

ACTU' ASSISES



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The «Assises» and Europe

In 2007, the «Assises des Déchets» took a European dimension which appeared to be a logical continuation of previous editions. Indeed, at the moment, a large part of advances in waste management have international origins, particularly what regards the community strategy and the different European directives. Waste management in Europe can greatly benefit from the sharing of experiences among the states members. Some European environment ministers have agreed to give their points of view.

SUMMARY

European point of view:

Interview of **Mr Nikolaus BERLAKOVICH**
Austrian Minister of the environment

Interview of **Mrs Joke SCHAUVLIEGE**
Belgian Minister of the environment

Interview of **Mrs Karen ELLEMANN**
Danish Minister of the environment

Interview of **Dr Norbert ROTTGEN**
German Minister of the environment

Interview of **Mr Andreas CARLGREN**
Swedish Minister of the environment

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Interview of **Mr Nikolaus BERLAKOVICH** Austrian Minister of the environment

Austria is the leader in Europe for composting household bio waste, even exemplary: what are the reasons, and which good practices could other European countries learn from your country?



Berlakovich: We have been relying in Austria with various successful initiatives on an ecological and sustainable recycling management in the field of bio wastes already since the beginning of the nineties and we have done for that purpose intensive awareness raising and information work for the broad public. In addition to that we have ensured by legal provisions and regulations the decentralized separation of bio wastes at source as well as a high quality composting and have thus reached an exemplary standard in bio waste management. Due to these measures our country is now, with an overall collection volume of about 116 kilograms of bio waste per capita considered to be the world champion in waste separation. At the same time we have succeeded in this way in making available high-quality composts, which are highly demanded in agriculture as well as in hobby gardening.

What should be the priorities for waste policy in Europe?

Berlakovich: The waste quantities and the pollutant contents of products are clearly too high and they have negative effects on the environment. In this respect it must be an objective at EU level to reach reductions and to enable in this way a more effective and efficient recycling. In particular in view of this scarcity of resources advantages can be reached by means of careful resource management and recycling of raw materials and the reparability and reusability of products, which is of great benefit for the economy and the environment.



Interview of **Ms Joke SCHAUVLIEGE** Belgian Minister of the environment

Household waste: the effective strategy of Flanders.

Statistics are clear: Belgium is among the most effective countries in Europe in reducing household waste and especially recycling. Back on the strategy led in Flanders, with Joke Schauvliege, Minister of the environment.



What overall strategy have Flanders chosen for household waste?

The fundamental point was to treat together all the stages: production, collection and processing. Not only limit the landfill but also take specific measures to boost recycling and reuse, and engage in prevention. We have worked hard to achieve the separation of flows, crucial for high rates of recycling, using material of higher quality and higher value. And we have heavily invested in communication towards the population through actions of explanation and education, the provision of equipment to facilitate sorting, by introducing the principle of producer/payer financially incentive to sort... All this allow us to travel big steps in recycling... but our challenge for the coming stays prevention.

In detail, how did recycling increase?

During the past 15 years, the amount of household waste produced in Flanders kept on progressing. It increased from 400 kg in the early 1990 to over 550 kg per inhabitant per year in 2000. On the other hand, the proportion of sorted waste for reuse/recycling has dramatically increased, it rose from less than 20% in 1991 to more than 50% in 1997, to 68% in 2001 and has since stabilized around 70%. Over the same period, the proportion of incinerated waste has remained stable at around 25%. The most notable changes has been the reduction in landfill that fell from 50% in 1991 to zero today.

Which organizations have been put in place?

Everything has been done to make sorting easier, but also to encourage them to do it. The polluter/payer principle was introduced, on the one hand with manufacturers, on the other hand and especially close to household with the introduction of payment based on the volume and especially the weight of waste produced, with a search of deterrent effects: the non-sorting is expensive, while the sorted waste is collected at a low price or even free. Such a device has required intensive communication campaigns upstream.

It was measured that such a system does not necessarily result in illegal dumping, a behavior adopted by 5 to 10% of the concerned population, but that we need to know how to treat, in a soft way (warnings...) or more severe (fines...) We also had to worry about geographically smooth rates, to avoid people dumping their waste in the town next door, turning into « waste tourism ».

In total, a Flemish household (2,4 people) spends about 220 euros per year for the treatment of its household waste: 36 euros via taxes producers/payers, 16 euros via the eco-tax package, the balance of 184 euros being taken by municipalities: one third via the variable cost of the abduction, one third via a fixed household waste tax, and one third through the income tax.

What measures do you put in place for prevention?

Here we also have heavily invested in communication. Since the campaigns of the payment to the amount of waste, households were first encouraged to compost. Today, a quarter of households already adopted the compost, 40% are located in urban areas. We also installed « masters of the compost » (5 for 1000 people), and encourage volunteers to help their fellow citizens to make good compost.

Communication campaigns have ben launched through the school system, stores, events organizers... Stickers « stop advertising » for letter boxes were widely distributed... and a vast network of reuse has been installed, where people can leave furniture, toys, electrical and electronic equipment, clothes... which collects more than 6kg per year per inhabitant. Our short term goal was to stabilize the production of household waste from 2010 to the level of 2000, then take this performance by uncoupling waste production and economic growth. To achieve this, we need to both develop recycling and the introduction of eco-designed products.

Interview of Ms Karen ELLEMANN Danish Minister of the environment

Your country is among the most performant in Europe with a balanced mix of management within treatment systems: what are the reasons and why other countries cannot reach the same results?

In Denmark, a very low proportion of waste is landfilled, the majority of our waste is recycled or the materials are recovered, and a considerable amount is incinerated with the combined production and full use of both heat and electricity. These achievements are due to a range of factors.

Firstly, Denmark started waste management planning relatively early, at both a national and local level, by adopting the first national waste management plan in 1989. Strategic directions were set, and municipalities were given clear responsibilities and therefore ownership for their actions towards ensuring the improved management of all waste streams. They were required to establish local waste management plans and to adopt local regulations in order to ensure the implementation of the national waste management legislation. In addition, new private landfills were prohibited from 1992 onwards with the clear strategic aim of lowering the amount of waste being landfilled and ensuring sufficient future landfill capacity for waste, which cannot be recovered or recycled.

Secondly, energy recovery for district heating and electricity, through waste incineration was introduced. This means, that waste incineration now forms a considerable part of the energy production sector in Denmark. There is a close connection between energy planning and waste management planning in Denmark. New waste incineration capacity must be approved by the national waste authorities. The use of surplus heat from waste incineration plants producing heat and electricity generally takes precedence over the use of heat from other, mostly coal fired, combined heat and power plants in the widespread Danish district heating networks.

Finally and very importantly, the basic regulation has been supported by a variety of financial instruments creating incentives and disincentives for households, municipalities and enterprises to support the diversion of waste away from landfilling towards recycling and recovery.

In the 1970s, a compulsory national refund system for most bottles and drinks cans was implemented. A weight-based tax on the landfilling of waste was introduced in the 1980s supplemented by a somewhat lower tax on the incineration of waste. The level of these green taxes have been raised a number of times. After some years allowing the development of new collection, sorting and recycling options to mature, a national legislation was passed in 1997 banning the landfilling of combustible waste and setting up mandatory treatment directions on a number of specific waste streams.

Why other countries cannot reach the same results?

The EU legislation on waste and perhaps especially the EU Landfill Directive from 1999 is a very strong driver for the member states. It is important to bear in mind that the European countries are different with different backgrounds, possibilities and needs. I am confident that the revised EU Waste Directive from 2008 will help all European countries to go forward in an environmentally sound manner over the coming years.

What should be the priorities for waste policy in Europe?

The European waste policy should play a pivotal role in achieving higher resource efficiency in Europe, and sustainable economic growth. The overall aim should be to promote waste prevention and a marked increase in reuse and recycling of resources.



In order to achieve this, there must be a clear focus on setting ambitious targets for resource efficiency, recycling, reducing landfills etc, on product design, on research and development and on promoting economic instruments. I see the Resource efficiency flagship, the ongoing revision of the EU's WEEE Directive and the upcoming revision of the EU's Eco-design Directive in this perspective.

Lastly, we need to pay particular attention to food production, especially of animal products, which is resource intensive and a significant contributor to a range of environmental impacts. A European initiative to avoid food waste could be considered covering the full value chain from production to consumption. Unavoidable food waste should, to a large extent, be exploited in ways that takes advantages of both the energy and the nutrient content in the waste.

Interview of **Dr. Norbert ROTTGEN** German Minister of the environment



Germany is champion of Europe in recycling and is exemplary in Europe with a balanced mix of management within treatment systems: What are the reasons, and why can other European countries not reach the same results?

In my view there are five main conditions which were helpful to develop an environmentally sound waste management structure in Germany:

1. A high common consciousness concerning environmental challenges and the willingness to pay for it.
2. A clear legislative framework of duties, responsibilities and technical-organisational requirements supplemented by strict enforcement.
3. A consequent use of the polluter pays principle, where the waste generator pays for the waste management, including extended producer responsibility.
4. A collaboration of private and public responsibilities and enterprises.
5. A separate collection of different waste fractions to reach high quality recyclables and good prices.

Each of these elements is necessary to establish a comprehensive infrastructure fulfilling highest standards. Today we have environmentally sound capacities for all kinds of waste; the recycling rate is relatively high, no waste may be landfilled if it is biodegradable and not treated.

We see in many countries a lack of adequate charging systems: if the citizen or the company doesn't pay the full price of the proper management of its waste, the necessary incentives and internalisation of costs can't come into effect. The result is in many cases a subsidised waste management with low standards. And in addition a strict enforcement of European and national is necessary to ensure the responsibility of the actors – as well waste generators as waste management companies -, to guarantee clear conditions of competition and to avoid illegal dumps.

What should be the priorities for waste policy in Europe?

We have common rules in the EU – and all member states agreed to them. But there is the need to implement not only legislation but the structure for a proper, high standard waste management, which is able to protect the environment, our resources and the climate on one hand, and promotes the investments, turnover and employment on the other hand. This is the typical win-win-situation of a Green Economy. We should therefore try to establish highest waste management standards all over Europe.

Interview of **Mr Andreas CARLGREN** Swedish Minister of the environment

Your country is among the most performant in Europe with a balanced mix of management within treatment systems : what are the reasons, and why other European countries can not they reach the same results ?

Sweden has taken all kinds of measures to take waste management to the next level. We are continuously aiming to minimize the amount of waste as well as the amounts of hazardous substances in products that eventually end up somewhere in the waste stream. We do emphasize the reuse and recycling, to make the best possible use of the materials and energy used for production, but also eco-design, to work proactively to produce products with less environmental impact that are possible to reuse and recycle. A lifecycle perspective is crucial for the work on Sustainable consumption and production and sustainable development.

A tax on waste sent to landfills together with prohibiting landfill of sorted combustible waste and organic waste was a natural part of our high ambitions concerning increasing energy self-sufficiency and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. All these measures are corner stones for Swedish waste management, and the system has been improved even further with our highly developed use of waste incineration including high efficient CHP (Combined Heat and Power). It reduces waste landfills and produces renewable and reliable energy with the best available technique so that we can minimize the effects on human health and the environment. Producer responsibilities for different products in order to separate these waste streams and set targets for recycling and recovery increases the environmentally sound management of these waste types. For food waste we introduced national targets to stimulate biological treatment of this kind of waste already in 2003.

What should be the priorities for waste policy in Europe ?

The waste hierarchy in the waste framework directive sets the priority for how the waste shall be managed. Prevention is of course the first choice, both regarding volumes and contents of hazardous substances. Otherwise it is useful to see that waste can be regarded as a resource if managed in an environmentally sound way.



CARBON FOOTPRINT



CARBON FOOTPRINT



*Photo of Patrick Garçon,
communication director of Nantes Métropole*

The last Actu' Assises announced you that the «Assises des Déchets» is realizing their Carbon Footprint, you can help us!

Realize a carbon footprint of an event allows to audit the production, service and travel to enable the environmental impact of the event organization or the next edition one. All the consumed flows are measured like for example days worked, kilometers flown, food eaten, the kw/h used, the m² by space or types of products, tons thrown away, etc...

Of course the organization of the Assises adopted an eco-friendly conduct and every year we are consistently trying to reduce its environmental footprint.

As a participant, you can also help reduce GES emissions - Greenhouse gas - related to the progress of the Assises.

Indeed, our organization has this year chosen the Cité des congrès of Nantes because of its close proximity to the train station and the short distance from the airport.

On site, during the Assises, we invite you to inform the Terminal Carbon Footprint, which will enable us to compile all the emissions calculations related to the participants transport.



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