



**PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE
UNION FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN**



COMMITTEE ON ENERGY, ENVIRONMENT AND WATER

- Draft report –

“Let's do it”

tabled by the co-rapporteurs

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DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee on Energy, Environment and Water,

- having regard to the “Barcelona Convention”,
- having regard to the Convention on the control of transboundary movements of hazardous wastes and their disposal (the Basel Convention) - the most important initiative taken at international level,
- having regard to decision No 1600/2002/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 July 2002 laying down the Sixth Community Environment Action Programme of the Community (2002-2012) which calls for the development or revision of the legislation on waste, including a clarification of the distinction between waste and non-waste, and for the development of measures regarding waste prevention and management, including the setting of targets,
- having regard to directive 2006/12/EC of the European Parliament and the Council of 5 April 2006 on waste which establishes major principles, the legislative framework for the handling of waste in the European Union and defines concepts such as waste, recovery and disposal and puts in place the essential requirements for the management of waste,
- having regard to directive 2008/98/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 November 2008 on waste and repealing certain directives to improve waste management, mainly by preventing waste and increasing recycling,
- having regard to the Council Directive 1999/31/EC of 26 April 1999 on the landfill of waste to prevent or reduce as far as possible negative effects on the environment from the landfilling of waste, by introducing stringent technical requirements for waste and landfills and prevent or reduce the adverse effects of the landfill of waste on the environment, in particular on surface water, groundwater, soil, air and human health,
- having regard to the Commission Communication of 21 December 2005 "Taking sustainable use of resources forward: A Thematic Strategy on the prevention and recycling of waste" (COM (2005) 666) which sets out guidelines for European Union (EU) action and describes the ways in which waste management can be improved to reduce the negative impact on the environment that is caused by waste throughout its life-span, from production to disposal, via recycling,
- having regard to the Communication from the European Commission on 5 September 2006 entitled: Establishing an environment strategy for the Mediterranean“ (COM (2006) 475 final) to protect the marine environment and the coastline of this region and to reduce pollution by 2020,
- having regard to the previous Reports of the Committee on Energy, Environment and Water especially “Water Management” (2009), “Protection of the marine environment“ (2010), “Waste Management in the Coastal Regions of the Mediterranean” (2011) and “Potential for Biomass in the Mediterranean Countries“ (2011).
- having regard to the “Let’s do it” campaign of 2008 in Estonia that can be viewed as an interesting case of a successful environmental waste management campaign to improve awareness, increase public participation and reduce pollution. This campaign is regarded as an inspiring example for the countries of the Mediterranean region in order to promote their environmental agenda.

1. Believes that what is needed is a multi-component integrated system involving the full waste life cycle starting from waste generation to final disposal, taking into consideration the principles of reducing consumption, reuse, recycling and recovery.
2. Considers that the waste management of all the countries of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership should be based on the waste-hierarchy-concept
 - a) prevention
 - b) preparing for re-use
 - c) recycling
 - d) other recovery, e.g. energy recovery; and
 - e) disposal;
3. Is of the opinion that the countries of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership are confronted with the following challenges in their waste management:
 - lack of surveys, statistics and consequently data and information on waste
 - lack of enforcement of environmental legislation
 - inadequate technical infrastructure, plans and strategies
 - limited financial resources
 - low-level of awareness
 - lack of institutional structure
 - limited participation of non-governmental organizations.
4. Invites all countries of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership to continue and strengthen their efforts by undertaking the following:
 - Provide appropriate environmental legislative frameworks and give effect to international conventions regulating them.
 - Develop an infrastructure for an integrated waste management system
 - Develop national institutional capacities and coordinate with international institutions and organisations especially in the Mediterranean region
 - Promote a more ambitious waste prevention policy
 - Pay greater attention and increase the efforts to combat waste by re-use, recycling and composting of waste
 - Develop an organization of separate waste collection systems and common reference standards for recycling
 - Promote more compost, energy recovery from waste and wastewater treatment (including sustainable means of treating solid waste)
 - Control hazardous waste management
 - Promote technological innovation to reduce emissions from landfills and wastewaters
 - Encourage research and development activities
 - Encourage investments into environmentally friendly waste management technologies
 - Encourage further monitoring of environmental impacts and integrate environmental concerns at all stage of development and sectoral policies
 - Stop illegal trans-boundary waste traffic
 - Involve civil society organisations more in the decision-making process
 - Intensify the exchange of good practices
 - Develop and facilitate the access to accompanying financing mechanisms in order to support projects, programmes and political initiatives aiming at waste management
 - Advocate the development of in-country awareness and communication campaigns in order to better involve and mobilise public opinions towards waste management. Educational programs and public campaigns should focus on prevention of waste production through educated consumption habits.

5. Recommends that once a year all Mediterranean countries participate in an event, using the campaign "Let's do it" as a reference, that is intended to promote proper waste management and improve the level of knowledge about the dangers of pollution. This campaign will not only increase public awareness regarding waste, but also create a common identity factor for citizens of the Mediterranean region. In this context, some financial support from public funds would be helpful to support and maintain the initiative.
6. Stresses that these efforts have the potential to improve the cost effectiveness of the waste policies and result in significant environmental and social benefits. For example, waste policies that are more focused on environmental impacts can also be considered more efficient and cost-effective as a result of increased waste recovery, reduction of emissions from waste disposal and carbon credit potential from reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.

I. EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

Introduction

Waste in the general sense of the word is whatever is left behind from any activity and has no primary or secondary use at source, though it might be of value if present in a different site where more suitable conditions are provided for optimal utilization.

All types of human activity produce diverse residues called “wastes” and these differ in terms of quality and quantity and in their properties from one country to another.

Statistics of waste production, composition, transport and treatment are not collected in the same way, nor to the same level of detail, in all countries. There is no definitive or common rate for waste generation in all countries, nor even among different regions within the same country, as this depends on a number of factors like community characteristics, social conditions and average income in each area. This makes it difficult to obtain an overall picture of the waste situation and identify trends. Lack of data on hazardous waste is of particular concern. Quantities of generated waste are mainly correlated to population increases as well as economic, industrial and urban development.

Major waste sources are activities related to agriculture, building construction, industry, mining and municipal areas. Agricultural waste is the most significant in terms of its environmental impact. Paper and organic waste make up a high proportion of European municipal waste streams, with an increasing share of plastic.

Waste is an environmental, social and economic challenge. As European society has grown wealthier it has created more and more rubbish. Each year in the European Union alone 3 billion tonnes of waste are thrown away – some 90 million tonnes of it hazardous. This amounts to about 6 tonnes of solid waste for every European citizen, according to Eurostat statistics. This has a huge impact on the environment, causing pollution and greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change. It is clear that treating and disposing of all this material – without harming the environment – becomes a major concern.

Waste sources vary between countries according to their economic situation. For example countries in Western Europe produce a greater share of industrial and municipal waste than those in Central and Eastern Europe, where mining is the main source of waste. Between 1990 and 1995 the amount of waste generated in Europe increased by 10%, according to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Eurostat data indicate that, on average, an EU citizen produced 468 kg of municipal solid waste in 1995 and 524 kg in 2008. By 2020, the OECD estimates that 45% more waste could be generated than in 1995 in the EU. This means that if no effective policy measures for reducing waste generation are put into place, an average EU citizen will produce 558 kg waste by 2020.

The gross generated quantity from Arab countries is estimated at 81.3 million tons annually on the basis of an average rate of around 256 kg per capita yearly. The quantity of municipal solid waste which is adequately treated is less than 20%, while recycled waste does not exceed 3% of the gross quantity of residues, although it has been estimated that up to 80% of this waste could be recycled. The recycling of the 77% would mean the annual saving of millions of dollars on waste disposal as well as millions of dollars worth of recyclable resources, which would not be just thrown away anymore.

Pollution of the Mediterranean Sea

Approximately 150 million people live on the 46,000 km long coastline of the Mediterranean Sea, while around 110 million of them live in cities. Two hundred million tourists visit this region each year. Two hundred petrochemical and energy installations, chemical industries, and chlorine plants are positioned along the coast. All these activities and industries combined result in the production of a significant amount of waste.

In addition to the waste produced by inhabitants and tourists, more than half of urban areas on the Mediterranean with a population of over 100,000 do not have waste water treatment plants and 60% of the wastewater produced in these areas is directly discharged into the sea. More than 80% of landfills in southern and eastern Mediterranean countries are not monitored and therefore not managed properly.

Pollution of the marine environment of the Mediterranean Sea is very serious – most of the contamination is caused by human activities on land. The main origin of pollution is municipal wastewater treatment and disposal, urban solid waste disposal, release of dangerous substances into the marine environment, illegal waste dumping, radioactive and hazardous waste and different activities directly on the coast causing the loss of marine life and coastal habitats. Toxic pollution is a severe problem in the Mediterranean Sea and includes chemical compounds, such as heavy metals (e.g. lead, cadmium, copper, zinc, and mercury), polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), dioxins, and different pesticides e.g. dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane (DDT).

The contracting parties of the Mediterranean Action Plan adopted mandatory targets to reduce and eliminate obsolete chemicals, pesticides and pollutants originating from land-based industrial activities and agriculture, and called for a close monitoring and reporting of progress made in achieving the set objectives by 2019. As mentioned in the committee's report "Protection of the marine environment" (2010), the efficiency of waste treatment and recycling processes, including sewage treatment, need to be further evaluated in all Mediterranean countries in order to reduce direct land-based pollution such as marine litter and plastic debris. In the report from 2010 the committee also recommended that the creation or further development of in-country coastal area protection programmes and policies, addressing comprehensively all sources of pollutants and polluting activities and protecting Mediterranean coastal ecosystems such as forests, wooded lands and wetlands, would contribute to a reduction of land-based pollution impacts on the marine environment.

Types of waste

Waste comes in very different shapes and forms. For example:

- a) Packaging waste: Packaging consumes raw materials during its manufacture, comprises an increasing proportion of non-degradable plastic and produces toxic emissions during incineration. Unfortunately more of the goods that we buy now come in more packaging.
- b) Clinical waste: Clinical waste is the term used to describe waste produced from healthcare premises (hospitals, clinics, doctors' offices, veterinary hospitals and laboratories) and similar activities that may pose a risk of infection or may prove hazardous.
- c) Agricultural waste: Agricultural waste is any substance or object from premises used for agriculture or horticulture, which the holder discards, intends to discard or is required to discard. It is waste specifically generated by agricultural activities. It includes fertilizer run-off from fields, pesticides that enter into water, air or soils, salt and silt drained from fields.
- d) Electrical and electronic waste (or e-waste): The waste stream of discarded electrical and electronic equipment is growing very quickly. Such equipments contain significant amounts for all kinds of hazardous waste, including heavy metals and various halogenated substances. Up to 60 elements can be found in complex electronics. In

addition, many raw materials are needed for the production of new equipment. Proposed legislation on electrical and electronic components seeks to improve waste management, reduce resource use and create employment.

- e) Industrial waste: Industrial waste is waste produced by industrial activity, such as that of factories, mills and mines. Toxic waste, chemical waste, industrial solid waste and municipal solid waste are other designations of industrial waste.
- f) Hazardous household waste: Leftover household products that contain corrosive, toxic, ignitable, or reactive ingredients are considered to be “household hazardous waste” or “HHW.” Products such as paints, cleaners, oils, batteries, and pesticides that contain potentially hazardous ingredients require special care when disposed.

Waste Management

Where waste material is produced, planners and managers must always choose the optimal treatment option with the lowest possible risks to human health and the environment. Each treatment option brings with it different impacts on various aspects of the environment and they vary according to the circumstances and capabilities of respective countries.

The first objective of any waste policy should be to minimise the negative effects of the generation and management of waste on human health and the environment. Waste policies should also aim at reducing the use of resources, and favour the practical application of the waste hierarchy.

The EU waste policy is based on the waste-hierarchy-concept, as previously described:

- a) prevention
- b) preparing for re-use
- c) recycling
- d) other recovery, e.g. energy recovery; and
- e) disposal;

This means that, ideally, waste generation should be prevented and what cannot be prevented should be re-used, recycled and recovered as much as feasible, with landfills being used as little as possible.

Waste Prevention

Good waste management begins with preventing waste generation in the first place. Hence, waste prevention and minimisation should have top priority in any waste management plan.

The awareness of the need to prevent and minimise waste is increasing, as is recycling of waste in countries with advanced waste management systems. In general, too little use is made of composting.

Waste prevention is a key factor in any waste management strategy. If we can reduce the amount of waste generated in the first place and reduce its hazardousness by reducing the presence of dangerous substances in products, then disposal will automatically become simpler. Waste prevention is closely linked with improving manufacturing methods and influencing consumers to demand greener products and less packaging.

The best way of “cleaning” the Mediterranean Sea is by preventing further pollution. Obviously prevention will not reduce the amount of pollution that already exists, but it will prevent an uncontrolled increase of waste in the sea. This can be achieved by supporting projects that assist in controlling inland waste management, treating industrial toxic waste properly and increasing know-how regarding waste-to-energy.

Recycling

As waste cannot be completely prevented, as much material as possible should be recovered,

preferably by recycling. The European Commission has defined several specific “waste streams” for priority attention with the ultimate objective of reducing overall negative environmental impacts. This includes packaging waste, end-of-life vehicles, batteries, as well as electrical and electronic waste. EU directives now require Member States to introduce legislation on waste collection, reuse, recycling and disposal of these waste streams. Several EU countries are already managing to recycle over 50% of packaging waste.

Complete or partial recycling means that the amount of waste to be disposed of can be reduced and use of raw materials can be avoided. For example, organic material can be composted to provide a valuable end-product and reduce the amount of waste for disposal. In some cases, recovering energy from waste materials through using it as a fuel might also be a solution.

Recycling reduces the quantity of materials requiring disposal and therefore saves money, time, natural resources and energy associated with the disposal process. Reducing the amount of rubbish we produce is the best solution to waste minimisation and people who recycle will become aware of how much rubbish they actually produce.

The waste management and recycling sector has a high growth rate. And since it is labour intensive, it provides between 1.2 and 1.5 million jobs just in Europe. The recycling industry is providing increasing amounts of resources to the manufacturing industry. According to the European Commission at least 50% of the paper and steel, 43% of the glass and 40% of the non-ferrous metal produced in the EU are currently derived from recycled materials. In addition, diversion of biodegradable waste from landfills and increasing recycling and recovery are contributing to reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Energy recovery

Considering the increasing amount of waste and its negative effects on human health and the environment, recycled and controlled waste management might be a suitable solution for many communities. Landfills produce so-called landfill gases with a high amount of methane. Well-managed landfills can capture and process methane as a source for energy production in order to produce electricity or heat. In addition to cleaning the air, reducing greenhouse gases and thereby global warming, waste to energy is a safe and guaranteed energy source with a stable price and constant availability.

Waste transport

Too much waste is still moved from place to place. In some countries, standards required for waste treatment or disposal are lower and therefore waste treatment or disposal is cheaper. But simply transporting waste to other parts of the world for disposal is in many cases illegal and is certainly not a long-term, sustainable solution. In any event, the transportation of waste should be minimised in order to reduce the risk of accidents and to save valuable resources.

Final disposal

Waste that cannot be recycled or reused should be safely incinerated, with the landfill option only used as a last resort. Most of what we throw away is either burnt in incinerators, or dumped into landfill sites (67% in the EU; still the cheapest available option). Landfill is the worst option for the environment as it signifies a loss of resources and could turn into a future environmental liability. Both landfills and incineration, create environmental damage and need close monitoring because of their potential for causing severe environmental damage. Landfills not only take up more and more valuable landscapes, but also result in the discharge of carbon dioxide (CO₂) and methane (CH₄) into the atmosphere and chemicals and pesticides into the earth and groundwater. This, in turn, is harmful to human health, as well as to plants and animals. Legal landfill sites are growing rapidly and thereby not a feasible solution for the future due to their limited capacity. Even more worrying is the unknown number of illegal landfills whose risks cannot be quantified. The main alternative disposal method to landfill – incineration – produces

toxins and heavy metals. To prevent their release, expensive filters must be installed in incinerators. Finally, used filters with highly concentrated contamination, together with a quarter of the waste's original weight, must still be landfilled. On top of all this, substantial amounts of industrial and household waste are classified as hazardous and require special care in treatment.

The EU has recently approved a directive setting strict guidelines for landfill management. It bans certain types of wastes, such as used tyres, and sets targets for reducing quantities of biodegradable rubbish. Another recent directive lays down tough limits on emission levels from incinerators. The Union also strives to reduce emissions of dioxins and acid gases such as nitrogen oxides (NO_x), sulphur dioxides (SO₂), and hydrogen chlorides (HCL), which can be harmful to human health.

Case Study: Campaign “Let’s do it”

An awareness campaign is essential in order to inform the general public about the possible dangers of pollution as well as of the related benefits of proper waste management.

A positive example of a successful campaign illustrates “Let’s do it!” – a civic movement with the goal of initiating clean-up projects in different countries (see www.letsdoitworld.org). The movement started in Estonia in 2008, where 50 000 people gathered to collect 10 000 tons of illegal waste in just five hours. Previously, the movement started a thoroughly planned campaign that involved the private, public, and third sector such as companies, organizations, national institutions, and civil groups. Crucial was the cooperation with local partners, who managed the campaign on the ground. The waste was located through a software that geo-mapped dumping sites in Estonia and enabled the logistical planning of the campaign. Most importantly, the campaign leaders were able to engage the media and prominent artists and musicians in their project. Thereby “Let’s do it” was able to reach a broad audience and deliver their message in a successful manner.

By now more than two million volunteers have participated in clean up events in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Portugal, India, Slovenia, Serbia, Finland, Romania, Bulgaria, Moldova, Ukraine, Cambodia, Russia, Hungary and Brazil.

The campaign is aiming to achieve a world clean up day in March and September 2012 in order to free the world of 100 million tons of illegal garbage.

The organizers of “Let’s do it” are aware of the fact that a campaign is not enough to bring about a profound change in waste management around the world. Therefore the movement is emphasizing the importance of cooperation between like-minded people and organizations, awareness building measures regarding sustainable consumption and recycling through education, environmentally friendly production processes and design as well as the introduction of financial incentives, e.g. tax relief for ecological products.

Increasing public awareness – clean campaigns

A public awareness campaign is essential in order to inform the general public about the dangers of pollution as well as about the benefits of a clean Mediterranean Sea.

In order to be successful the campaign will need a local partner in each member state that can assist in organizing events and activities. It is crucial to develop a smart and successful awareness strategy that is tailored according to each country’s public in order to reach as many people as possible.

Within the framework of the “Let’s do it” campaign for the Mediterranean Sea awareness building activities towards proper waste management should be organized such as numerous workshops

and events. Different types of clean-up campaigns can be considered, e.g. beach and coastal/underwater cleaning campaigns or cleaning initiatives related to illegal waste dumping inside the country that are connected to water ways and thereby infiltrate the sea. In addition educational and artistic workshops could simultaneously take place. In the campaign a variety of project partners could be considered such as community, municipal or regional representatives, NGOs, schools, youth organizations, companies, the tourism industry ... etc.

In order to foster some common identity between the member states and local participants, an appealing slogan needs to be considered which can be immediately associated with the campaign.

Also an appropriate flag and symbol should be developed. In addition common events can be organised such as synchronized cleaning events which take place in different countries at the same time.

An inspiration for the “Let’s do it” campaign for the Mediterranean Sea offers the original Estonian example of 2008, which has been broadcasted in several countries. The short informative movie that the Estonian organizers produced should be translated into the native languages of participating countries and shown on national TV. Also, an online campaign with the help of social media, e.g. Facebook and Twitter, should be considered as a means of information-sharing and mobilisation that will especially attract the younger generation. National teams in the participating countries have to be set up that consist of grass root organizations, volunteers in addition to professionals that understand the media and political landscape of the respective country. The ideal situation would require a chief coordinator who oversees the campaigns in all member state countries. At the same time, local coordinators are required as well who are responsible for the respective country. In addition celebrities, cultural and opinion leaders in each country should be identified that can help in motivating the general public to participate.

Next year’s Mediterranean clean-up day could be held simultaneously with the UNEP’s World Clean-Up Day on June 5th or the Ocean Project Day on June 8th.

In order to start a successful campaign, all countries are kindly asked to answer the questions in our questionnaire (Annex I). This will help to analyze the major difficulties and challenges in the respective member states.

Conclusions and recommendations

The current situation cannot continue as it is. Waste is now not only a danger to our environment. It is increasingly a threat to human health and our way of life.

Most developed economies and many developing countries are pursuing the objective of improving waste management. Countries with less developed waste management systems usually aim at improving basic waste management practices, especially in regards to land filling of municipal waste and management of hazardous waste. Countries with more mature waste management systems seek to prevent waste generation and to increase recycling and recovery of waste.

A combination of measures is necessary.

- Prevention of waste
- increased re-use, recycle and composting of waste
- simplification and modernisation of existing legislation
- full implementation of existing legislation
-
- introduction of life-cycle thinking into waste policy
- promotion of more ambitious waste prevention policies
- better knowledge and information

- development of common reference standards for recycling
- technological innovation to reduce emissions from landfills and wastewater

Some Arab countries have pursued an integrated waste management strategy, namely handling waste as recoverable resources through a series of integrated interrelated links involving successive stages (birth-to-death life cycles), starting with generation at source (where waste is reduced quantitatively, qualitatively and hazard-wise), followed by in-house storage and separation and later multi-source amassing and transport to suitable sites for phased stockpiling or treatment. This strategy develops the possibility of recycling recoverable materials and final disposal that is environmentally safe. Challenges still persist in respect of making this system operational.

Although a lot of actions, like technical research, training, awareness-raising actions and exchange of best practice, are already taking place, waste generation is still too high and rising rapidly. Legislation is, in some cases, poorly implemented and there are substantial differences between national approaches. The potential for waste prevention and recycling is not yet completely tapped. The emerging knowledge about the impact on the environment is not totally reflected in waste policies. The situation is critical. For years there has been too little action on waste problems and inadequate planning for optimal solutions.

Together, all partners must actively seek solutions for our own benefit and that of future generations. We share responsibility for our environment. We have to tackle the growing waste problem. We need local solutions linked to larger management plans. Let's start with a small but effective step to promote proper waste management and improve the level of public awareness about the damages of pollution. Let's start to clean up the Mediterranean landscape and Mediterranean Sea and create a shared and common identity between the member countries of the Mediterranean region by implementing an annual clean-up day according to the "Let's do it" – campaign. Everybody: schools, municipalities, communities, youth organizations, NGOs, and especially cities and regions, should be involved. Each year there will be different types of activities and events. The Committee on Energy, Environment and Water will oversee the campaign and motivate member states to participate in the process within the first three years. After this initial period, the member states should contribute actively and independently to the annual campaign. Best practice examples will be chosen in order to demonstrate the progress in the campaign. Collectively, problems can be solved and practical solutions implemented. With this in mind: "LET'S DO IT (TOGETHER)!".