

Waste management: Community strategy

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The Committee considers welcomes the Commission intention of holding a wide debate on the review, and appreciates the Council's timely adoption (9 December 1996) of a resolution on the subject. The Committee calls for the resolution to provide a basis for clear commitment, from the various authorities particularly as regards: - adoption of clear objectives and time frames for a reduction in waste generation and for uniform re-use and recycling rates for materials; - definition of clear objectives and time frames for restrictions on, and where necessary, the elimination of toxic substances from products and the productive cycle; - early presentation of the new draft directive on landfills, to ensure high levels of environmental protection by providing for the internalization of the environmental costs involved in this type of disposal, which, if not paid, make it superficially cheaper to recover neither materials nor energy; - provisions to ensure uniform, EU-wide environmental requirements for waste treatment and recovery plant, to avoid distortions of competition between the Member States having a perverse effect on waste transactions and transport; - adoption of uniform standards for waste treatment in industrial plant and in specific treatment plant, to take account of the priority objective of prevention; - an increase in funding for research into prevention and recycling, and the creation of an integrated waste management system, making judicious use of available financial instruments; - promotion of the recycled products market through initiatives targeted on priority sectors; - support and dissemination of know-how and information on experience and successful schemes at local level; - promotion of public awareness and consumer education campaigns, actively harnessing the respective associations and organizations; - promotion, perhaps via a specific EEA assignment, of studies and research into the key aspects of the problem and specific situations, until the complex mechanism for Europe-wide statistics processing starts to produce reliable data; - a firmer undertaking from the Commission to develop better procedures for monitoring Member State compliance with Community regulations, and to establish, should the need arise, specific investigative and study programmes; - greater attention on the part of the Community institutions and the Member States to the waste management policy's potential for job creation, on the basis of the suggestions contained in the White Paper on growth, competitiveness and employment, appropriately referred to in point 20.1 of the Council resolution.