THE BIGGER PICTURE

Why Green Prompt matters in the EU

129 kg of food wasted per person, every year

~16 kg of textiles binned per person, every year

33% of 65–74-year-olds have basic digital skills

Greener habits + digital confidence, at any age.

Source: Eurostat 2024–2025; EEA 2025

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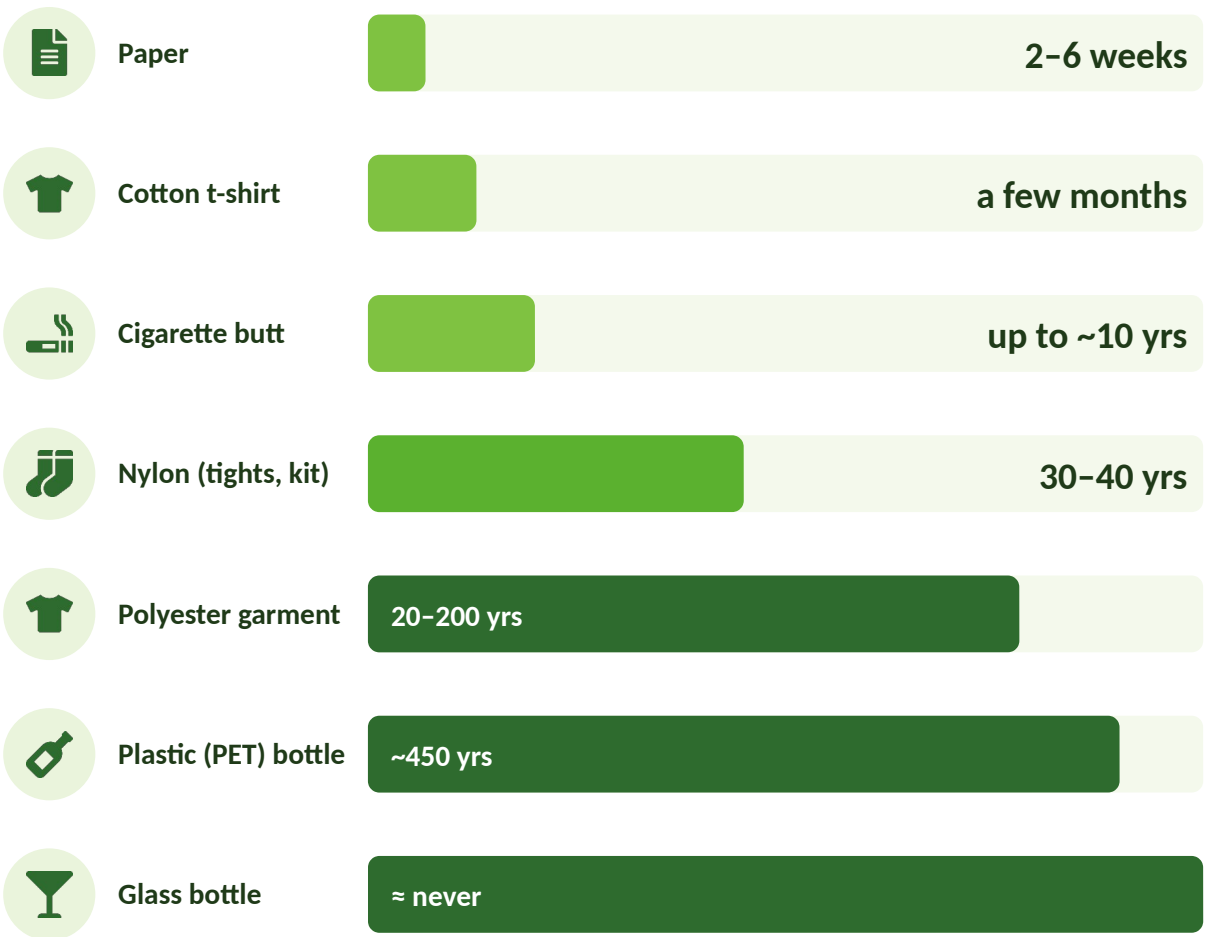
KNOW YOUR WASTE

How long it really lasts as litter

If it isn't reused or recycled, here's roughly how long it lingers.



Source: NOAA & waste-authority estimates; ranges vary by conditions

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FAST FASHION

Your clothes are (mostly) plastic



About 60% of EU clothing is made from plastic fibres like polyester — and barely any is recycled.

- Europeans buy ~19 kg of textiles each per year.
- Under 1% of clothing worldwide becomes new clothing.
- Since 2025 the EU must collect used textiles separately.
- Buy less, buy better, repair, and donate what still works.

Source: EEA 2025; Ellen MacArthur Foundation; EU law

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HIDDEN PLASTICS

Laundry & microplastics

Washing synthetic clothes sheds tiny plastic fibres into water. A few habits cut it down.

Choose natural fibres

Cotton, wool, linen don't shed plastic microfibres.

Wash full & cool

Full, cooler loads create less friction and shedding.

Use a filter or bag

A microfibre laundry bag traps fibres before they drain.

Air-dry when you can

Tumble dryers shed fibres and use lots of energy.

Wash less often

Air clothes between wears; wash only when needed.

Source: EEA textiles briefing

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HIDDEN WATER

The water you can't see

Most of the water we 'use' is hidden in the things we buy.

2,700 L to make one cotton t-shirt

~15,000 L for one kilo of beef

~140 L behind a single cup of coffee

~7,500 L for one pair of jeans

Source: Water Footprint Network; WWF; UNEP (approx.)

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CLIMATE-SMART EATING

What's on your plate

What you eat often matters more for the climate than how far it travelled.

Red meat hits hardest

Beef and lamb have by far the biggest footprint.

Plants are gentle

Beans, lentils and veg are a fraction of the impact.

Seasonal & local helps

It matters less than diet, but still trims waste & miles.

Waste nothing

Binned food wasted all the water & energy behind it.

Balance, not perfection

Even a few meat-free meals a week adds up.

Source: Our World in Data; Poore & Nemecek, 2018

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LABEL CONFUSION · 01

“Biodegradable” = compostable?

MYTH

“If it says biodegradable, I can compost it or it'll just vanish.”

FACT

Not the same — and 'biodegradable' can be almost meaningless.

- Biodegradable = breaks down eventually, maybe over decades.
- Compostable = breaks down safely into soil, fairly quickly.
- Many 'compostable' plastics need industrial composting.
- Look for a certified home-compost logo before composting.

Source: EN 13432; European Commission, 2022

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LABEL CONFUSION · 02

“It's recyclable, so it gets recycled”

MYTH

“If it has the recycling symbol, binning it means it'll be recycled.”

FACT

Recyclable means it can be — not that it will be. How you bin it decides.

- Dirty or greasy items can spoil a whole batch — rinse first.
- 'Wishful' recycling (binning hopefuls) does more harm.
- Black plastic and mixed materials often can't be sorted.
- When unsure, check your local council's rules.

Source: EEA; national recycling guidance

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DECODE YOUR BIN

Those plastic numbers

The triangle number (1–7) tells you what a plastic is — not that it'll be recycled.

1 PET & 2 HDPE

Bottles & milk jugs — the most widely recycled.

4 LDPE — bags & film

Rules vary — some bins take film, some shops do.

5 PP — tubs & lids

Increasingly accepted — check your local list.

3 PVC, 6 PS, 7 Other

Rarely recycled — avoid where you can.

The number is a clue

Not a promise. Always follow local rules.

Source: Resin identification codes; local guidance

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FOOD LABELS

“Best before means bin it”

MYTH

“Once the date passes, the food is unsafe and must be thrown away.”

FACT

'Best before' is about quality, not safety. 'Use by' is the one to watch.

- Best before: still safe after — may just lose peak flavour.
- Use by: about safety — don't eat after this date.
- Trust your senses: look, smell, use common sense.
- EU households waste ~69 kg of food per person a year.

Source: European Parliament; Eurostat 2024

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RIGHT TO REPAIR

Repair beats replace



E-waste is one of the EU's fastest-growing waste streams — and in 2024 the EU adopted a 'Right to Repair' law.

- Fixing things keeps them — and their materials — in use.
- Look for repair cafés, spare parts and how-to guides.
- Update software before assuming a device is 'too old'.
- USB-C is now the EU's common charger — fewer cables, less waste.

Source: EU Right to Repair Directive, 2024; European Parliament

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OLD GADGETS

Don't drawer it — de-clutter it

The EU buys ~32 kg of new electronics per person a year, but collects only ~12 kg for recycling.

Use proper drop-offs

Shops & councils take old electronics — not the bin.

Donate what works

A working phone or tablet can help someone learn.

Wipe data first

Factory-reset and remove SIM/memory cards.

Recycle batteries

Never in household waste — use battery points.

Empty the 'tech drawer'

Hoarded gadgets lock up valuable materials.

Source: Eurostat 2023 (WEEE)

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ENERGY DEEP-DIVE

The power you pay for but don't use



Devices on standby keep sipping electricity 24/7 — often a noticeable slice of a home's power bill.

- TVs, boxes, chargers and consoles all draw 'phantom' power.
- A switchable power strip cuts several at once.
- Buildings use ~40% of all EU energy — homes are a big part.
- Less waste also means lower bills — money back in your pocket.

Source: European Commission; JRC (buildings & energy)

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FOR COLDER MONTHS

Warm home, lower bills

In 2025 about 1 in 11 people in the EU couldn't keep their home warm. A cold home affects health, too.

Aim for ~18–21°C

Living areas around 18–21°C is a common comfort guide.

Heat the room, not the house

Close doors and warm the rooms you actually use.

Stop the draughts

Seal gaps at doors, windows and letterboxes.

Layer up & move

Warm layers and gentle movement help you feel warmer.

Ask about support

Many countries offer heating help — worth checking.

Source: Eurostat 2025 (energy poverty); WHO guidance

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AI, DEMYSTIFIED · 01

What AI actually is (and isn't)



Today's AI is a very advanced pattern-predictor. It guesses likely words — it doesn't truly 'understand' or 'know'.

- It learned patterns from huge amounts of text.
- It predicts what usually comes next — convincingly.
- It has no feelings or real opinions of its own.
- A brilliant helper — but a tool. You stay in charge.

Source: General explainer

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AI, DEMYSTIFIED · 02

Confident — but sometimes wrong



AI can state false things with total confidence. This is called a 'hallucination' — and it looks just as sure as the truth.

- It can invent names, dates, quotes or 'facts'.
- A confident tone is NOT proof of accuracy.
- Always verify anything important elsewhere.
- Ask it: “How sure are you? What's your source?”

Source: General AI-literacy guidance

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AI WORDS · ADVANCED

AI jargon, decoded



LLM

Large Language Model — the 'brain' that predicts text, e.g. behind ChatGPT.



Token

A chunk of text (a word or piece of one) the AI reads and writes in.



Training vs using

Training = learning once (huge energy); using it daily = 'inference'.



Agent

AI that doesn't just answer — it takes steps to do a task for you.

Source: General AI-literacy guidance

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GREEN AI

AI has a footprint too

AI runs in data centres that use real energy and water. Using it thoughtfully keeps it greener.

Not all chats are equal

Short chats use little; long or 'reasoning' tasks far more.

Images cost far more

Generating an image uses many times a text reply.

Be concise

Shorter, clearer prompts can measurably cut energy use.

Get it right first time

A good prompt avoids energy-hungry do-overs.

Data centres add up

They used ~485 TWh worldwide in 2025 — and rising.

Source: IEA, 2026; UNESCO & UCL, 2025 (estimates vary)

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PROMPTING · INTERMEDIATE

A better prompt, part by part

1

ROLE Give it a job

"Act as a patient energy adviser…"

2

TASK Be clear & specific

"…ways to cut my winter heating bill."

3

CONTEXT Add your details

"I live alone in a small, older flat."

4

CONSTRAINTS Set the limits

"Low-cost ideas only, nothing structural."

5

FORMAT Shape the answer

"Give me 5 short bullets, simple words."

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PROMPTING · ADVANCED

Show it an example



Stuck getting the style you want? Give the AI one example of a good answer, then ask for more like it.

- “Here's a note I liked: '...'. Write 2 more in that style.”
- Examples teach tone, length and format fast.
- Not right? Reply with a tweak — it remembers the chat.
- This trick is called 'few-shot' prompting.

Source: Prompt-engineering practice

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AI × SUSTAINABILITY

Let AI help you go greener

Your two new skills work together — here's AI put to practical, green use.

Cook from your fridge

“What can I make with these 5 things?” — less waste.

Get repair guides

Ask for step-by-step help fixing something at home.

Decode your energy bill

“Explain this bill simply and where I can save.”

Sort your recycling

“Which bin does this go in?” for tricky items.

Write to your council

Draft a note asking for a repair café or bins.

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STAY SAFE · SCAMS

Spot AI scams & fakes

Scammers now use AI to clone voices and fake messages. A few habits keep you safe.

Hang up & call back

“It's me, I need money”? Call the person directly.

Voices can be faked

AI can copy a familiar voice from seconds of audio.

Beware urgency

“Act now / keep it secret” is a classic scam signal.

Don't click links

Go to the official site or app yourself instead.

Check with someone

Unsure? Ask a trusted friend or family member.

Source: Consumer-safety guidance

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STAY SAFE · MISINFORMATION

Check before you share

AI makes fake photos, videos and stories easy. A quick pause stops misinformation spreading.

Pause if it's shocking

Strong emotion is exactly what fake news is built for.

Look closely at images

Odd hands, garbled text and weird edges hint at AI.

Check the source & date

Is it a real outlet? Is the story current?

Search it yourself

See if trusted sites report the same thing.

When unsure, don't share

Better to hold back than pass on a fake.

Source: Media-literacy guidance

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STAY SAFE · PRIVACY

Keep your data yours



Treat an AI chat like a public postcard, not a private diary. Assume someone could read it later.

- Never type passwords, PINs, or bank details.
- Avoid your full name, address or ID numbers.
- Chats may be stored or used to improve the AI.
- Check the app's privacy settings to limit this.

Source: EU GDPR principles; app privacy settings

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USE AI WISELY

“AI can be my doctor or lawyer”

MYTH

“I'll ask AI about my symptoms / contract / pension and just follow it.”

FACT

Great for a first draft or plain-English explanation — not for high-stakes decisions.

- It can be wrong, out of date, or miss your situation.
- Use it to prepare questions for a real professional.
- For health, money or legal matters, confirm with a human.
- You — and qualified people — make the final call.

Source: General AI-literacy guidance

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Small habits.
Smart tools.
Active ageing.

Greener living and confident AI use go hand in hand
— and it's never too late to start either.

Follow Green Prompt for more 🌱

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G-PRO · Green Prompt

Promoting Healthy & Sustainable Ageing Through AI and Interactive Learning. Green & AI tips: 26 posters, free to use, print and share for non-commercial adult education.

More tips, the board game, the handbook and the training pack: g-pro.elnlab.eu

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