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The role of labeling of chemical substances contents in recycling promotion - Japanese case

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In 1998, the Home Appliance Recycling Law was adopted in Japan. Since then, 4 types of large home appliances have been collected and recycled under a scheme of manufacturer's responsibility; however, at that time, there were no definite regulatory frameworks to restrict hazardous substances put in the large home appliances like the RoHS directive enacted in EU in 2003. The RoHS Directive demands manufacturers to prove their own compliance. Therefore, manufacturers in the world (especially in Asia) initiated to seek the methods for proving this. Consequently, industry associations in Japan and METI introduce the standard called J-Moss, which declares hazardous substances contents subject to the restriction of the RoHS Directive. Labeling as a tool for displaying information was utilized not only for the whole product but also for single parts and modules such as PCB. In this paper, we focus on LF and HF labeling (LF:Lead-free, HF:Halogen-free) for PCB. We have collected WEEE of different ages and manufacturers. After dismantling them, we confirmed the historical change of each WEEE. In other words, the visual of the modules had changed to comply along with the installation of hazardous substances regulation and recycling methods indication. We found these changes are a notable tendency among Japanese manufacturers around 2002. Nowadays, this labeling method is utilized widely and evolved further as CE labeling. Our finding (i.e. the involvement of manufactures to RoHS) is a useful example for effective and practicable institution-building among encouragement of Resource Efficiency and Circular Economy policies.

Biography

Mizue Kama has completed her Master's degree in Mineral Processing from Tohoku University, Japan in 2010, and she went on to pursue her Post-doctoral studies in the same university. She major in Sociology of Law especially EU Environmental Regulations.

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