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Waste and climate change

Revision of the framework directive on waste

Waste is contributing to climate change depending on the way it is managed.

Disposal of biodegradable waste in landfills is very problematic, as it is a waste of resources and leads to the **release of the strong GHG methane** during the breakdown of organic matter.

Incineration of waste leads to emission of CO₂ and of an undefined cocktail of hazardous substances, it generates also large quantities of secondary residues, some of which are highly toxic and wastes the energy and raw material contained in the burned product.

Recycling and reuse however are generally climate friendly, as the emissions of the recycling or reuse process are offset by the reduction in fossil fuels that would be required to obtain new raw materials.

By far the best solution is waste prevention, i.e. to consume by producing less or even no waste.

Therefore **European waste policy must clearly focus on those first 3 steps of the five-level hierarchy, i.e. waste prevention, reuse and recycling** which have the lowest climate impact and save energy contrary to waste incineration and waste disposal in landfills.

See the commission's proposal on the revision of the framework directive on waste (pdf)

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