

THE CONGRESS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES

Recommendation 189 (2006)¹ on local and regional waste management and the siting of landfills

1. The Congress expresses its concern for the consequences that waste management has for Europe's future socio-economic development: the economic growth of recent decades has been matched by increases in the amount of waste produced, which has a significant impact on human health, nature and the planet's resources, with related risks such as emissions of pollutants into the air (including greenhouse gases), water and soil.

2. Most waste streams will increase further over the years to come, with current predictions, if nothing changes, indicating a doubling of waste production by 2025. Waste disposal methods are not coping with the increased loads, and the amount of biodegradable waste sent to landfill is increasing in several countries.

3. Presently decisions to build new landfills have an impact that extends beyond the sites proper: the aspects of public health, air pollution, water pollution, the use of groundwater connected to landfills and the protection of landscapes and natural habitats are also involved.

4. The Congress underlines that local, regional and national authorities in most European countries are faced with growing waste management responsibilities, in particular with regard to landfilling and the management of municipal waste, and draws attention to the specific problems that European towns and regions are facing:

a. in several European countries, local authorities are unable to identify sites for new landfills to replace existing landfills which have reached their maximum capacity, or need to be modernised;

b. municipal solid waste landfills are increasingly regarded as having a significant adverse impact on people who own, live in or otherwise use properties near the sites; in addition local, regional and national authorities are faced with the

growing reluctance of the public and citizens' associations to accept incineration as a safe method of waste disposal.

c. local authorities have noted that the introduction of municipal landfill taxes or charges is not really effective in reducing the generation of certain waste streams (including municipal waste, in particular); in addition, the growth in the generation of waste and the increase in fiscal measures designed to discourage landfilling have substantially increased the amount of illegal dumping and the exporting of waste to neighbouring regions, including across national boundaries;

5. The Congress recommends the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to entrust the Council's intergovernmental sector with the task of analysing the possibilities for setting up specialist centres to facilitate administrative and technical co-operation between local authorities regarding waste management and to forward the present recommendation to the Council of Europe member governments with the view to:

a. launching public awareness campaigns on the importance of waste reduction, waste recycling and selective waste collection;

b. stepping up measures to raise awareness and develop more responsible conduct among goods manufacturers (in particular concerning the overproduction of packaging) and taking steps to reduce the technical and economic factors that significantly limit the possibility of recycling various types of products;

c. tightening up the measures to protect the public in connection with the siting of new landfills and imposing penalties for the poor management or maintenance of existing sites and provide the authorities responsible for siting landfills with appropriate technical and financial support so that the impact of developing new landfills is thoroughly analysed and assessed;

d. backing up sanctions for undesirable waste management practices with measures to encourage or reward desirable practices – such as waste prevention, minimisation and recovery – and planning for the adoption of measures in the area of industrial production aimed at internalising waste management costs.

1. Debated and adopted by the Congress on 31 May 2006, 2nd Sitting (see Document CG (13) 7, draft recommendation presented by J. Borg (Malta, R, EPP/CD) and V. Prignachi (Italy, L, EPP/CD), rapporteurs).