



**PRESS RELEASE:**

## **More incineration than trash to burn threatens recycling in Europe**

**Brussels, 21 January 2013:** A new study reveals that incinerators already operating in some EU states have the capacity to burn more than the non-recyclable waste generated. Still, industry is pushing to further expand incineration capacity in the European region.

The study finds that:

- Germany, Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom already have more incineration capacity than trash to burn;
- As a result, shipments of waste for burning has increased across national borders, which contradicts the proximity principle (1) and causes unnecessary CO2 emissions,
- Despite already burning 22% of EU's waste, the industry plans to increase the European incineration capacity, undermining the objectives set out in the Waste Framework Directive (WFD 2008/98/EC) and the Roadmap to a Resource Efficient Europe, which advocate the prioritization of waste prevention, re-use and recycling (2);
- The increase in waste shipments may endanger accomplishment of recycling targets, particularly in those countries that are currently further away from achieving them.

**"If the European Commission is to maintain its commitment to limit incineration to non-recyclables by 2020, the strategy should be to close incinerators and not to build new ones.** The objectives of the Resource Efficiency Roadmap and recycling targets won't be achieved unless the European Commission tightly controls the European incineration capacity. " said Joan Marc Simon, coordinator of GAIA in Europe.

### **Germany**

"In Germany the objectives of the Roadmap to a Resource Efficient Europe are nothing but empty words, because there are hardly any obstacles against building new incineration plants, and the recycling targets of packaging material are still too low. Improvements in waste prevention and recycling are happening only slowly, if at all." Said Hartmut Hoffmann of BUND (Friends of the Earth Germany).

### **United Kingdom**

"The European Commission has warned the United Kingdom to pursue reuse and recycling rather than overcapacity of incineration, and has noted that: 'Countries like Denmark and Switzerland are burning much more than they should and that's not good'(3). However, the Government has not even been monitoring the situation in the UK, despite the fact that there is already more incineration capacity in the UK than genuinely residual waste." Said Shlomo Downen, National Coordinator of UKWIN (UK Without Incineration Network).



## France

"France has one quarter of all European incinerators, yet there are new ones still in the pipeline. The incineration overcapacity in the country is responsible for the low implementation of the necessary separate collection and recycling programs. As a result our recycling rates are lower than they could be." Said Delphine Lévi Alvarès, Policy Officer at CNIID (National Center for Independent Information on Waste).

## Spain

"Majorca has the sad honour to host the largest incinerator in southern Europe. As a result the citizens pay the highest waste fee in Spain and suffer the health impacts associated to burning theirs and others waste. The Waste Framework Directive was the excuse to build an incinerator that depends on waste imports to operate and oppresses recycling (in 2011 84% of the municipal waste was incinerated, only 16% recycled)." Said Margalida Ramis, coordinator of the local group GOB in Majorca.

"If incineration overcapacity continues and/or is extended it will either be at the expense of taxpayers - because it will increase waste fees to compensate for the unused installed capacity - or it will hijack waste prevention and recycling - because there will not be enough waste to burn. **The European Commission should control the supply of incineration capacity in the European market to ensure it doesn't endanger prevention and recycling. It should also remove all the economic and legal incentives that today make burning waste preferable to recycling.**" concluded Simon.

*GAIA (www.no-burn.org) is an international alliance of more than 650 grassroots organizations in over 90 countries that works to stop incinerators and promote safe, sustainable and just alternatives.*

For a copy of the report please contact [info@no-burn.org](mailto:info@no-burn.org) or download [here](#).

This report with similar demands has been published by groups in Bulgaria, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Romania, Spain and the UK.

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- (1) The proximity principle (art16 WFD 2008/98/EC) advocates that waste should be treated close to the point at which is generated and that "the network shall be designed to enable the Community as a whole to become self-sufficient in waste disposal and recovery operations". Since the Waste Framework Directive (2008/98/EC) opened the European market to incineration, the shipment of waste for recovery operations has increased which means more non-national waste is burned in the EU.
- (2) The Roadmap to a Resource Efficient Europe (COM(2011)571), supported by the resolution of the European Parliament of May 24, 2012, states that by 2020 incineration with energy recovery should be limited to non-recyclable materials. Currently the EU burns 22% and non-recyclable materials amount to less than 20%.
- (3) UK edges up European recycling league table. letsrecycle.com, 1 March 2012. Available from: <http://www.letsrecycle.com/news/latest-news/waste-management/uk-creeps-up-european-recycling-league-table>