

Municipal waste, Utilitalia: with the waste-to-energy plant in Rome CO2 emissions reduced (120,000 equivalent tons), energy for 200,000 families and 150 new jobs

- *According to a study carried out by Utilitalia, this plant will have a positive impact not only in Lazio Region but also on a national scale*
- *To date, Central Italy has to export 17% of its municipal waste, despite already disposing an extremely high percentage (34.2%) to landfill*
- *The Rome waste-to-energy plant will lead to a reduction of 24,000 trips using trucks loaded with municipal waste to plants in the North of Italy and abroad and the production of 540,000 MWh of electricity*
- *Brandolini: “The publication of the tender is an important step towards the creation of a fundamental plant to guarantee the correct management of the municipal waste cycle and to achieve the European targets for 2035”*

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A reduction of 24,000 truck trips used to transport municipal waste to plants in the northern Italy and abroad, with savings for 8,000 tons of CO2 equivalent and covering the energy needs of 200,000 families, equivalent to approximately 600,000 citizens. These are some of the advantages arising from the construction of the waste-to-energy plant in Rome, as reported in the Utilitalia (the Federation of water, environmental and energy companies) study “Municipal waste, current and 2035 plant needs”, now in its fourth edition.

This plant - which will be capable of managing 600,000 tons per year - will have positive impacts not only in the Lazio Region but also on a national scale: the management of non-recyclable waste in the Rome area will be solved, Lazio Region will be close to self-sufficiency in the management of non-recyclable waste and the energy recovery capacity needs for Central Italy will be halved. As it emerges from the study, to reach the EU targets which requires 65% effective recycling and a landfill disposal

less than 10%, by 2035, to date central Italy will need to recover an additional 1.15 million of tons of waste and to treat 650,000 tons of organic waste.

The shortage and unbalanced location of plants is the main cause of waste traveling along the Italian peninsula, with important costs in economic and environmental terms. To date (2021 data) the Center is forced to export 17% (1.10 million tons) of its waste production, despite already disposing an extremely high percentage to landfill, equivalent to 34.2%, but not capable to guarantee all the requests. The waste-to-energy plant in Rome will make it possible to considerably reduce waste shipments from the Center to other regions and abroad.

On a national scale, 24,000 waste truck trips will be avoided every year (14% of the total trips currently made annually): the 12 million avoided kilometers traveled by these vehicles will lead to a reduction in climate-changing emissions of 8,000 tons of CO₂ equivalent. There are also advantages in terms of energy production, estimated at approximately 540,000 MWh (51% of which are renewable): the energy needs of 200,000 families (equal to approximately 600,000 citizens) would be satisfied and climate-altering emissions of approximately 110,000 tons of CO₂ equivalent will be saved. Overall, therefore, considering the reduction of municipal waste travel together with the production of renewable energy, the construction of the Rome waste-to-energy plant would lead to save approximately 120,000 tons of CO₂ equivalent. Also 49% of non-renewable energy would be locally produced, thus reducing dependence on foreign countries. In addition there are positive employment implications, with the creation of around 150 new jobs, including related industries and without considering the construction phases.

Utilitalia has always promoted research and analysis activities in the sectors in which its associated companies operate, in support of its policy and regulatory proposals. The studies, which are based on real data and scientific knowledge, carried out by the Federation in recent years – Gestione dei rifiuti urbani - Scenari di sviluppo infrastrutturale: comparazione del rendimento ambientale”, “Libro Bianco sull’incenerimento dei rifiuti urbani” and “Green Book” – support Rome's choice to equip itself with this type of system.

“The publication of the tender for the waste-to-energy plant in Rome – explains the president of Utilitalia, Filippo Brandolini – is an important step towards the creation of a fundamental plant to guarantee the correct management of the waste cycle and to achieve the European targets for 2035, as well as fully consistent with the strategies indicated by the National Waste Management Programme, approved in 2022. In terms of climate-altering emissions, landfill disposal, as demonstrated by various scientific studies, has a much higher impact than energy recovery. Many municipal waste flows, if not used to produce energy, are disposed of in landfills. Energy recovery from waste, indeed, is the best alternative to landfill and is complementary to recycling, as demonstrated by the data from those areas which, equipped with industrialized systems, record higher percentages of separated collection and recycling. The environmental impact, certified by the various analysis models in relation to the collection and treatment methods, highlights how an integrated system of plants that manages to close the waste management cycle, in proximity, determines huge environmental and economic benefits”.

UTILITALIA

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