



WASTE PREVENTION

On average European citizens produce 480kg of municipal solid waste per capita every year [1]. Yet this amount is less than 10% of the total waste generated in Europe if we include waste from economic activities. The total amount of waste produced every year is actually closer to 6 tonnes per person [2].

To tackle these gigantic amounts, the first step is to look at how some of this waste could be prevented and only afterwards examine what could be recycled. Simply put, the best way to deal with waste is not to produce it in the first place.

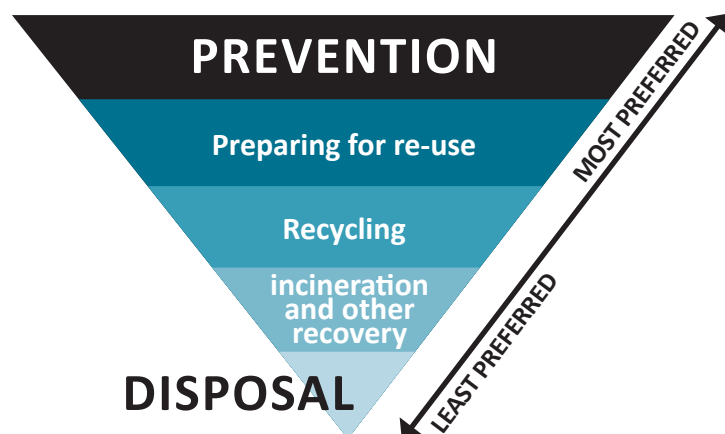
WHAT IS THE SITUATION?

Waste prevention has generally not been tackled as comprehensively as other steps in the waste treatment hierarchy. This is due to two main factors. First, prevention tends to result from a series of small-scale actions. Secondly, economic models based on reducing waste are mostly used in niche areas.

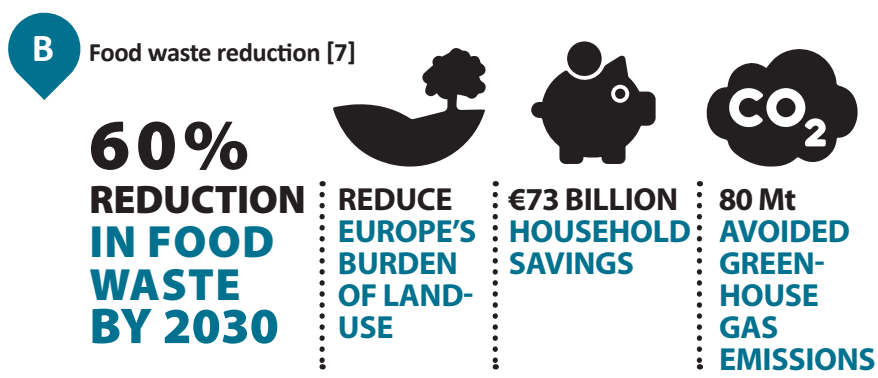
But since December 2012, EU member states are required to set up waste prevention programmes [3]. Efforts to turn Europe into a circular economy now offer the opportunity to set up a system of incentives and obligations to design waste out of the economy.

Prevention, through reuse, creates more jobs than recycling or waste disposal [4]. It also leads to fewer greenhouse gas emissions [5]. Defining reduction targets, using an EU-wide methodology for calculating waste reduction and the use of more economic incentives would lead to increased job numbers and reduced environmental impacts.

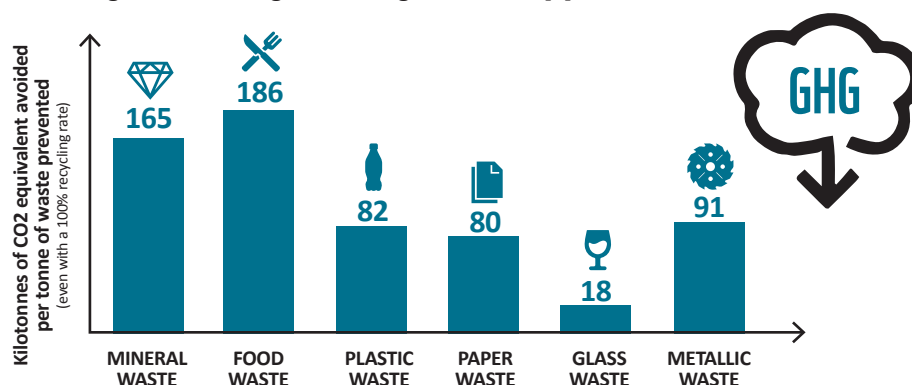
WASTE PREVENTION = REDUCING THE **AMOUNT OF GENERATED WASTE**



FACTS AND FIGURES



C Preventing waste slashes greenhouse gas emissions [8]



CASE STUDIES



Some Member States have already set prevention targets for themselves:



FRANCE wants to achieve 7% municipal solid waste generation less per capita by 2020 compared to 2010 [9]



ITALY wants to reduce non hazardous waste by 5% and hazardous waste by 10 % per unit of GDP by 2020 compared to 2010 [10]



Certain municipalities and regions have signed up to a zero waste goal and have managed to significantly reduce their municipal waste generation. The Gipuzkoa region in Spain has reduced its generation of waste by 7% over 4 years while Ljubljana has reduced its waste generation levels by 15% over 10 years [11].



POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- The Waste Framework Directive should include binding waste prevention targets for municipal and commercial waste at least for food waste
- Set specific objectives for preparation for reuse, distinct from recycling, for furnitures, textiles and electrical and electronic equipment, and ensure prior access to waste collection points to accredited reuse centres
- Agree on a set of prevention indicators to be deployed by all EU states as part of their national prevention programs
- Help the development of packaging-free goods and reusable packaging through tax rebates (e.g: use of VAT Directive)
- Set a marine litter prevention target based on a harmonised methodology to measure littering in marine environment
- Require waste prevention plans and industrial symbiosis activities in permitting industrial facilities
- Set minimum requirements and market incentives schemes (e.g rewards and penalties) for products placed on the European market to avoid waste generation (life extension, reparability...), beyond electrical and electronic products already covered by the Ecodesign Directive
- Allocate structural cohesion funding for waste management along the waste treatment hierarchy: more towards prevention than towards recycling, and none for landfill or incineration
- Support projects on waste prevention and resource conservation (e.g through EU funding available in Horizon2020), continue support for European Waste Prevention Week and move towards innovative business models and territorial approaches that promote waste prevention

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Zero Waste Europe – www.zerowasteurope.eu

Friends of the Earth Europe report – https://www.foeeurope.org/sites/default/files/resource_use/2015/preventing_waste_0.pdf

European Environmental Bureau: “Tips and advice on how to create an efficient waste prevention programme”

European Week for Waste Reduction – <http://www.ewwr.eu/en/project/main-features>



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