

THE CONGRESS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES

Resolution 213 (2006)¹ on local and regional waste management and the siting of landfills

1. The Congress considers that waste management and waste prevention are one of the major challenges that local, regional and national authorities will face in the coming years: the amount of waste produced has grown in line with the European economy and a potential doubling of waste production is predicted over the next 20 years.

2. Most of the municipal waste in Europe is landfilled, with only a very small quantity being collected selectively or recycled. The existing landfills in several member states have reached their maximum capacity and local and regional authorities are finding it hard, not only objectively but subjectively, to identify new sites for municipal landfills, with populations adopting a “not in my backyard” attitude.

3. Local authorities are faced with many risks and constraints concerning the siting of landfills: public health, economic and environmental problems affecting the quality of groundwater and surface water; toxicity to plants; noise pollution; landscape degradation; destruction of natural habitats; destruction of archaeological sites; and problems concerning properties near to landfill sites, including reductions in their value. These problems affect not only people who own, live in or otherwise use properties near the sites but the population as a whole;

4. The Congress considers that selective waste collection and optimal waste recycling should be priorities for local and regional authorities and all players involved in waste management: an optimum approach to waste management includes upstream minimisation of waste generation, reduction in the hazardous constituents of waste and proper management of residual waste. In this context, the use of new practices and the use of modern technologies in implementing optimal waste management are essential;

5. The Congress fully subscribes to the principle of cleaner consumption – a key aspect of sustainable development – which includes the adoption of a preventive approach throughout the entire product life cycle, incorporating design, manufacture, use and disposal.

6. For these reasons the Congress calls on local and regional authorities:

a. to implement measures to support and promote selective household waste collection and raise public awareness that refuse may be regarded as “wasted” raw materials;

b. to put in place instruments, aimed at businesses, designed not only to impose penalties on undesirable waste generation, but also to encourage or reward desirable practices, namely waste prevention, minimisation, reuse, recycling and recovery;

c. to step up co-operation between local, regional and national authorities in terms of integrated waste and landfill management, as such co-operation has proved effective and financially beneficial in several European countries;

d. with regard to the siting of landfills, to make sure that all projects are technically justifiable and achievable, with sufficient funding guarantees to prevent groundwater pollution and to establish, as far as possible, “buffer zones” between landfill sites proper and neighbouring properties, so that the rightful enjoyment of such properties is not impaired;

e. to use part of the income from domestic waste collection charges to offer appropriate financial compensation packages to those in the areas surrounding landfills so as to enable them to leave the areas or accept the adverse effects of the landfills, provided such effects do not include pollution;

f. to involve the public more closely – through citizens’ advisory committees – in the decisions on siting of landfills, thereby ensuring its right to the necessary information flow, transparency and scrutiny.

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