



> **New focus on waste**

### WASTE PREVENTION – A TURNING POINT?

**Timo Mäkelä**, Director for Sustainable Development and Integration in DG Environment



**Caroline Jackson**, MEP and Rapporteur on the Waste Framework Directive  
Both participated in a seminar organised with CEPS in early June  
**see page 2**



> **New focus on biodiversity**

### GREEN WEEK

EU Commission Green Week on *Biodiversity is Life* and ACE's participation  
**see page 4**



## EU POLICIES ON RECYCLING AND PREVENTION OF WASTE



**EU policy should be firm on objectives but flexible about how to achieve them**

**The debate on the future of EU waste policy, and its overall objectives, is now gathering momentum. Since their simultaneous launch in December, the Commission's Thematic Strategy on Prevention and Recycling of Waste and the draft for a Revised Waste Framework Directive have been the prime focus of discussions.**

There have been two main highlights so far in discussions between EU policy-makers and stakeholders. The first concerns the existing Directive's hierarchy of waste treatment options, and whether greater flexibility is needed in applying it, so as better to achieve EU goals of reducing environmental impact. The second is the emerging importance given to the life-cycle approach in pre-

venting environmental impact, including waste impacts over the life of a product or material.



As these shifts occur, prevention is receiving more attention, leaving end-of-pipe waste strategies no

longer the single-minded focus of stakeholders and policy-makers. For example, recycling and other recovery options remain key tools for addressing environmental impact at the waste stage, but excessive allocation of scarce resources at this phase may neither be sustainable nor make sense against the overall objectives of reducing the amount of wastes going to landfill and, more generally, of environmental impact.

Reflecting this, EU policy should be firm on objectives but flexible about how to achieve them. In this sense, the EU waste hierarchy should be viewed as an indicative framework from which stakeholders can choose the best tools to reduce environmental impact along the life cycle.

## WASTE PREVENTION: EU STRATEGIES AT A TURNING POINT?

Organised jointly by ACE and CEPS<sup>1</sup>, a conference was held in early June on the EU's future policy on waste and environmental impact prevention. It provided a forum for a range of stakeholders to raise some key issues at a pivotal time for policy in this area.

The European Parliament and the Council of Ministers have begun preparing their views on the Thematic Strategy on the Prevention and Recycling of Waste and on the revision of the Waste Framework Directive – two proposals the Commission tabled in December. Revision of the Directive, to be jointly decided by the Parliament and the Council, will be a particularly significant landmark in one of the EU's most important environmental policy areas in the months to come.

Speakers included representatives of the three main EU policy-making institutions – Caroline Jackson MEP, the Parliament's rapporteur on the Waste Directive, Timo Mäkelä, director in the Commission's DG Environment and Michael Sebanz representing the Austrian presidency of the Council of Ministers. Melissa Shinn spoke for the European Environment Bureau, an environmental NGO. ACE president Erika Mink gave an industry perspective.

The EU waste hierarchy, life-cycle thinking and resource management were recurrent themes in an often lively debate.

### THE EU 5-STAGE WASTE HIERARCHY



<sup>1</sup> the Brussels-based Centre for European Policy Studies, [www.ceps.be](http://www.ceps.be)

## A view from the Commission: flexibly applied waste rules

"Waste policies are moving toward resource policies", said Mäkelä. Elaborating on this, he explained that "resource strategy has to go with sustainable development, which means sustainable production and consumption". Turning to the revision of the Waste Framework Directive, he said: "I want to make it clear that the waste hierarchy remains very much our guiding principle. But", he continued, "if there is an environmental justification to deviate from that, then that should be the reality".



*"With the new focus on prevention, we're not just talking about waste policy. We're looking right up the value chain"*

**Timo Mäkelä**, Director for Sustainable Development and Integration - DG Environment, European Commission

Stressing the contribution of life-cycle thinking to Commission strategies for reducing environmental impact, Mäkelä said: "We're explicitly aiming to use life-cycle thinking as part of our waste policies - but with the

new focus on prevention, we're not just talking about waste policy. We're looking right up the value chain".

## A view from the Parliament: how does flexibility work in practice?

Jackson addressed the life cycle issue, looking at the role of life cycle analysis (LCA). This was a welcome tool, she said, but there was still the question of how best it should be applied. "Many member states and outside interests would like to see the 5-stage hierarchy stay in place", she commented. "We have no objection to that, but then we need something that allows people to deviate from that on the basis of an LCA or whatever".



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**Caroline Jackson**, MEP  
Rapporteur on the Waste Framework Directive

"The question is", she continued, "if you need to apply to deviate from the hierarchy, who gives the permission to

proceed? The Commission is very good at tossing off these ideas, but we still have to make them work somehow".

## An NGO view: core indicators needed for prevention

On behalf of the EU Environment Bureau, Shinn spoke of some concern at the use of life cycle analyses. "We are a bit scared of these LCAs, because we think that the methodology is not mature and robust enough, and can be abused. By playing with key parameters, you can get any result you want", she said.

Turning to the role of prevention in any new policies, Shinn noted that each member state may have a dif-



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**Melissa Shinn**, Senior Policy Officer, Waste, Product Policy & Natural Resources - European Environmental Bureau

ferent view on what is important in the context of prevention and how prevention is to be measured. "We could have 25 different ways of

defining and measuring prevention. What we need are core indicators and guidance to see if progress is actually being made", she argued.

## An industry view: life cycle programmes on a sectoral basis

Addressing the life cycle issue, Mink stressed the importance of the role played by life cycle thinking in minimizing environmental impact in the beverage carton sector.

"Programmes for the reduction of environmental impact", she said, "could probably be mounted to best effect by concerted action on a sectoral basis."

"We believe the best solutions will be sector specific rather than regionally based", she said. "Voluntary life cycle programmes addressing environ-



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**Erika Mink**, Environment Director Europe, Tetra Pak

mental impact in a specific sector represent a less bureaucratic solution and could well be the best way of implementing a life-cycle approach".

achieving environmental benefits, rather than being used as an instrument to determine environmental policy.

More particularly, LCAs could play a very helpful supporting role in

For other ACE views, see box below.

## ACE'S VIEWS ON...

**WASTE HIERARCHY:** ACE believes a more flexible approach is needed to the waste hierarchy. Economic operators should be able to choose from a range of defined waste treatment options the method most appropriate to preventing environmental impact along the life cycle on a cost-effective basis.

**WASTE POLICY:** Clearer definitions are needed in EU waste policy of recycling, prevention, recovery and disposal.

**PREVENTION TARGETS:** Quantitative targets and plans set up at national or EU level risk being arbitrary or meaningless. This is because the amount of waste generated depends on a variety of factors, and their differing importance in different geographies and circumstances - e.g. the level of economic activity, demographic changes, technological innovation, lifestyle, etc.

**TOOLS FOR IMPLEMENTING LIFE-CYCLE APPROACH:** the life cycle approach enables measurement of the effectiveness of environmental action because it can be implemented by tools such as: LCAs (when carried out to ISO standards); Eco-design; Best Available Techniques as referenced in the EU's IPP Directive; product standards (e.g. CEN standards for packaging).

# Meet the Neighbours



## Working with Nature

The Nordic countries are home to some 40,000 species. And for many - like moose, woodpeckers, beavers and cloud-berries - home is the forest.

Forests that provide raw material for the beverage carton industry are responsibly

managed to maintain and renew the habitats of these and many other species.

The beverage carton industry actively supports policies and practices that ensure sustainable forest management and help protect biodiversity.

### FORTHCOMING EVENTS

> 20 September 2006

#### EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ROUNDTABLE

ACE to hold a Roundtable in the European Parliament on the Sustainable Forest Management Action Plan

### INDUSTRY NEWS

> June 2006

ACE board producer members Korsnäs and Frövi merged to become a single forestry product company specialising in packaging materials. The new company assumes a leading position in Europe in a number of areas.

For further information, please visit [www.korsnas.com](http://www.korsnas.com)

### ACE AND BIODIVERSITY AT GREEN WEEK 2006

*In order to preserve and restore biodiversity, EU Heads of State and Government have agreed to halt the loss of biodiversity by 2010. In line with this objective, the European Commission held its annual Green Week under the theme Biodiversity is Life at the end of May and invited NGOs, businesses, various levels of governance and the public to participate in the activities and debate on the topic.*

*ACE paperboard producers proactively cooperate with forest owners, local and national authorities and biologists in monitoring and evaluating the impact of forest operations on species and habitats enabling further refinement of the management of these resources and encouraging biodiversity.*

*Demonstrating members' contribution to biodiversity in Europe and the world, ACE's stand at the Green Week exhibition showcased some of the Alliance's work and included a number of interactive activities for visitors. Mr Olof Johansson of Sveaskog, a major supplier of wood to ACE paperboard producers in Sweden, also participated as panelist for the 19th session of the programme entitled "Biodiversity, the bottom line: Business and biodiversity".*



THE ALLIANCE FOR  
BEVERAGE CARTONS  
AND THE ENVIRONMENT

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ACE represents leading beverage carton packaging producers and their main European paperboard suppliers in EU environmental policy developments

### ACE MEMBERS

