



New Guidance by the European Commission- Producing energy from waste as part of the EU circular economy strategy

Along with the published [EU Action Plan for the Circular Economy](#), the European Commission has uploaded a new guidance ([Waste to Energy Communication](#)) focusing on the production of energy from waste. This guidance document should encourage manufacturers and consumers to make the most out of raw materials, products and waste. It delivers advices on how to generate energy from waste that cannot be recycled or reused, but still be part of the Circular Economy strategy. Improving the efficiency of the waste to energy process will help to reduce massively greenhouse gas emissions in the waste sector.

Background to this publication

The European Commission had adopted an EU action plan on Circular Economy in December 2015 presenting a transformative agenda that offers huge growth potential aiming to fostering sustainability in consumption and production that goes in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The waste management sector still needs further improvements in terms of waste prevention, reuse and recycle patterns that are all stressed in both of the action plan and the legislative package on waste. Improving these key aspects can significantly open up new opportunities in the economy sector: better raw material supply to industry, create local jobs and supporting green technologies.

The aim of this communication paper is to ensure that energy from waste strategies supports the objectives of the circular economy action plan and should guide the EU waste hierarchy. It is also examining the role of waste to energy process can be optimised in meeting the objectives from the Energy Union and the Paris Agreements.

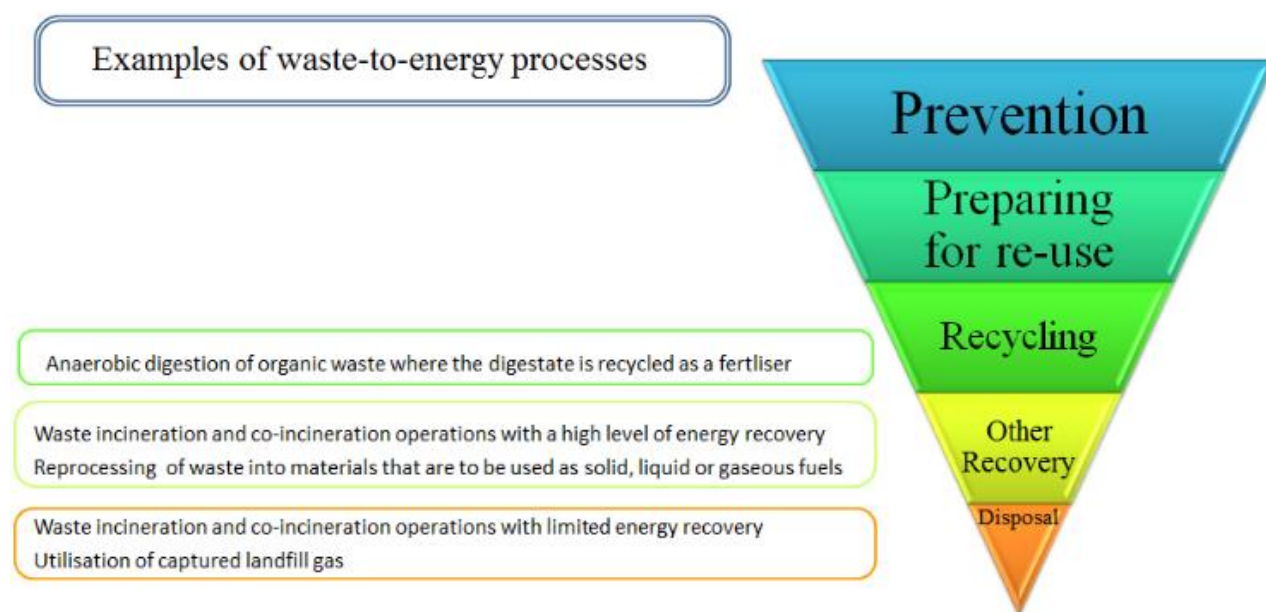
Communication Deliverables of the New Guidance

- Clarifies the different waste-to-energy processes in the waste hierarchy
- Provides Member States guidance on how to make better use of economic instruments and capacity planning
- Identifies and presents the newest technologies to optimise the energy-to-waste process.

The Waste Hierarchy and waste-to-energy processes

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This waste hierarchy (see below) is one of the main objectives used in the Action Plan for the Circular Economy. It shows when energy is recovering from waste (e.g by incinerating) it can conserve more energy and thus results fewer emissions than discarding waste as landfill. The European Commission is trying to deliver this message to the Member States and assists them with this guidance to adopt these methods. One very popular method is *anaerobic digestion*, which is a process that converts agricultural or urban organic waste to biogas and can be used as transport fuel and also for the heating and cooling sector and for power generation.



Source: European Commission, 2017

A very important aspect of this Waste Hierarchy is that it reflects as well the environmental and climate perspectives. By reducing waste, reuse and recycling, the Waste Hierarchy can help to assist to reduce massively the exhaustion of Greenhouse Gas emissions.

The Communication paper has published the following main waste-to-energy processes:

- Co-incineration of waste in combustion plants
- Anaerobic in incineration in dedicated facilities
- Anaerobic digestion from biodegradable waste
- Production of waste derived solid, liquid or gaseous fuels
- Processes including indirect incineration following a pyrolysis or gasification step
