

PRESS RELEASE

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Circular Economy Should Apply to All Waste Streams While Residuals Should Have Secure Treatment

CEWEP has been following the European Parliament's work on the New Circular Economy Action Plan with great interest and supports many of the policies mentioned in the Draft Report. However, we would like to encourage the law makers to take a wider structural approach that would consider all the different waste streams when striving for a more circular economy.

Firstly, we would like to particularly emphasise the importance of landfill diversion which is a win-win for climate protection and sustainable waste management. It would be a missed opportunity if we continue focussing mainly on diversion of municipal waste from landfills (as done in the 2018 Circular Economy Package). This is only a small part of the total waste volume. Therefore, we must go for ambitious landfill diversion targets also for industrial and commercial waste that can be recycled or recovered.

Secondly, CEWEP is convinced that reducing the overall generation of waste is a crucial step towards a more circular economy. It should be done first and foremost through qualitative measures, such as Ecodesign and consumption pattern changes while any quantitative measures should be carefully assessed and measured. A push to substantially reduce solely the amount of one waste stream, residual or other, could prove to be counterproductive and might lead to contamination of recycling streams and waste taking the illegal routes, like fly tipping and shipments for illegal disposal (for more information on increasing waste crime see e.g. [Interpol report](#)).

For the residual waste that cannot be avoided despite all efforts secure treatment capacities must be ensured. Waste-to-Energy (WtE), incineration with energy recovery, is the sustainable and hygienic option for these waste streams. Treating them in WtE plants prevents this waste stream from ending up in landfills. At the same time, it helps to keep the recycling streams clean because WtE plants treat the waste that is not good enough for recycling, including the residues from sorting and recycling plants. Furthermore, they produce energy (electricity, heat and steam) that is delivered to households and industry and replace fossil fuels that would otherwise be used for energy generation. From the bottom ash, that is left over after incineration, metals are recycled while minerals can be recovered to replace virgin raw materials, e.g., sand and gravel, in constructions applications.

Waste diversion from landfills, replacement of fossil fuels in energy production and material recovery from bottom ash comprise a threefold way that WtE contributes to climate protection as well as resource efficiency.

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CEWEP (Confederation of European Waste-to-Energy Plants) is the umbrella association of the operators of Waste-to-Energy plants across Europe. CEWEP's members are committed to ensuring high environmental standards, achieving low emissions and maintaining state of the art energy production from remaining waste that cannot be recycled in a sustainable way.