

Support for European Parliament position on Waste Framework Directive from waste unions

The unions expressed broad support for the ambitious goals of the Parliament to stabilize waste in 2012 at 2008 levels and to reduce waste by 2020.

The new waste hierarchy - prevention, re-use, recycling, recovery and safe disposal/ landfill - was cautiously welcomed as questions remain over the role of incineration (recovery of energy and heat).

The Parliament also agreed the polluter pays principle, strengthened producer responsibility, introduced a proximity principle and argued for the adoption of best available techniques. The MEPs also adopted the concept of a European Recycling Society and set a target: that by 2020 an overall re-use and recycling level of 50% for solid municipal waste, 70% for construction/ demolition, industrial and manufacturing waste should be achieved. Countries that currently recycle and reuse less than 5% have an additional 5 years to catch up. By 2015 there should be separate collection schemes for paper, metal, plastic, glass, textiles, other (?) biodegradable wastes, oil and hazardous waste.

The unions will plead for an impact assessment to have a better understanding of the employment effects of the measures. The unions discussed the EP position at the waste seminar 15 February 2007, Berlin.

Other issues which were discussed by the unions included:

- *Public procurement*: Verdi has commissioned a legal study of the relation between the European procurement directives and German law regarding the issue of demanding respect for collective agreements and minimum standards in public contracts. This was presented by Caroline von Bechtolsheim. The opinion of the legal experts is that introducing collective agreements in public contracts is allowed, and at different stages of the tender. Respect for collective agreements can already be asked when proofing if a company fulfils the formal requirements but also when testing if a company is economically capable of fulfilling the contract. The unions considered the situation in different countries and if workers' protection

is guaranteed or not. Further work is required. EPSU has argued that the social aspects of procurement should be an important issue for ETUC to campaign around. Also more governments should sign up to ILO convention 94 which argues that a labour clause in public contracts is possible. If you are interested in the legal opinion (German only) please contact the secretariat.

- *Recent developments of Multinational companies in the waste sector*: The waste sector continues to concentrate and also sees more and more private equity investors. The colleagues also discussed companies that could be targeted to establish an EWC.

- *Hazardous substances*: Kia Regner of SKTF presented the Nordic trade union waste programme and what they are doing regarding hazardous waste in household waste. This will be developed further and possibly for use in EPSU.

The position of the European Parliament on the waste directive is available [here](#)

For a summary overview of some of the main elements please see a powerpoint presentation of EPSU Secretariat.

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