1. **OBJECTIVE OF WASTE PREVENTION**

- The general goal of waste prevention is to reduce impacts of waste generation on the environment. It was recognised that there are cases were there are trade-offs between reducing environmental impacts through waste prevention and through other environmental measures.

- The definition of waste prevention should not be confused with landfill diversion. Language of the 6EAP and of the Waste Framework Directive (WFD) was referred to. Prevention of waste has two principle dimensions:
  - Reducing the amounts of waste
  - Improving the quality of the waste.
  
  The legal definition of waste prevention should remain simple. It could be supplemented with more detail in non-legislative documents.

- Reducing hazardous substances in waste is an important part of qualitative waste prevention. However, other qualitative aspects are also important such as recyclability, design, etc.

- Various tools and guidance can be useful for developing and implementing waste prevention but they need to be suitable for the specific cases. For example LCAs are useful for assessing industrial processes or assisting in design. In some cases simple common sense can lead to waste prevention, e.g. while implementing an Environmental Management System in a small enterprise, but this would often need to be supplemented with some type of systematic approach. We need to use the right tool at the right level.

2. **WASTE PREVENTION TARGETS**

- General waste prevention targets may not be meaningful but they symbolise the political importance given to waste prevention and contribute to putting society into motion. Targets should not be confused with goals. Whereas goals give the direction we want to move towards, targets indicate how far on the road we want to go.

- Determining waste prevention targets without adopting a policy would not make sense as targets alone will not make waste prevention happen. Waste prevention policy must go right down to individual prevention actions, e.g. by individuals or businesses. This implies a cascade of measures from the general or European level to the level where action is taken. Targets and waste plans must interact and be developed at the appropriate levels.

- Indicators and reporting mechanisms are needed to enable proper monitoring of progress towards waste prevention targets. Indicators often need to be specific to particular waste prevention measures and actions. Reporting and monitoring can be effective tools in their own right.

- Industry, consumers and local authorities all have a role to play.
3. **WASTE PREVENTION PLANS OR PROGRAMMES**

- Linking to the WFD a clearer obligation to develop national waste prevention plans or programmes was seen as a workable option to promote waste prevention policies.

- The option of a waste prevention Directive was suggested.

- Any planning approach should respect a development circle which enables to build upon prevention policies designed at the level closest to where individual action takes place. Therefore, there is a need to carefully dose a top down drive and a bottom up elaboration of policies.

- Waste prevention plans/programmes and progress in implementing these should be discussed in appropriate fora to enable exchange of experience and cross fertilisation. This could also contribute to assessing policies.

4. **INDUSTRIAL WASTE PREVENTION**

* A range of measures were screened for potential environmental impact, eco-efficiency and added value of EU action.

- **IPPC and pro-active use of BREFs**
  
  A discussion was held on how well waste prevention was currently covered in BREFs. There was agreement that this varied from BREF to BREF. Recent work by IMPEL showed that permiters would like to see more information on waste in the BREFs (but at the same time felt that the BREFs were too long).

  There was disagreement on whether the BREFs were ambitious enough. Some suggested that the BREFs were good as background information, but would not necessarily promote waste prevention on their own as they stand, and argued they needed other waste based targets to act as a spur to use the information in them. The extent to which BREFs adequately cover management, planning, logistics (good housekeeping) issues as well as technical/equipment issues was also discussed. There was some consensus that further use of benchmarks would be useful.

  As for the potential use of BREFs on a voluntary basis or in national legislation for smaller structures, it was noted that BREFs were designed with this in mind. On the other hand, the waste prevention measures in BREFs applicable to bigger facilities are not always transferable to smaller structures. The fact that the BREFs themselves are not translated, only the executive summaries, was cited as a barrier to their wider use.

- **Economic instruments – resource, waste generation taxation, tradable permits.**
  
  Waste management taxes were noted as definitely having an effect on waste prevention, and resources taxes were identified as potentially efficient in this area. Opposition to further taxes on the grounds of competitiveness and scepticism about the likelihood of taxes at the EU level was registered.
• *Sectoral or business level waste prevention plans*

On the whole, the group preferred the idea of wider waste management plans for business, rather than plans focussing only on waste prevention.
• **Environmental management systems/waste audits.**
  Environmental management systems were perceived as useful, but better at identifying waste prevention ideas than actually implementing them in practice.

• **Voluntary approaches/environmental agreements.**
  There was a mixed picture on the success of environmental agreements in the EU. They were seen as being successful in NL, but as having little effect in other Member States.

• **Industrial ecology measures/closed loop systems.**
  These were considered as being difficult to implement in the EU, where so many of the industrial sites are already in place.

• **Cleaner Production Centres.**
  The consensus was that these should be used as focal points for discussions between government and business, but not substitute for the market in terms of waste prevention consultancy.

**General discussion on SMEs**
It was considered that there was potential in this area, although it was not always easy to attain, as the plethora of existing SME related actions attests. In some cases it was felt that even immediately and economically beneficial waste prevention actions were not being taken, due to lack of time and knowledge, and that simple distribution of information would not always help. The consensus was that it is best to gather information at the EU level, but that this information should be distributed at the lowest possible level, through local structures that were adapted to SMEs.

A catalogue of best practice for process waste prevention, similar to that produced by the European Topic Centre (more focussed on consumer waste prevention) was considered to be a useful action.

**General discussion on new Member States**
It was noted that the IPPC approach had had and would continue to have a valuable waste prevention impact in the new Member States, notably in terms of promoting a dialogue between the various actors involved.

5. **Consumer waste prevention.**

• Any waste prevention policy would be a mix of instruments. Each instrument is to be used for specific cases and at an appropriate level. It was felt that the list of instruments included in the annotated agenda was incomplete. Instruments that should be added to the list include:
  ✓ Economic instruments. They could be applied early in the life cycle (e.g. on resources) or later in the life cycle (e.g. reduced VAT on eco-labelled products)
  ✓ Repair should be added as an individual measure
  ✓ EU studies could play a role, for example the identification of products that are have a high potential for reduction of environmental impacts through waste prevention.
• The various instruments considered can be classified in two major categories:
  ➢ Instruments which affect the production/consumption cycle or the nature of products before the point at which the consumer is called to make a choice (called pre-consumer measures). Such instruments modify the products/services proposed to the consumer. Examples are eco-design, substance restrictions, etc.
  ➢ Instruments which try to influence the decision of the consumer (called consumer level measures). These instruments try to make the consumer interested in better consumption patterns or products. Examples are labelling and product information, awareness campaigns, etc.

• At present pre-consumer measures have more leverage than consumer level measures. This is partly due to the fact that consumers receive very diverging signals and can in cases have behaviours that could appear illogical. However, we should keep the long term objective of having well educated and involved citizens and consumers making the right environmental decisions. In the shorter term messages sent to consumers need to be consistent, repeated and well focussed. Action on consumer waste prevention should break the vicious circle in which consumers are not aware of eco-products and do not buy them, these products are therefore not proposed by retailers, and producers do not sell them to retailers, all of this being passively witnessed by governments.

• Public procurement can be powerful and could benefit from more active promotion at all levels of government.

• The principal effect of PAYT is to encourage sorting and composting of waste. It can also have indirect waste prevention effects as it makes consumers aware that waste is costly. PAYT is very powerful and must be handled with care as bad implementation can be disastrous.

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