

German statement at CSD18 on waste management (6 May 2010)

Germany also wants to align itself with the EU statement. We would like to add some information from our national perspective.

The objective of the German government's policy on waste is to achieve a recycling-based economy that conserves resources and reduces adverse impacts on the environment. The aim is to increase and optimise the efficient use of raw materials, to maximise recycling and recovery quotas and to permanently remove from our environment any residual waste that can no longer be used. This will lead to a substance management within closed substance cycles, i.e. turning today's trash into tomorrow's treasure-trove. Activities on waste are part of the Federal Ministry for the Environment's action programme to increase the productivity of resources.

The main pillar of waste legislation in Germany is the Closed Substance Cycle and Waste Management Act. This act will be further developed by the end of 2010 on the basis of the new EU Waste Framework Directive in order to further strengthen waste prevention, recycling and recovery.

Modern waste policy in Germany has triggered the rapid evolution of recovery and disposal technologies – an important green market.

Glass, paper, old clothes, compost and biowaste, packaging, electrical and electronic waste, batteries, metal, bulky waste and hazardous waste from private households are collected separately in Germany before they are recycled. There has been a clear shift towards more recovery and recycling. The overall recovery rate is more than 70 percent.

The provisions on landfills in Germany are much stricter than required by the EU Landfill Directive. Since June 2005, residual waste from households and industry must be treated in such a way as to prevent biological conversion processes from occurring in landfills. This has led to a reduction of more than 30 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalents per year.

As regards the problems linked to the export of e-waste, we actively work at the international level, e.g. under the Basel Convention, and on national level. I would like to inform that the results of a research project on exports of e-waste from Germany have been published in March of this year. It contains a number of possible measures to progress on this issue.

German development policy supports a number of technical and financial assistance projects to further the environmentally sound management of wastes. In addition, the Federal Ministry for the Environment is conducting an initiative "Recycling and Efficiency Technologies" (RETech) in order to foster the transfer of German recycling and waste disposal technologies. Further information is available at www.retech-germany.net/english.