Incineration of waste

1998/0289(COD) - 14/04/1999 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

Adopting the report by Johannes Blokland (I-EDN,NL), the European Parliament considers that the incineration of hazardous and non-hazardous waste should be the subject of a single directive with common emission limit values. The directive should contribute to the achievement of the overall objective defined by European waste policy: prevention, recycling, incineration with energy use and final disposal. According to the adopted amendments, hazardous waste is defined in greater detail, in order that the incineration and treatment processes can be adapted. The definition of "coincineration plant" has been improved in order to to eliminate any possibility of escaping the legislation. Plants which thermally treat waste come under the directive, regardless of whether they only reduce the waste or not. The Parliament calls for more rigorous emission limit values than those proposed by the Commission, notably with regard to nitrous oxide (NOx), dust and ammonia. It demands that, in certain cases, yet more stringent standards than those set by the directive may be imposed for discharges into the atmosphere as for discharges into water. The Parliament requests that the issuing of permits for incineration plants should be subject to certain conditions (eg. the existence of a regional waste plan; the region has implemented other measures to reduce the volume of waste, systems for sorting and phasing out dangerous components and the introduction of pre-sorting). Furthermore, the issuing of new permits should be forbidden in regions where the environmental quality standards are in danger of being exceeded. The Parliament insists that plants which become operational after 31/12/2003 should seek to recover the heat generated during the incineration process as far as possible, namely by means of combined heat and power generation, the generating of process steam or district heating.