Waste management: landfill

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Adopting the report by Mrs Caroline JACKSON (PPE,UK) the European Parliament took the view that the landfill of waste is the option of the last resort in the hierarchy of prevention, recovery, recycling and incineration and landfill. In order to strengthen the new directive, Parliament adopted amendments seeking to: - include in the scope of the directive risks for the global environment including the greenhouse effect; - calling on the Commission to table by the end of 1998 a directive on the incineration of non-hazardous waste in existing and new incinerators on the basis of strict standards for dioxins. - calling on the Commission to put forward by the end of 1998 a directive on composting and biomethanization, since it is ecologically more sensible to make compost and biogas from biodegradable waste than to landfill or incinerate it; - calling on the Council to adopt economic instruments such as a tax on waste going to landfill, such measures being the responsibility of the Member States in the absence of community measures; - calling for European legislation on the processing of dredging sludges; - proposing authorization for the disposal of whole tyres. Parliament also seeks to ensure that: - by 2002 biodegradable municipal waste is reduced to 75% of the total amount by weight of biodegradable municipal waste produced in 1993; - for Member States to submit a progress report to the Commission on each of the three stages (31/12/2002, 2005 and 2010). - for as long as a discharge is likely to cause a hazard to the environment, the operator of the site shall be responsible for monitoring and analysing landfill gas and leachate from the site for a period of at least 30 years after closure of the landfill; Finally, Parliament calls for the following criteria to be applied in order of importance with regard to landfill sites following the entry into force of the directive: - the existence of groundwater; - local geological and hydrogeological conditions; - the risk of flooding, subsidence, landslides or avalanches on the site; - protection of natural or cultural heritage and coastal and nature protection zones in the area; - the distances from the boundary of the site to residential areas which should be a minimum of 0.5 km in the case of municipal landfills and 2 km in the case of hazardous waste.