

Letter from: EU Secretariat  
Letter to: Stavros Dimas  
Date: 5 March 2009

**Reply to the Commission's Green Paper on the management of bio-waste in the European Union – COM(2008) 811**

Dear Mr Dimas,

Please find below the reply from the Environment and Regional Planning Committee and the European Affairs Committee of the Danish Parliament to the consultation on the Commission's Green Paper on the management of bio-waste in the European Union.

The reply to consultation from the Environment and Regional Planning Committee was adopted by the European Affairs Committee on 27 February 2009, as stated below.

**Opinion from the Environmental and Regional Planning Committee and the European Affairs Committee**

The *majority* of members of the Committees (Liberals, Danish People's Party, the Conservatives and Liberal Alliance) have no comments on the Green Paper.

A *minority* of members of the Committees (the Social Democrats, the Socialist People's Party, the Social Liberals and the Unity List) consider the Green Paper a positive initiative and welcome the fact that the Commission is looking into how Europe can make better use of biological waste fractions and as far as possible eliminate damage caused by waste and favour positive uses. The minority therefore supports developing a European strategy in this area.

In the Green Paper the Commission looked only at the following biodegradable waste fractions:

- garden and park waste, and
- food and kitchen waste (households, restaurants and food processing).

These are second generation raw materials which are not from primary agricultural production. The Commission does not, therefore, address waste fractions from farming or forestry. Likewise, waste from processed wood and paper, for example, is not covered.

The minority is of the view that it would be beneficial to propose improved measures at European level in the following areas:

- Minimum collection requirements (optimising possibilities for recovery), minimum recovery requirements (effectiveness)
- Minimum requirements for end products, including requirements for the content of heavy metals and xenobiotic substances, and related requirements on traceability in order to reduce and eliminate any xenobiotic substances, and
- Phasing out and prohibiting the landfill of biodegradable waste fractions and, more generally, of all organic waste.

The Commission should also actively provide funding for research and development and actively disseminate and facilitate the exchange of knowledge and technology.

The minority also suggests involving key professional organisations and green NGOs in the wider work in order to take full advantage of these activities in the Member States.

It is important that the focus is not limited to the technology mainly used today or that is currently considered the optimal one on the market. We would draw particular attention to two technological possibilities which should be used and further developed:

- The breakdown of fibres using enzymes, which makes uses other than incineration for energy recovery possible
- Treating wet biomass under pressure, which can produce oils.

Both technologies can also be used on waste fractions from sewage sludge and wood and paper waste, which are not covered by the Green Paper. These technologies can also help collect resources with a view to recovery.

The minority wishes to highlight the following elements, in addition to the focus on climate (energy production from bio-waste) and land restoration (recycling compost, etc.):

- Phosphorus is a limited resource. Phosphorus recycling technologies should therefore be prioritised.
- Raw materials for new products. Technologies which can use bio-waste directly as a raw material for production and thereby replace fossil fuels should be promoted.

A hierarchy of principle can be established, see the points below, which takes account of long-term interests as regards the climate and other restrictions on

the continued use of fossil fuels. The final hierarchy should include life-cycle studies from cradle to cradle, and from a local to a global perspective. In parts of Europe composted bio-waste can be used, for example, to counter desertification. In other parts of Europe, compost from bio-waste (as defined in the Green Paper) could only help land restoration to a limited extent.

1. Energy (biogas) – with phosphorus recovery – is equivalent to the production of raw materials for new products (bio refining)
2. Incineration for energy production (combined heat and power) (including waste products from 1)
3. Composting (including waste products from 1 and 2).

The top priority is therefore producing energy from waste, for example as biogas or by using carbon from waste for new products. In both instances fossil fuels are replaced. The second priority is also energy recovery, but in a simpler form, through regular incineration.

The lowest priority is composting for land restoration.

Yours sincerely,

Steen Gade  
Chairman of the Environmental and  
Regional Planning Committee

Svend Auken  
Chairman of the European  
Affairs Committee