

European Waste Management Statistics: the comparison between Member States is questionable, because of non-comparable data.

FNADE, the French professional trade organisation representing the environmental services industry, today commented on the publication of statistics on waste management in Europe. FNADE made clear its view that the results of the different Member States cannot be compared objectively because of insufficient data harmonisation. Furthermore, only municipal waste is covered which accounts for less than 30% of non-hazardous waste treated in France.

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Eurostat has just published the statistics for recovery and recycling of municipal waste. In FNADE's view, these figures do not paint an accurate picture. Yet these statistics are of utmost importance since they are the basis on which waste management policies are designed. They are used in particular for establishing quantified recycling and recovery targets, and they influence the investments that are necessary to achieve the objectives. European statistics suggest that France has poor performances compared to other Member States.

A study commissioned by FNADE, carried out by BIPRO, a German consultancy firm, identifies the differences in the calculations made by MS on the different waste treatment options. These differences affect the recycling/recovery rates of each country.

For instance, France does not take into account sorted and exported waste. If this category was included, as it is in certain Member States, the French recycling rate would increase from 44.5% to 50.9% of total non-hazardous waste. If only household and similar waste is considered, the inclusion of sorted and exported waste would allow France to report a recycling rate above 40%.

One can also read that Germany does have recourse to landfills for the purposes of disposal of municipal waste. In 2010, France landfilled 24 Million tons of household and similar waste. The same year, Germany landfilled more than 30Mt of waste whereas in Eurostat statistics there is no municipal waste shown as landfilled for Germany. The German « zero landfilling » is therefore not a reality. It results from an approach based on showing that no municipal waste in Germany is landfilled without pre-treatment. This is also the case for the majority of French municipal waste collected through civic amenities, sorting centres and more than 20 different EPR schemes; nevertheless residues from treatment are declared as not pre-treated and landfilled.

The FNADE study clearly demonstrates differences of calculation concerning:

- The accounting method for exported and imported waste;
- The way input or output wastes in sorting centres are taken into account;
- The scope of municipal waste (notably green waste and waste from markets and street cleansing);
- The qualification of the treatment method in the case of multi-treatment sites which biases the landfilling rate;
- The inclusion or the exclusion of treatment residues from municipal waste which are, depending upon the Member State, recorded as municipal waste or industrial waste (because pretreated by an industrial installation);
- The qualification of use of waste for backfilling, intermediate cover and road construction on landfill sites which are accounted as recycling or not, depending upon the Member State.

In order to avoid a situation in which France is penalised by waste policies based on non-comparable data, FNADE calls for:

- **a unique method of calculation based on more precise definitions in EUROSTAT questionnaires.**
- **a European reporting system that in the future incorporates non-hazardous household waste and waste from economic activities. FNADE recalls that statistics published by Eurostat cover only municipal waste, i.e 30 % of non mineral, non hazardous waste produced in France.**

European statistics are a navigational tool which enables the European Commission to ensure compliance by each Member State with the objectives lay down in the Waste Framework Directive. Therefore, it is essential that these statistics are based on common and **mandatory** rules.

Michel Valache, President of FNADE, recalls the importance of current work that will steer the French waste management policy for the coming years: « Through the waste management plan 2014-2020, the fiscal strategy on waste that was announced at the end of the French Committee on Environmental Taxation, as well as with the coming revision of the objectives of the Waste Framework Directive, new ambitions and targets will be established. **It is essential that these objectives take into account the differences in statistical methodology between Member States, as they will shape our sector indelibly** ».

FNADE, the French Federation for Waste Management and Environmental Services holds together service providers, builders and manufacturers involved in waste management. The federation, through its 9 syndicates represents 283 private companies, 60 810 employees in France and 130 000 worldwide; a turnover of more than €13.4 billion and 1052 treatment sites. FNADE is a member of FEAD the European Federation of Waste Management and Environmental Services.

Press contact : Marie-Claire PEPIOT

Tel: +33 1-53-04-32-90

mc.pepiot@fnade.com

FNADE - 33 rue de Naples - 75008 PARIS