle manufacturer needs for type-approval under Directive 2005/64/EC. Directive 2005/64/EC adds a type-approval check: new M1 and N1 types must be reusable and/or recyclable to at least 85 % and reusable and/or recoverable to at least 95 % by mass under point 1 of its Annex I, and the approval authority verifies in the preliminary assessment of the manufacturer that the materials comply with Article 4(2)(a) of this directive; it does not apply to special purpose vehicles, to multi-stage built N1 vehicles whose base vehicle complies, or to vehicles produced in small series.

Art. 1, Art. 3, Art. 5(1), Art. 5(2), Art. 6(2) and Annex I, point 1

Importer of vehicles or components

- As a professional importer of vehicles into a Member State you are the producer under Article 2(3) and carry the producer duties: the substance ban, free take-back cost, coding, dismantling information and buyer information. Art. 2(3), Art. 4(2)(a), Art. 5(4), Art. 8 and Art. 9(2)
- Check before import that materials and components of vehicles put on the market after 1 July 2003 comply with Annex II, including the spare-parts rule and the 0,1 % and 0,01 % tolerance per homogeneous material. Art. 4(2)(a) and Annex II
- Provide dismantling information for each new vehicle type within six months of putting it on the market, or make sure the manufacturer's information is available to the authorised treatment facilities in the Member State of import. Art. 2(13) and Art. 8(3)
- Register with the national producer register and either join a collective scheme or ensure yourself that owners can hand in end-of-life vehicles free of charge; in Denmark importers of new and used passenger and light commercial vehicles register with Dansk Producentansvar at the latest 14 days before they first place vehicles on the market, pay a one-off registration fee of 1 000 kr. (500 kr. where they are already in the register under the batteries or WEEE order) and an annual fee of at least 250 kr., and a producer outside a collective scheme placing more than 20 vehicles a year must provide take-back within 50 km. § 29, § 47, § 48, § 52, § 56 og § 57
- Register with the national producer register; in Denmark importers of passenger and light commercial vehicles register with Dansk Producentansvar at least 14 days before first placing vehicles on the market and pay a one-off fee of 1 000 kr. (500 kr. if already registered under the batteries or WEEE order) and an annual fee of at least 250 kr. § 47, § 48, § 52, § 56 og § 57
- Either join a collective scheme or ensure yourself that owners can hand in end-of-life vehicles free of charge; in Denmark a producer outside a collective scheme placing more than 20 vehicles a year must provide take-back within 50 km. § 29
- Make the Article 9(2) information on recoverability, treatment and progress accessible to prospective buyers and include it in the promotional literature used to market the new vehicles. Art. 9(2)

Distributor (dealer or workshop)

- Take part, as an economic operator, in the systems set up for the collection of all end-of-life vehicles and, as far as technically feasible, of waste used parts removed when passenger cars are repaired. Art. 2(10) and Art. 5(1)
- Hand end-of-life vehicles you receive over to an authorised treatment facility; in Denmark dealers and workshops must transfer them to the registered treatment operator they have an agreement with, and failing to do so is a punishable offence. Art. 5(2); § 11 and § 64, stk. 1, nr. 7
- Issue the certificate of destruction on behalf of an authorised treatment facility only where your Member State permits it, you are registered with the public authorities and you guarantee the transfer of the vehicle to that facility; issuing it gives no right to reimbursement unless the Member State has arranged one. Art. 5(3)
- Where you sell vehicles made or imported by a producer, expect to be a take-back point: in Denmark a producer outside a collective scheme must let owners deliver end-of-life vehicles to any business selling its vehicles. § 29, stk. 1, nr. 1

Authorised treatment facility, collector, shredder, recycler or insurer

- Obtain a permit from, or register with, the competent authorities before carrying out any treatment operation; the registration derogation is only available for recovery operations on already depolluted waste after an annual inspection of the waste types and quantities, technical requirements and safety precautions. Art. 6(2) and Art. 6(4)
- Store, even temporarily, and treat end-of-life vehicles in accordance with the waste hierarchy and Article 4 of Directive 2008/98/EC and with the minimum technical requirements of Annex I: impermeable surfaces with spillage collection, water treatment, segregated storage of fluids, batteries, filters, PCB condensers and tyres. Art. 6(1) and Annex I, points 1, 2 and 5
- Strip end-of-life vehicles before further treatment, remove and segregate hazardous materials and components so that shredder waste is not contaminated, and carry out depollution as soon as possible: removal of batteries and LPG tanks, neutralisation of airbags and other explosive components, draining of all fluids and removal of mercury-containing components. Art. 6(3) and Annex I, point 3
- Remove catalysts and glass before shredding, and remove metal components containing copper, aluminium or magnesium, tyres and large plastic components such as bumpers, dashboards and fluid containers unless the shredding process segregates those materials so that they can be effectively recycled as materials; store components so that reusable parts and fluids are not damaged.
Art. 6(3)(c) and Annex I, points 4 and 5
- Issue the certificate of destruction to the holder or owner when the end-of-life vehicle is transferred to you; it is the condition for deregistration and must be recognised in every Member State. In Denmark it is issued through the digital system of Dansk Producentansvar and sent by Digital Post.
Art. 5(3) and Art. 5(5); § 10
- Attain the targets of at least 95 % reuse and recovery and 85 % reuse and recycling by average weight per vehicle and year, and keep the records the Member State needs to report the data electronically within 18 months of the end of each year with a quality check report. Art. 7(2)(b), Art. 9(1a) and Art. 9(1b)
- Attain the targets of at least 95 % reuse and recovery and 85 % reuse and recycling by average weight per vehicle and year. Art. 7(2)(b)
- Keep the records the Member State needs to report the reuse, recycling and recovery data electronically within 18 months of the end of each year, with a quality check report. Art. 9(1a) and Art. 9(1b)
- Consider a certified environmental management system, which Member States must encourage; in Denmark anyone treating vehicles professionally must operate an environmental management system in accordance with ISO 14001 or be registered under EMAS, the system must cover every activity regulated by the order and be certified by a body accredited by DANAK or an equivalent EA signatory, and the certification body must notify Miljøstyrelsen and the supervisory authority within eight days if the certificate is withdrawn. Art. 6(5); § 7, stk. 1–4, og § 64, stk. 1, nr. 4

Penalties

Directive 2000/53/EC contains no penalty article: it is addressed to the Member States, which had to transpose it by 21 April 2002 and enforce it through their own permit, registration and deregistration systems and their national sanctions; Directive (EU) 2018/849 added reporting and delegated-act provisions but no penalties. The directive is listed in Annex I of Regulation (EU) 2019/1020, so the market surveillance powers of that regulation apply to vehicles and components as products, and, as point 10 of its Annex II — the list of Union harmonisation legislation without provisions on penalties — it obliges Member States under Article 41(1) of that regulation to lay down effective, proportionate and dissuasive penalties for infringements of the directive that impose obligations on economic operators. Article 54 of Regulation (EU) 2026/1738 deletes points 10 and 11 of that Annex II, that is both this directive and Directive 2005/64/EC. Regulation (EU) 2026/1738 changes this: by 1 September 2029 Member States must lay down effective, proportionate and dissuasive penalties for infringements of its provisions on authorised treatment facilities, extended producer responsibility, collection, delivery, the certificate of destruction, treatment, the targets, the landfill ban, vehicle transfer and export. In Denmark bilskrotbekendtgørelsen (BEK nr. 1654 af 29. december 2022, in force since 5 January 2023, as amended by BEK nr. 1492 af 1. december 2025) punishes with a fine, among other things, failure to hand in or receive end-of-life vehicles correctly, operating without registration or certification, failing to issue the certificate of destruction, breaching the depollution and storage rules, missing the reuse and recovery requirements, charging owners more than allowed and placing vehicles on the market without registration with Dansk Producentansvar; the penalty rises to imprisonment of up to two years where the offence was intentional or grossly negligent and harmed the environment or brought economic gain, and companies can be held criminally liable.

Art. 10 and Art. 13; Annex I, point 13 and Annex II, point 10; Art. 49 and Art. 54; § 62, § 64, stk. 1 og stk. 2, § 65 og § 66, som ændre

Checklist

- 1. Confirm that each vehicle is category M1 or N1 (or a three-wheel motor vehicle, to which only Articles 5(1), 5(2) and 6 apply) and whether it is a special-purpose or small-series vehicle with a narrower set of duties (Articles 2(1) and 3).
- 2. Decide your role: a vehicle manufacturer or professional importer is the producer, component and material suppliers are manufacturers under Articles 4 and 8, and treatment operators need a permit or registration (Articles 2(3), 2(10) and 6(2)).
- 3. Break the vehicle or component down into homogeneous materials and verify that lead, mercury, cadmium and hexavalent chromium stay below 0,1 % (0,01 % for cadmium) or are covered by a current Annex II entry with its scope, type-approval cut-off and labelling requirement (Article 4(2)(a) and Annex II).
- 4. Diarise the Annex II expiries you depend on: 8(f)(ii), 8(k) and 5(b)(ii) at type-approval before 1 January 2024, 14(b) before 1 January 2026, 2(c)(i) before 1 January 2028; the battery entries 5(a), 5(b)(i), 5(b)(ii) and 16 ceased on 13 August 2026 and Regulation (EU) 2023/1542 Annex I now applies to them.
- 5. Use the component and material coding standards and label the Annex II components marked for stripping (Articles 4(2)(b)(iv) and 8(1)).
- 6. Deliver dismantling information for every new vehicle type within six months of putting it on the market and answer treatment facilities' requests for component dismantling, storage and testing information (Article 8(3) and (4)).
- 7. Fund or organise free take-back so that the last holder pays nothing, register with the national producer register (Dansk Producentansvar in Denmark) and, if you sell more than 20 vehicles a year in Denmark outside a collective scheme, provide take-back points within 50 km (Article 5(4); BEK 1654/2022 §§ 29 and 47 to 52).
- 8. Make sure end-of-life vehicles go to authorised treatment facilities that issue the certificate of destruction, depollute per Annex I and reach the 95 % and 85 % targets (Articles 5(2), 5(3), 6 and 7(2)).
- 9. Publish the recoverability, treatment and progress information for buyers and include it in promotional literature (Article 9(2)).
- 10. Plan the transition to Regulation (EU) 2026/1738: general application on 1 September 2028, extended producer responsibility, treatment duties and penalties from 1 September 2029, new targets from 1 January 2030, the substance ban with Annex IV for types approved from 1 September 2032 (Articles 5(4), 16, 33, 49, 57 and 59).

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