

PRESS RELEASE

Omission of Waste-to-Energy in 2025 UN Global Methane Status Report risks undermining effective methane mitigation in waste sector, WtE+X Knowledge Alliance warns

Brussels, 14 April 2026 - The **WtE+X Knowledge Alliance**, a partnership of leading waste, energy and academic organisations - [CEWEP](#), [ESWET](#) and [WtERT](#) - welcomes the increased focus on methane mitigation reflected in the Global Methane Status Report (GMSR) 2025. However, the Alliance cautions that the **report, in its current form, does not yet provide a complete or operational framework for addressing methane emissions from the waste sector.**

In a newly published [position paper](#), the Alliance highlights a critical gap in the GMSR: the **absence of a clear definition and recognition of Waste-to-Energy (WtE) as a necessary final treatment option for the residual, non-recyclable fraction of waste.** This is the fraction that remains even in the most advanced waste management systems and continues to be landfilled or dumped in many regions worldwide.

While the GMSR appropriately prioritises upstream measures such as waste prevention, recycling, composting, and anaerobic digestion, it refers to “energy recovery” without technical definition or differentiation between biological and thermal routes. The report, rather, mentions “thermal pre-treatment” only peripherally, without conceptual development, environmental performance criteria, or monitoring, reporting and verification (MRV) requirements.

As a global reference document, the [GMSR](#) heavily influences national climate plans, EU external climate policy, development finance criteria, and sustainable investment frameworks. **When technologies are not explicitly named, defined, and qualified, they are often excluded from implementation and financing decisions.** This is particularly true in regions where the realistic alternative remains uncontrolled dumping or poorly managed landfills.

Speaking on behalf of the WtE+X Knowledge Alliance, Dr. Siegfried Scholz, President of European Suppliers of Waste-to-Energy Technology (ESWET), said:

“We ask to recognise the role of Waste-to-Energy for treating non-recyclable waste while avoiding methane emissions from landfills.”

Across Europe, countries with high recycling rates also maintain significant WtE capacity, demonstrating that material recovery and energy recovery are complementary, not competing, pathways within the waste hierarchy. This integrated approach has been instrumental in reducing landfilling and associated methane emissions, while ensuring energy recovery and the recovery of materials from residues.

“Within the European Union, Waste-to-Energy is clearly regulated, limited, and conditional on best available techniques, strict emissions limits, and robust monitoring. Reflecting this experience in global methane policy would make the GMSR more applicable, more credible, and better aligned with the urgency of the climate challenge,” Dr. Scholz added.

From an academic and scientific perspective, the omission also raises concerns about the completeness of the report’s analytical framework.

“From a scientific standpoint, any comprehensive methane mitigation strategy in the waste sector must address the full waste management chain, including the residual fraction that cannot be recycled or biologically treated,” said Prof. Huang Qunxing, Executive President of the Global Waste-to-Energy Research and Technology Council (WtERT) and Vice-Dean of College of Energy Engineering of Zhejiang University. *“Decades of peer-reviewed research and operational data demonstrate that controlled thermal treatment of residual waste plays a critical role in avoiding methane formation from landfills, while ensuring energy recovery and material stabilization. The omission of this pathway risks creating a gap between scientific evidence and policy implementation.”*

Globally, approximately 500 million tonnes of municipal solid waste are treated annually in WtE facilities, while more than one billion tonnes continue to be landfilled, representing one of the largest remaining sources of waste-related methane emissions.

With rapid urbanisation accelerating, particularly in the Global South, the absence of a clearly articulated role for controlled thermal treatment risks locking in methane emissions for decades. Without addressing the residual waste stream, methane mitigation strategies risk remaining incomplete, even where recycling and organics treatment are expanded.

The WtE+X Knowledge Alliance calls for the GMSR to be strengthened by:

1. Explicitly recognising Waste-to-Energy as a distinct technological category;
2. Defining its complementary role alongside recycling and biological treatment;
3. Establishing eligibility criteria aligned with best available techniques, environmental safeguards, and MRV requirements.

About the WtE+X Knowledge Alliance

The WtE+X Knowledge Alliance is a strategic partnership that brings together leading organizations in waste management, energy, academia, and sustainability ([CEWEP](#), [ESWET](#) and [WtERT](#)). The Alliance’s mission is to advance and share science-based knowledge on Waste-to-Energy technologies, supporting their responsible adoption as part of integrated solutions to reduce reliance on landfilling.

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