

Recommendation 1225 (1993)¹

Management, treatment, recycling and marketing of waste

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The constant increase in quantity and the harmfulness of waste have become major concerns of environmental policy and of efforts to improve the quality of life.
2. Since the increase is the consequence of production processes, marketing methods and consumption patterns, it has to be stressed that, without a major change in lifestyles, we face a dramatic and irreversible deterioration of the environment.
3. Under these circumstances, the Assembly considers that the concept of sustainable development, as defined in the work of the United Nations, particularly that of the Brundtland Commission, and reaffirmed at the Rio Conference, must form the basis of any waste management policy.
4. The Assembly therefore wishes to stress that the best way of solving the problem of waste is - first of all - to reduce the quantity produced, through a policy designed to change lifestyles, methods of production and consumer behaviour.
5. In this context, the Assembly draws attention to the importance of awareness and training programmes, undertaken in conjunction with local authorities, business and industry, nongovernmental organisations, consumer associations and the general public.
6. It is convinced that any waste management strategy must be based on the logical order of priorities, prevention - recovery - disposal, with reduction at source being the priority of priorities.
7. Programmes to promote waste recovery, and in particular recycling and the marketing of recycled products, should be established, so that waste disposal becomes the last resort in the waste management cycle.
8. The successful implementation of such a policy calls for a balanced range of regulations and financial incentives to stimulate industry to rethink the way it manufactures and packages products, in order to reduce the volume of waste and encourage distributors and consumers to opt for materials which can be recycled in complete safety.
9. In order to cope with the growing costs of waste treatment, the Assembly considers that the "polluter-pays" principle, which makes waste producers or holders responsible for meeting the real cost of its disposal, must be given statutory force.
10. The Assembly considers that there must be strict civil liability, which is objective and irrespective of any negligence on the part of the producers or holders, for any damage to the environment caused by waste.
11. It stresses the need for closer harmonisation of national legislation in this field, to establish the conditions for fair competition, thereby avoiding artificial flows of investment and waste towards countries where conditions are less onerous.

1. Assembly debate on 1 October 1993 (51st Sitting) (see [Doc. 6912](#), report of the Committee on the Environment, Regional Planning and Local Authorities, Rapporteur: Mr Ruffy; and [Doc. 6938](#), opinion of the Committee on Science and Technology, Rapporteur: Mr Roseta). Text adopted by the Assembly on 1 October 1993 (51st Sitting).



12. In this context, it notes the efforts made by the European Community, which may serve as a source of inspiration for the Council of Europe's other member states.
13. While continuing to be aware of the complexity of issues relating to responsibility in this area, it wishes to stress the key role played by territorial authorities, whether local or regional, in waste management.
14. Finally, the Assembly supports the strict control of transfrontier shipments of waste and reaffirms the principle of proximity in waste management, while at the same time emphasising the importance of active transfrontier co-operation in solving problems linked to waste treatment.
15. In this context, the Assembly reiterates the need to ensure that the countries of central and eastern Europe do not become a new destination for waste from the rest of Europe, on account of their less strict environmental regulations.
16. It therefore recommends that the Committee of Ministers:
 - 16.1. adopt the Additional Protocol to the European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities as soon as possible;
 - 16.2. invite the Steering Committee on Local and Regional Authorities to include studies of the role played by territorial authorities in waste management in its activities and to prepare models for practical solutions;
 - 16.3. ask the Standing Conference of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe to develop a training programme on issues relating to waste management, to be implemented within the framework of the European network of training centres for local and regional authority staff, part of which would be specifically aimed at the countries of central and eastern Europe;
 - 16.4. establish a special research programme to investigate waste treatment, recovery and recycling;
 - 16.5. invite the European Community to ratify the Basle Convention on the control of transboundary movements of hazardous wastes as soon as possible;
 - 16.6. invite the member states to:
 - a. implement national waste management plans in order to restrict waste production, encourage the introduction of appropriate collection and treatment systems and promote recovery and recycling;
 - b. promote research and development to devise technologies and ways of organising production which are better suited to the recovery of used materials; this can be achieved by introducing an analysis of the life-cycle of each raw material used in industry from the extraction stage to the recycling stage;
 - c. rapidly ratify the Basle Convention on the control of transboundary movements of hazardous wastes;
 - d. ratify, as soon as possible, the Council of Europe Convention on civil liability for damage resulting from activities dangerous to the environment;
 - e. develop scientific research into changes in storage sites for nuclear waste, giving preference to sites located in stable underground geological formations. The measures advocated in Assembly [Recommendation 847](#) remain relevant in this context.