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PRESS RELEASE

European Commission announces a phase-out of biodegradable waste in landfills at the FEAD landfill workshop

18 march 2011 - Prague

FEAD welcomed more than 70 participants from 16 different countries to the third edition of its workshop on the implementation of the Landfill Directive in Prague.

The keynote speaker, the representative of the European Commission in charge of the Landfill Directive, Jose Jorge Diaz del Castillo, reported on the non-compliance of Member States with the existing diversion targets as set in the Directive¹ [see annex]. As the Commission services are currently gathering and analysing relevant data, he fears that possibly several countries may have not met the 2009 and 2010² targets. In spite of this, he took the opportunity of the FEAD workshop to announce the Commission's intention to propose a *"phase-out of biodegradable waste going to landfill in 2020-2025"*. Whereas the exact scope of the measure would still need to be decided, the Commission's actual intention was confirmed by Mr Diaz del Castillo.

Since the previous FEAD landfill workshop - in 2009 in Tallinn - where Mr Diaz del Castillo referred to "thousands of illegal landfills" that would not be in compliance with the Directive's requirements, the Commission made in the meantime a more detailed inventory and could, last Friday, inform the audience that at least 619 illegal landfills had been identified in the EU [see annex]. He however did not wish to "name and shame" the concerned countries as the situation is at the pre-contentious phase. He explained that the figure could be under-estimated as two countries had not provided any information. Moreover, he reported that since the deadline for implementation of the Directive in 2001, a total of 177 infringement cases had been initiated by the Commission across Europe.

Finally, Mr Diaz del Castillo emphasised that the outlook is promising. A proper implementation of the waste hierarchy, waste targets, waste management plans and waste prevention programmes as set out in the revised Waste Framework Directive should lead to further move away from landfilling. Since 1995, the landfill rate has fallen from 62% to 38%.

Reports from representatives of the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary provided participants with an overview of the implementation of the Directive in their respective countries, showing progress made and the challenges remaining to achieving full compliance. Representatives of the French waste management industry provided an overview of France's implementation of the Directive, noting the option of a 'bioreactor' landfill as one possible technical solution to facilitating compliance with the operational aspects of the Directive.

The workshop dedicated the afternoon session to two key aspects for landfill activities: aftercare and gas recovery. Both aspects were presented by Heijo Scharff, Vice-Chair of FEAD landfill committee and Chair of European Commission's TAC working group on landfill gas recovery.

Mr Scharff suggested that interpretation of the financial provision requirements of the Landfill Directive was not consistent across Member States and called for *"guidance for determining end of aftercare when there is no further unacceptable risk for human health and the environment"*.

¹ Article 5(2) of the Directive on the landfill of waste [1999/31/EC] requires:

- by 2006 to reduce the amount of biodegradable municipal waste going to landfill to 75% of that produced in 1995;
- by 2009 to reduce the amount of biodegradable municipal waste going to landfill to 50% of that produced in 1995;
- by 2016 to reduce the amount of biodegradable municipal waste going to landfill to 35% of that produced in 1995.

Member States who landfilled more than 80 % of their municipal waste in 1995 can apply for a prolongation of the time limits not exceeding four years. Some Member States (Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Greece, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and the United Kingdom) have made use of this option and have special derogation periods.

² 2006 target for countries with the four year extension.

He also reported on the work being carried out by the Technical Adaptation Committee (TAC) on the revision of the technical annexes to the Directive relating to landfill gas, carried out under the Comitology procedure. The purpose of the process was to provide more detailed specifications on the recovery of landfill gas. Considering the recent decision to propose a phase-out of biodegradable waste in 2020-2025, the Commission has now decided to produce non-binding technical guidelines that can be applied in the interim to curb landfill gas emissions.

The workshop was hosted by Peter Hodecek, active Austrian member of FEAD. The event was moderated by Karl E. Lorber, Professor at the Montanuniversity in Austria. The workshop was preceded by a visit of AVE CZ's waste management facility in the city of Benátky nad Jizerou.

The presentations are available on the FEAD website: www.fead.be

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Note to the editor:

FEAD is the European Federation representing the interests of private waste management and recycling companies in Europe. FEAD's members are national waste management associations from 20 EU Member States plus Norway. They have an approximate 60% share in the household waste market and handle more than 75% of industrial and commercial waste in Europe. Their combined annual turnover is approximately € 75 billion. FEAD represents about 3000 companies with activities in all forms of waste management. These companies employ over 320000 people who operate around 2400 recycling and sorting centres, 1100 composting sites, 260 waste-to-energy plants and 900 controlled landfills. They play an important role in the determination of the best environmental option for waste management problems.

ANNEX (abstract of EC presentation)

