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## Welcome to the Fourth Edition of the SOPHIA Newsletter

This autumn, SOPHIA is reaching beyond its own consortium. On 8 October we brought seven EU-funded projects together to compare challenges and map where we can work as one. On 4 November we take that conversation to Brussels, where our first results meet the policymakers shaping the future of end-of-life PV panels.

## 🚀 Project Updates

**Seven EU projects, one table: the SOPHIA clustering webinar**

| Project | FOCUS |
|---|---|
| **SOPHIA** | Increasing the circularity of PV panels |
| **SOLARIS** | Sustainability and resource efficiency in the PV industry |
| **EVERPV** | Delamination of end-of-life PV panels, material recovery and reuse |
| **REWIND** | Decommissioning, repurposing and recycling of end-of-life wind energy systems |
| **EcoPlast** | Circular operations in the automotive plastics value chain |

| | |
|---|---|
| | clothing industry |
| **SORT4CIRC** | Automated sorting of post-consumer textiles into high-quality feedstock |

Participants decided on the most relevant topics for their projects and conducted discussions:
**Eco-design.** Projects across sectors face the same tension: making products more durable while keeping them easy to disassemble, and doing both at a competitive cost. The lack of harmonised eco-design criteria for PV, and of standard methods for calculating recycled content, came up repeatedly.

**Recycling and reuse.** High costs, difficult material separation and weak demand for recovered materials remain the main barriers. Reuse raises its own questions, from warranties and liability for repaired panels to the cross-border movement of second-hand products within Europe.

**Digital Product Passport.** Data quality, ownership and security dominated the discussion, along with a practical challenge for long-lived products like solar panels: keeping passport data accessible for 25 to 30 years.
The participants' own takeaways sum it up well: although each industry has its own conditions, the underlying principles and challenges are strikingly similar, and setting shared eco-design criteria now, before regulation requires it, is where projects can lead.

Thank you to all speakers and participants for an open and productive exchange.

## 📅 Events

### Closing the Loop on Solar, 4 November, Brussels

Join us on Wednesday 4 November 2026 at CEPS in Brussels for "Closing the Loop on Solar: Digital Traceability and Circularity for PV Panels", SOPHIA's first stakeholder event. The half-day programme runs from 14:00 to 17:30 and closes with a networking cocktail.

We expect 60 to 80 participants from EU institutions, EU-funded projects, PV manufacturers, recyclers, producer responsibility organisations, academia and civil

**What is on the programme**

- **SOPHIA at mid-term.** The coordinator, AIMPLAS, presents progress across the project's five pillars and first technical results on repair, recovery and eco-design.
- **Current EU landscape.** Recycling Europe shares first findings from its review of EU legislation and where current rules fall short for end-of-life PV panels.
- **The SOPHIA Digital Product Passport and marketplace.** A live walkthrough of the passport and marketplace tool.
- **EU project spotlight.** Three circularity EU projects present, building directly on the findings of our 8 October clustering webinar: how can project work together?
- **From evidence to policy.** A panel on whether Europe's treatment capacity is ready for the first large wave of end-of-life panels, what the value chain needs from a DPP, and which levers matter most: the WEEE revision, ESPR delegated acts or public procurement.

The event is in person, **you can register here.**

**SOPHIA heads to Spain's National WEEE Congress**

SOPHIA will be showcased at Spain's National WEEE Congress, the annual gathering of the country's electrical and electronic waste sector, bringing together producers, distributors, waste managers and public authorities.

Consortium partner Recyclia, one of Spain's leading producer responsibility organisations, will present the project through a dedicated poster, produced in Spanish to reach the predominantly national audience. It is a valuable opportunity to put SOPHIA's work on PV panel repair, recycling and digital traceability in front of the people who manage end-of-life equipment on the ground every day, in one of the project's key countries.

## 🌍 The Policy Landscape

results will enter.

**The EU Digital Product Passport Registry is live.**

The Commission switched on the central DPP Registry on 20 July 2026, together with a testing environment and helpdesk. Product data stays decentralised; the Registry records each passport's unique identifier so authorities can verify it exists. Registration only becomes mandatory as product-specific rules apply, starting with certain batteries on 18 February 2027. For PV, this is the infrastructure the SOPHIA passport will need to plug into, and a strong argument for a shared PV data model now.

**The WEEE revision and a dedicated category for solar.**

Under the 2024 amendment to the WEEE Directive, the Commission must assess the need for a full revision by 31 December 2026. That assessment includes creating a separate category for photovoltaic panels, with collection targets based on the panels expected to reach end of life rather than on sales. Because panels last decades, sales and waste volumes differ sharply, which makes this change significant for the sector.

**The Circular Economy Act is expected this autumn.**

The WEEE revision is set to be a central part of the Circular Economy Act, with the proposal anticipated on 18 November 2026. The Commission's emerging approach points to a wider WEEE scope, mandatory material recovery targets, EU-wide end-of-waste criteria, digital EPR registration and recycled content thresholds. These are exactly the questions on the table at our 4 November event.

## Communications

You can follow us for updates, news, and events on LinkedIn and X !

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CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE!

SOPHIA
Advanced digital solutions to increase PV panel circularity

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