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Good morning ladies and gentlemen. Thank you very much for inviting me and thank you for the nice introductory words, reminding me of my sins of the past, all the things that I have done, before eventually coming round to seeing the environment as a key challenge. But in my presentation I will try to make the link with all my other international activity.

Before we get into talking about Waste-to-Energy, recycling and resource efficiency, let me say happy 10th anniversary to CEWEP. I think it is a young federation in comparison to many other European federations that I have the pleasure of dealing with. But from your presentation, Ella, we saw that it is a very dynamic, rapidly growing, federation. And it is a sector that is, rightly, coming much more into the centre of economic activity than it has in the past.

I was very pleased in listening to Mayor Rosenthal's introduction that we started from a local perspective. We then already had an indication about the European perspective from Dr. Weisgerber. My approach to resource efficiency and to the issues that you will be discussing here over the day, comes from an even wider international perspective.

Why are we dealing with resource efficiency? Why is this becoming such an important, and I would almost say dramatic, challenge for us? It is a challenge because the population of this planet is growing rapidly. When I was born there were 3 billion people on this planet. Today we are 7 billion. And we are expected to reach 9 billion by 2050. All of this demographic growth is happening in the developing part of this planet. Therefore the demand for goods, for products, for resources, for energy is growing exponentially, above the effective demographic growth. Because the growth is taking place in the parts of the world that is lacking in the quality of life that we enjoy in Europe, and that people enjoy in the industrialised part of the world, which is no longer seeing demographic growth. So we have real global challenges, and we have come to see that the ways we produce and consume are no longer sustainable. Projections on the quality of life in 2050 for all the people on this planet show us that we would require the natural resources of two and a half times that of planet earth. We can't clone a planet. And even if we now have an explorer roaming Mars, I am not sure that this will help us in any way dealing with the challenges that are around the corner in the year 2050.

Global extraction of resources, for those reasons, is expected to increase from some 58 billion tonnes in 2005 to some 100 billion tonnes in 2030, an increase of over 75%. And this shows that we are just no longer capable of producing by extracting

what we need to produce, and throwing the finished products back into landfills. Therefore all of your calls to make sure that landfilling is virtually eliminated (as is the nice phrase) is fully supported by the European Commission, and will continue to be a driver for the policies that we will propose. We will have to find ways, within the very next years to virtually eliminate landfilling. We need to do this because we have to use these resources. We have to turn our economy into a circular economy. From digging, using and putting back into landfill, we have to recycle, reuse the materials and continuously have a circular economy. This circular economy is necessary for the materials that we need in our societies. And it is therefore for me very important that we recognise the merit of using waste to generate energy. Because quite clearly growing demand on the planet includes growing demand for energy. But we need to make sure that the highest priority goes to reusing and recycling the materials.

And in listening to the presentations, when we look at it in this manner we quite clearly come to the questions that Ella has quite rightly addressed to us. I think that we are, however, not that far away in that we may just have semantic differences between us. When we from the Commission side are talking about the fact that we should continue to turn “non-recyclable waste” into energy, I read that CEWEP uses the phrase “waste not suitable for recycling”. “Non-recyclable” or “not suitable for recycling” both need to be defined. And if we work together we may discover that we are actually not that far apart from each other. We may discover that you feel that the conditions that would go into the definition of this term “not suitable” may not entirely be those that we are working with. But I do recognise that we cannot have a concept that is only driven by physical considerations. Obviously economic considerations have to play a role when we come to defining what should continue to be recycled, and what no longer makes economic, physical sense in recycling directly, and what should therefore be used for producing energy. I am really convinced that in defining these notions we will have to set the right criteria.

And in our work in Brussels dealing with specific decisions – I constantly have to answer the question : how do I regulate? If I regulate how do I define the elements that go into regulation or do I use market incentives? Can I use pricing indicators and then see if the markets react? For the moment we have a lot of distortion in the energy market, we have distortions in resource use. We see in many, many countries, far too much household waste is still going into landfill, because the pricing systems between landfilling, recycling, incinerating are not properly aligned. So we need to think in terms of those frameworks conditions, and we also have to take them into consideration very often when we produce legislation. The most recent example was when we had the review of the WEEE directive (Electric and Electronic waste). This is one of the forms of waste that is most clearly understandable to represent high value, because this electronic and electric waste contains very, very valuable raw materials. However, we run into reactions from our 27 Member States that fundamentally are saying “slow down, wait, we are not ready, we need more time to adjust”. I remember these discussions very clearly, because I

was very directly involved. And I was constantly trying to make the point that we collectively understand that these are valuable resources. We are looking for growth elements in our societies. And, which is no scoop, we are living in a period of rather difficult economic times. We are all looking for growth. Here are growth opportunities. And then when we discuss in Brussels at Council of minister level, we have to provide more time before those opportunities would effectively become binding on Member States. It is very difficult for me to understand that we effectively decide to provide twice as much time for addressing more ambitious separate collection targets for electronic and electric waste in the face of a crisis when we are looking for employment and economic activity. But that is still the reality that environmental legislation, including waste legislation, is still very much perceived by policy makers as a constraint, as a limitation, as an additional cost, as a burden. And we need to turn this around and move towards seeing it as an opportunity.

I was very pleased to hear, this morning already, the reference to the job creation effect that dealing with waste can achieve through turning it into energy or through recycling. Our own estimates, in Brussels, have found that simply implementing existing EU waste legislation properly would lead to creating another 400,000 jobs in Europe. 400,000 additional jobs in Europe with all the economic impact in a period of dramatic need for growth. It is unbelievable that we are not desperately running to seize these opportunities. And that we are not making much, much more effort to actually getting there.

It was also mentioned that both the European budget itself, through its cohesion funds, but also the European Investment Bank and other European donor banks are putting substantive amounts on the table to invest in up-grading the waste systems, whether it is incineration, recycling or setting up separate collection systems. And I am always flabbergasted to see that precisely in this area the take up in the 27 Member States is dramatically low. Even in a country desperately looking for finance, such as Greece. We have single digit percentage take up of funds available at European regional level to upgrade the waste system, to modernise landfills (where they are still inevitable) to invest in incineration and recycling, to set up separate collection systems.

So we still have a really tall task ahead of us to make this opportunity known and I think a Federation like yours and a Conference like the one today should be used to highlight to policy makers, to broad public opinion the opportunities that we are wasting by not actively, aggressively moving forward rapidly, making sure that these important resources are used to our best advantage. And this will drive not only jobs, it will also drive innovation.

I am very pleased every now and then to visit a facility. I am very happy to see the innovation capacity of your sector, the respect of the incineration facilities for the emission limitation that the European Union is establishing. And plants' use of

increasing energy efficiency by not only generating electricity, but also by using the heat in much more effective terms, is so much and so rapidly growing.

And yet if you go to any of our environments, in any of our cities and you ask people whether they would be supporting the construction of an additional incinerator you will have yearlong debates and discussions. Because people are afraid of the impact on environment, on air quality etc. If more people knew that a modern incinerator emits into the air, at the end of the process, about the quantity of emissions that one of the many lorries that brings the waste to the incinerator; I think we would have achieved a lot in the understanding that we are looking at a part of the story that is clearly no longer the most threatening to our environment, if modern, new technology installations are put in place. We should now focus on the many other elements that still cause air quality problems. And I think that we need to collectively move forward in this direction: educating, explaining, showing, developing new innovation and innovative forms of addressing these challenges.

I think that we have in Europe some incredible success stories, as were highlighted by showing that some Member States have basically already reached zero landfilling of household waste, or very close to zero. But at the same time we still have many other Members States still landfilling over 90%. And it is obviously difficult for me, when I am representing Europe, for example in Rio just before the summer break, Rio + 20. It is very difficult to explain that our way of handling waste and using waste for energy, using it for recycling is the way forward. But many of our developing country partners are telling us that “as long as you don’t show us that this is feasible in a rich part of this world, in a high technology part of this world, where you have this knowledge, you can’t transform your policy recipes, how could you expect them to be implemented by us”. And here again is challenge and opportunity for us in Brussels, but also for you.

I have taken back from the conference in Rio, after many, many long and difficult discussions, a willingness by many of the cities in many of the developing countries, of a desire to learn more about the technology that has allowed those European countries that no longer have landfilling, how this has been done.

And again we have heard this morning that Europe is leading technology worldwide when it comes to handling waste. We indeed are, and we have export opportunities here that we should equally think about and should seize. Because in this global economy the competitiveness of Europe is diminishing rapidly in many standard sectors, but we are still leaders when it comes to innovation, when it comes to innovative technology. And particularly innovative technology in the environmental sector, and here very specifically when it comes to handling waste. We have lots of systems that have been developed at municipal level, developed within companies, developed within enterprises of how to handle waste from collection to recycling, to incineration. All the way through the chain of making waste a valuable resource and

turning it back into a circular economy. We have the skills, we have the technology. We know that we can create much, much better working conditions than the ones you see if ever you travel to a developing country and you happen to come by a landfill in a developing country. You will see kids trying to rip out of a mountain of waste a few copper cables, burning them and having a dramatic effect on their health and on their prospects of life.

So there is opportunity, there is reason, there is a need to do this from a global perspective. It is helpful, useful for Europe. It is helpful at the communal level, as we have heard, because we can use more the heat that we produce by producing energy. We have heard from Würzburg that it helps the local ambient air here. So it all goes in the same direction, and makes utter sense to do these things.

And yet, I can tell you, that it is a daily struggle in Brussels to try to convince 27 Member States of the European Union, still at very different levels of development, with very different financial and regulatory systems, to actually agree and more forcefully move forwards. We will keep pushing. I am putting the final touches to a European Union Environmental Action Programme for the period 2014-2020. When this document comes out, by the end of this year, you will see that waste will have a central piece in this document. The waste area will remain a very focal point for our environmental policies. And we will set ambitious targets. The challenge is going to be to see to what extent these targets will be approved at the European level within the European Parliament and within the European Council. Because in European decision making the Commission has the privilege of proposing, the Parliament and the Council has the right of disposing, or of deciding. And I hope we will jointly make sure that more positive decisions will be taken, more courageous decisions. However, it is very important that your voice is heard in this. Because you are building your economic activity on better access to waste, on better systems, on successful recycling and the successful generation of energy from waste, which depend, at the end of the day, on the concept of designing a product. The more we can think, as we design products, that eventually these products will become waste, they will have to be handled either in terms of recycling, or in the terms of transformation into energy the better, the more efficiently can we do this turning into a circular economy. So we need to collectively gain this consciousness that we have to start at the designing phase, and we then have to have systems in place that then take these materials all the way through the process. We need to avoid that we just focus on single elements. And that is why I spoke a little bit more about the resource element of this question than the energy side.

Climate change in Europe has become a topical issue and almost everyone accepts, understands, and is concerned about climate change, therefore about the use of fossil fuels. But at the same time we have these wider resource limitations. We are running out of water, we are running out of soil, and as I said we cannot afford a situation of extracting over 100 billion tonnes of material forever. It is not sustainable.

Therefore only measuring success in terms of energy recovery is not enough, the recycling element is at least equally important in our waste hierarchy. We therefore rightly have placed recycling, reuse and avoidance of waste at higher level than transformation into energy. I hope that we can jointly move forward in this direction. And I was very interested in looking at the materials for this conference: the new technologies, the new possibilities of effectively extracting materials even from the ashes. And I think that the discussion that you will have here today will improve the understanding of what can be recovered even out of the end product of incineration, which so far has widely been discharged, but even in that material you can still technologically and economically recover valuable minerals.

I think that there is a lot that we can still do together that we need to do. I think your industry is really centrally placed in moving us to a much more sustainable future. So I wish your conference a lot of success. Thank you.