



F. I. R.

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Review Thematic Waste Strategy

In 2005 the EU "Thematic Strategy on the Prevention and recycling of Waste" was adopted. This strategy has set the "Recycling Society" as a long term goal for Europe. The strategy has been reviewed by the European Commission, which issued its Communication on 19 January 2011. The strategy identified seven key actions. Implementation and enforcement of existing waste legislation is still lacking behind. Recycling rates are said to have increased. Overall waste recycling in the EU has increased by 5% to 38%. Waste going to landfill has decreased from 49% in 2005 to 40% in 2008. The long term effects of recycling are acknowledged by the review report. It is estimated that job creation in the waste recycling could amount up to half a million jobs.

The Commission still sees a lot of work that must be done. For instance, better indicators are required to measure progress to a recycling society. It also considers that new market mechanisms favouring secondary raw materials should be explored.

New steps in Raw Materials Initiative

Commodity markets have been increasingly volatile in recent years. Global supply and demand patterns change rapidly and sustainable access to raw materials needs to be secured. In 2008 the European Commission drew attention to the issue by launching the Raw Materials Initiative. Since then, it has taken actions within this framework to address sustainable access to raw materials both within and outside the EU, as well as on resource efficiency and recycling. The Initiative is based on three pillars: ensuring a level playing field in access to resources in third countries; fostering sustainable supply of raw materials from European sources; boosting resource efficiency and promoting recycling. One action within the Initiative has been identification of fourteen critical raw materials, mainly rare earth metals. These materials occur for instance in electric and electronic equipment. The Commission has therefore worked to prevent illegal export of this type of waste. It has also proposed new ambition targets for the recovery of waste from electric and electronic waste.

In its Communication of 2 February 2011, the Commission describes future work to be done. With regard to critical raw materials, it intends to explore targeted actions notably with regard to recycling. As for the sustainable supply of minerals, the Commission considers that national Mineral policies should be developed. With regard to wood, the Commission intends to carry out an analysis on the availability. With regard to resource efficiency, the barriers which prevent recycling need to be further addressed. According to the Commission, these barriers fall into three broad categories: leakage of waste or sub-standard treatment; obstacles to the development of the recycling industry; and inadequate innovation in recycling.

Flagship initiative resource-efficiency

Next to several other policies already in place, the European Commission has recently launched a new initiative: the flagship initiative on resource efficiency. It is one of the seven flagship initiatives as part of the Europe 2020 strategy aiming to deliver smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. The flagship initiative aims to create a framework for policies to support the shift towards a resource-efficient and low-carbon economy.

In its Communication of 26 January 2011, The European Commission links the new flagship initiative to existing policies, such as the Raw Materials Initiative and the legal framework for waste. It stresses that true costs to society of the consumption of resources must be transparent. Prices must get right and reflect the full costs of resource use to society.

A series of actions is foreseen in 2011 to deliver on the resource-efficiency flagship. One step is the development of a roadmap for a resource efficient Europe in the second quarter of 2011. Also foreseen in 2011 is a strategy for the sustainable competitiveness of the EU construction sector.

FIR visit to Hungary

The new European policies have also infected stakeholders in Hungary. Management of Construction & Demolition Waste is now on the agenda of authorities and industry. Recycling of C&DW is at a low level now. Only a few installations are in operation, their products find only difficult application. FIR spoke to BauRec, a new organisation that aims to build a national recycling association. Its first goal is to discuss with authorities the development of proper regulation for C&DW.

In April the Hungarian Ministry for Rural Development and the German Ministry for Environment organise a workshop in Budapest. Experts from Germany will inform stakeholders about the approaches that lead to proper recycling in Germany.



Recycling site in Budapest

City of Amsterdam saves money with recycling

At IJburg, Amsterdam, the city of Amsterdam decided to close materials loops as good as possible. Stony material and debris were used as raw materials for new road constructions in the area. Three recycling concepts were put in place to recover materials. Concrete bricks are taken up by a "ST1" equipment which makes new packages ready for direct use. A mobile crusher processes debris into recycled aggregates. The aggregates are sieved whereby sand is removed from the aggregates. The sand is also fit for use in local works. In total some 5,000 ton of debris was processed. The works, which took only three weeks, delivered savings of Eur 250,000 for the city of Amsterdam.

FIR event on Incinerator Bottom Ash in Italy

In 2010 it was decided that FIR will also engage in the issue of Incinerator Bottom Ash (IBA). Treatment and further use of IBA poses an increasing problem throughout Europe. Being another secondary mineral material, IBA finds other markets and applications than recycled aggregates. The problems for IBA are for instance felt in Italy. Many owners of incineration plants and processors of IBA are seeking solutions.

FIR organises a meeting on 22 June in Milan in order to discuss with Italian stakeholders proper approaches for IBA. The main aim is to make these parties aware of the assistance which FIR may deliver as European partner. Ultimately, such parties may become new members of FIR and help develop this new business of FIR.

Plastics in C&DW are of interest

The interest in C&DW recycling strongly focuses on inert materials and the production of recycled aggregates. Yet, some 15-20% of the waste is non-inert. In many countries this mixed C&DW is disposed of. The interest in recyclable materials in mixed C&DW is growing though. Sometimes producer responsibility is due to this, sometimes new business emerges.

The European association for polyurethane (PU) insulation has carried out a study into the management of PU waste in construction and demolition in the UK, Germany and France. Data in the UK show that about 15,000 – 17,000 tonnes/year of PU insulation arises (on a total of some 56 million tonnes of C&DW). In neither of the countries PU insulation is recovered for recycling. The study reveals though several options for collection and recycling. It suggests amongst others to develop voluntary agreements between stakeholders to realise this.

A current study in The Netherlands looks at the waste situation of PVC. PVC is predominantly used in construction. Much PVC therefore ends up in C&DW. The study included amongst others analyses of C&DW and of sorting plants processing mixed C&DW. Part of PVC is already kept separate at construction and demolition sites. A main part however ends up, in a diffuse manner, in incineration plants. Some recycling companies process separately collected PVC which is recycled into a raw material. Recycling of PVC has become feasible as proper outlets have also been found. The current study will identify additional options to increase recycling.

End-of-waste criteria for metal scrap

In March a first set of end-of-waste criteria has been adopted by the European Commission. The criteria determine when certain types of metal scrap cease to be waste. The criteria address such issues as input control, processing and quality control of processed materials. The criteria are described in a Regulation, which is supposed to be the first of a series of Regulations for different types of wastes. Recycled Aggregates are not a soon candidate. Currently a study is being undertaken by the Commission on the relation between environmental limit values and end-of-waste criteria for recycled aggregates. This is preparative work for end-of-waste criteria.