

HOW WASTE-TO-ENERGY CONTRIBUTES TO SUSTAINABLE EUROPEAN WASTE MANAGEMENT!

FUTURE GENERATIONS DESERVE TO LIVE AND STRIVE IN A CLEAN AND SAFE ENVIRONMENT. TO ENSURE THIS, THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A SUSTAINABLE WASTE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK IS ESSENTIAL. THANKS TO NEW TECHNOLOGIES AND WITH THE FIRM COMMITMENT OF ALL STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED, WE WILL BE ABLE TO DEVELOP THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY.

In the last months of 2018, hundreds of thousands of young students took to the streets in all capitals of Europe with a clear message for politicians and policy makers: we have to take care of our planet, and there is not a single second to lose. They are right, and their demands need to be listened to carefully.

Waste management stands at the crossroads of worldwide challenges: climate change, pollution, health, scarcity of resources, economic development and more. The continuous implementation and upgrading of sound and sustainable waste management systems are key to uphold the right to a healthy environment, which should be considered a basic human right.

This is particularly important if we look at the larger picture. Recent reports show that the global warming of 1.5°C or higher above pre-industrial levels would create long-lasting or even irreversible changes with serious impacts for the Earth and its population.

Europe's waste management policies need to involve all stakeholders in the value chain for a circular economy process. Starting from the design phase of products to a sustainable waste

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and resource management. In order to reach the best results, it is important to equally focus on prevention, recycling, reuse and recovery.

Over the years, Waste-to-Energy plants have managed to adapt to changing waste streams, e.g. as a result of improved separate collection. They are a key contributor in fostering the circular economy and achieving a significant reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and are therefore a major component of Europe's most successful waste management systems. In this regard, European companies confirm their role of global leaders by exporting innovation and technological know-how worldwide.

A wide range of characteristics can be applied to Waste-to-Energy technologies.

Waste-to-Energy plants:

- Are nearly pollution-free: due to strict pollution control legislation, the Waste-to-Energy sector has significantly reduced its pollutant emissions, to air and water, making this industry one of the cleanest in Europe.
- Produce energy: almost all incineration plants recover the energy potential of waste through electricity, heat and/or cold, with efficiencies of up to 95%.
- Produce secondary raw materials: ashes and flue gas cleaning (FGC) residues resulting from the combustion process are more and more channelled into recycling processes.
- Contribute to a high quality of recycling through taking out and destroying toxic materials. If these would enter the recycling circle they can pollute it and make it unable to meet proper quality standards.
- Contribute to reduction of GHG emissions by diverting waste from landfills and thus preventing methane emissions. In addition, the resulting by-products of Waste-to-Energy (i.e. energy, ashes and FGC residues) prevent the extraction of further fossil fuels and primary raw materials.

Landfilling corresponds to the prehistory of waste management, and we are finally reaching the end of that era. This is why ambitious and innovative choices need to be applied at both European and global level to ensure a cleaner and safer environment for future generations.

In this regard, Waste-to-Energy suppliers are firmly committed to bring their contribution towards a more resource efficient and decarbonised economy.



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