

ESWET Comment on Circular Economy Package – ENVI vote

3 February 2017

The ENVI Committee of the European Parliament adopted on 24th January four reports on the legislative proposals from the Circular Economy Package. ESWET would like to use this opportunity to remind about the important role of Waste-to-Energy in the transition towards the Circular Economy.

According to the EU Waste Hierarchy, landfilling is the last resource option and should gradually phase-out. In some Member States it is already banned for untreated waste, but others still heavily rely on this waste treatment option. Phasing out landfilling will therefore be for them a very ambitious task, and Waste-to-Energy is a proven solution to deal with a big share of waste that is unsuitable for recycling. Hence, waste management strategies should be adjusted to local conditions and should take into account all available options.

As we wrote above, dealing with waste unsuitable for recycling is an important function of Waste-to-Energy plants. The amount of such waste cannot be changed after it is generated, therefore we strongly believe that suggesting limits or taxes on Waste-to-Energy will not facilitate a shift to the Circular Economy. Caps on Waste-to-Energy, set together with a landfill ban, might lead to a gap between the amount of generated rubbish and waste treatment capacities (combined recycling and capped incineration). In addition, the experience from some countries shows that charges on Waste-to-Energy are not an efficient measure to improve recycling rates.

ESWET is nevertheless glad to notice that the ENVI Committee supported the Commission's proposal to include in the recycling rates metals recovered in conjunction with incineration. As Europe is striving to save natural resources, Waste-to-Energy is of great help to reclaim secondary raw materials that would be otherwise buried in a landfill.

ESWET also supports a harmonised method for calculating recycling rates. Current regime generates statistics that are often incomparable between the Member States. Single methodology will allow for a better assessment of EU waste policies and how they are implemented at national level.

Contacts

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About ESWET

ESWET is the association grouping the European Suppliers of Waste-to-Energy Technology. Its members have supplied over 95% of European Waste-to-Energy plants. ESWET aims to raise the awareness of the positive contribution of the technology for the environment, energy supplies and resource-efficiency.