



JOINT-STATEMENT ON THE ROLE OF WASTE-TO-ENERGY IN THE EU TAXONOMY

19 OCTOBER 2020

We, the signatories, welcome the launch of the Platform on Sustainable Finance as Europe aims to achieve climate-neutrality by 2050. In this regard, the “EU Taxonomy” (Regulation (EU) 2020/852) is a significant step to guide the green transition.

While respecting the EU waste hierarchy¹, we believe it is important for the Platform to consider more in-depth sectors dealing with waste management, heat and energy efficiency. They bring significant contributions to all of the environmental objectives listed in the taxonomy.

Every year, about 15 million citizens in Europe receive heat generated in Waste-to-Energy plants via district heating. The plants most often use high efficiency cogeneration, which makes them and their district heating networks highly efficient and recovering heat and cooling that would otherwise be wasted.

Cogeneration also enables them to provide electricity for 18 million citizens when variable renewable energy sources are not available. Doing so, Waste-to-Energy plants link key sectors of the economy – waste management, heating and electricity sectors and others – and are key enablers of systems integration making the bridge between building a more circular economy, an energy union and achieving climate change goals.

The Commission already underlined that Waste-to-Energy has a role to play in the circular economy²:

- **As a complementary tool to recycling³**, it safely treats the fraction of waste not suitable for recycling (the so-called residual waste) and takes pollutants out of the eco-cycle, thus being a sink for hazardous substances.

¹ *Article 4 of Directive 2008/98/EC on waste (the ‘Waste Framework Directive’)*

² *Communication on the role of Waste-to-Energy in the circular economy*

³ *For instance, see EuRIC Statement on issues stemming from the lack of capacity for ultimate residual waste*

It is also among the sectors with the most stringent pollutant emissions requirements under EU rules;

- **It diverts residual waste from landfills** where the waste would be lost as a resource and its organic fraction would emit methane, a greenhouse gas with a global warming potential 84 times more important than CO₂ in a 20-year time frame⁴;
- **It ensures the implementation of the EU landfilling target** of maximum 10% for municipal waste in 2035, as demonstrated in Member States with the most advanced recycling schemes. The combustion process is controlled with one of the most stringent EU regulations, guaranteeing therefore a minimised environmental impact.
- **It turns waste into energy** to produce heat, steam and electricity, which can substitute fossil fuels and meet citizens and businesses need for electricity when the wind does not blow and sun does not shine. The energy output from Waste-to-Energy plants is about 50% renewable, due to the organic portion of municipal residual waste;
- **It recovers valuable secondary raw materials** (e.g. metals and aggregates) clean and ready to be recycled in the economy, thus preventing carbon-intensive extraction and use of virgin materials. In line with the waste hierarchy, material recovery in Waste-to-Energy plants is complementary to prior separate collection and sorting⁵.

Because of its role in energy and material self-sufficiency in Europe, its complementarity with recycling and renewable energy, but also with other industries, Waste-to-Energy is one of the sectors involved in the transition towards a sustainable Europe.

We thus invite the Platform on Sustainable Finance to positively consider Waste-to-Energy and to assess under what conditions it can be considered as taxonomy-eligible.

⁴ See the *Working Group I contribution to the 5th assessment report of the IPCC*

⁵ *Articles 10 para. 4 and 11a para. 6 of Directive (EU) 2018/851 of 30 May 2018 amending Directive 2008/98/EC on waste (the 'Waste Framework Directive')*

THE SIGNATORIES

CEWEP (Confederation of European Waste-to-Energy Plants) is the umbrella association of the operators of Waste-to-Energy plants across Europe. CEWEP's members are committed to ensuring high environmental standards, achieving low emissions and maintaining state of the art energy production from remaining waste that cannot be recycled in a sustainable way.

www.cewep.eu



COGEN Europe, the European Association for the Promotion of Cogeneration, is the cross-sectoral voice of the cogeneration industry. Its mission is to work with EU institutions and stakeholders to shape better policies and eliminate administrative, regulatory and market barriers to the wider use of cogeneration in Europe. We have over 60 members: 13 national associations and 50 organisations spanning the entire value chain from technology manufacturers and users to consultancies.

www.cogeneurope.eu



Energy Cities is a network of 1,000 local governments in 30 countries. We believe that the energy transition is about more than renewable energy or great technologies: It is about a wise use of resources while strengthening local participation and well-being in a democratic Europe.

www.energy-cities.eu



Energy Technologies Europe represents the suppliers of energy conversion technologies. Members are located throughout Europe and are engineering cutting edge technologies contributing to a clean, secure, and affordable energy supply.

www.eteurope.eu



ESWET is a European association representing the European suppliers of Waste-to-Energy technologies, committed to foster the development and dissemination of Waste-to-Energy at the European level. ESWET also seeks to raise the awareness of the positive implications of the technology in terms of better waste management, energy and for the environment.

www.eswet.eu



Euroheat & Power is a unique network of district energy organisations and professionals, connecting industry players, decision-makers and academia in a joint effort to drive forward sustainable heating and cooling.

www.euroheat.org



European Aluminium, founded in 1981 and based in Brussels, is the voice of the aluminium industry in Europe. Our 80+ members include primary aluminium producers; downstream manufacturers of extruded, rolled and cast aluminium; producers of recycled aluminium and national aluminium associations are representing more than 600 plants in 30 European countries. Aluminium products are used in a wide range of markets, including automotive, transport, high-tech engineering, building, construction and packaging.

www.european-aluminium.eu



FEAD, the European Waste Management Association, represents the private waste and resource management industry across Europe. FEAD's members represent about 3,000 companies with activities in all forms of waste management, enabling the transition to a circular economy by producing resources which can be re-injected in the economy.

www.fead.be



Municipal Waste Europe is the European association which represents municipalities responsible for waste management and their publicly-owned waste management companies, promoting public responsibility for municipal waste management as a service of general interest. The members are national public waste associations and similar national or regional associations. They are committed to sustainable waste management that minimises environmental impact and promotes resource efficiency, taking into account local conditions.

www.municipalwasteurope.eu

