



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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*Mr Pietro GRASSO
President of the
Senato della Repubblica
Piazza Madama, 1
IT – 00186 ROME*

Dear President,

The Commission would like to thank the Senato della Repubblica for its Opinion on the Communication on the role of waste-to-energy in the circular economy {COM(2017) 34 final}.

The Commission welcomes the Senato della Repubblica's overall support for the Communication. The transition towards a circular economy should provide Member States with good opportunities for economic growth and jobs while reducing residual waste to a minimum. Functional waste management systems, operating with the optimal amount of waste-to-energy capacity for non-recyclable waste, should contribute to establishing the right market conditions to boost quality recycling while reducing waste to landfill.

The Commission acknowledges the large differences between Member States as regards waste management performance, particularly with regard to recycling and landfilling of municipal waste. The waste proposals¹ under the circular economy package - currently in the legislative process - recognise this.

In the case of Italy, such differences also occur between the northern and southern regions as noted in the European Union Environmental Implementation Review Country Report². The Commission finds it important for Italy to explore further the underlying causes so as to be able to find the most efficient solutions at both national and regional levels. The relatively high amount of municipal waste sent to landfills in Italy - 34% in 2014 - calls for more efforts to divert waste from disposal towards recycling; and, in the case of non-recyclable waste, to

¹ Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Directive 2008/98/EC on waste {COM(2015) 595 final}, proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Directive 94/62/EC on packaging and packaging waste {COM(2015) 596 final}, proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Directive 1999/31/EC on the landfill of waste {COM(2015) 594 final}, and proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Directives 2000/53/EC on end-of-life vehicles, 2006/66/EC on batteries and accumulators and waste batteries and accumulators, and 2012/19/EU on waste electrical and electronic equipment {COM(2015) 593 final}.

² http://ec.europa.eu/environment/eir/pdf/report_it_en.pdf

waste-to-energy process designed to provide maximum energy output. The 21% incineration of municipal waste reported in 2014 can be considered as being within the optimal capacity range which, if maintained at this level, should not affect the achievement of the more ambitious recycling targets currently discussed by the co-legislators under the aforementioned waste proposals. These proposals would give Member States a more active role in ensuring the availability of quality secondary raw materials through the application of end-of-waste criteria when certain conditions are fulfilled, thereby reclassifying materials as recyclables instead of waste, in line with the comments provided by the Senato della Repubblica.

As regards research and development, the Commission agrees with the Senato della Repubblica that more investment is necessary to increase reuse and recycling. In this regard the Horizon 2020 Work Programme 2016-17 invests EUR 650 million on "Industry 2020 in the circular economy" which grants funds to demonstrate the economic and environmental feasibility of the circular economy approach, and at the same time gives a strong impetus to the re-industrialisation of the European Union.

Finally, the Commission is currently reviewing the Best Available Technique Reference document, established in 2006 for waste incineration in order to ensure that it is in line with the conditions laid down in the Directive on industrial emissions³ and the environmental and energy-related requirements.

The Commission hopes that these clarifications address the issues raised by the Senato della Repubblica and looks forward to continuing political dialogue in the future.

Yours faithfully,

*Frans Timmermans
First Vice-President*

*Karmenu Vella
Member of the Commission*

³ Directive 2010/75/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 November 2010 on industrial emissions (integrated pollution prevention and control) (Recast), OJ L 334, 17.12.2010, p.17.