

FUTURISTIC LOOK FOR FEAD



(Above): FEAD delegates visited the trial Zenrobotics sorting facility in Helsinki, (left) FEAD president Peter Werth with Hannele Pokka, permanent secretary at the Finnish ministry of the environment at the conference

The public sector should not be given any advantages in competing with the private sector

– Pirjo Rytkonen, Finland

Fair play between councils and industry and future EU aspirations were discussed at this year's FEAD conference in Helsinki. Steve Emlinton reports

It was celebration time for Europe's waste management industry as its pan-European trade association, FEAD, celebrated a 30th anniversary at its annual conference in Helsinki at the end of September. Delegates spent the conference looking forward to what the European Commission is proposing and to a possible future with robots sorting waste materials. A visit was made to a Zenrobotics trial using robotic sorting at a SITA facility. Later in the day a dinner and river cruise were held with the dinner address given by Norbert Rethmann, second president of FEAD.

The following day, September 30, saw the conference sessions start with a welcome

from FEAD president Peter Werth and Pirjo Rytkonen, president of the Finnish Association of Environmental Enterprises.

Mrs Rytkonen explained how Finland is preparing to implement the revised Waste Framework Directive with a new Waste Act coming into force in May 2012.

Mrs Rytkonen reflected a theme among some member associations of FEAD that the public sector should not be given any advantages in competing with the private sector and nor should unnecessary burdens be placed on the private sector.

"The legislation will not create any extra or unnecessary demands," said Mrs Rytkonen. "This has been a key

topic in Finland. We have to take care of environmental aspects but we don't want a bureaucratic system. There is a market economy and should be no exclusive rights to the public sector.

"We have similar problems to Germany, about packaging waste, how municipalities want to take care of that as well. That is why our organisation – FEAD – should make sure this doesn't happen in Europe."

The Finnish government was represented by Hannele Pokka, permanent secretary at the Finnish ministry of the environment. She noted that global warming changes could be seen in Finland. "Autumns are warmer, summers are hot, winters are

very cold like Siberia and even Lapland is warmer during the year.”

Mrs Pokka spoke of the need to see materials as a resource including those found in electronic waste and argued that the time may come to recover metals from landfills. She said: “This may contain more valuable metals than are found naturally. These wastes and discarded modern waste in landfill contain modern resources. So, landfills may be seen as resource banks, especially for metals.”

The FEAD event had substantial input from the European Commission’s environment division. While the Commissioner for the Environment, Janez Potocnik, did not attend in person, he chose to give a video message in which he emphasised the importance of treating waste as a resource and highlighted the need to move to a resource efficient Europe.

He said: “Under the Roadmap for a Resource Efficient Europe, effective waste management will have a central role. I believe that we will have moved close to a resource efficient society when landfilling is reduced to virtually zero, when we only bury the residues of the residues and when energy recovery is limited to non-recyclable materials. We will only achieve these kinds of targets if we get to the stage where waste is considered as a valuable resources. That is our challenge, but I know that it is possible. Why, because it is already starting to happen

The Commission will need the support of FEAD to achieve its aims – Commissioner Potocnik

– recycling of municipal waste has doubled in the last 10 years and landfilling has reduced from 62% to 40%.”

Mr Potocnik said the EU will need the support of FEAD to achieve its aims. “We will certainly need your experience and also your engagement. We will need it in supporting full implementation of our waste legislation, particularly the new Waste Framework Directive, so that we can climb further up the waste hierarchy. We will need it to push our ambitions further, as we start to review targets for prevention, reuse and recycling and for landfill diversion. We will need it to help deliver on the higher collection targets we are pushing already for waste electrical and electronic equipment.”

Peter Kurth, the current FEAD president, welcomed Rosalinde van der Vlies, deputy head of waste management unit at the DG Environment, for more detail about the topics which Mr Potocnik had touched on.

In a lively and creative presentation, Mrs van der Vlies said: “We are all in this together. It all boils down to preserving the beautiful planet we are living on, there is no Planet B, or at least not yet.”

The Commission official referred to the

Roadmap which had three priorities, five targets and seven flagships. “The priorities are for smart growth, sustainable growth and inclusive growth,” she said. “The targets include 75% employment by 2020, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 20% and similarly to increase recycling efficiencies and use of renewable energy to 20%. Also there is a reduction of poverty now affecting 80 million people reducing to 20 million.”

And, Mrs van der Vlies added that the “beauty of the 2020 strategy is that these targets have been transferred to national governments, it is not a top down approach.”

She continued: “There is a growing demand for resources, and we see this in increased prices. We have to be more efficient with what we have. Resource efficiency basically boils down to sustainability, it is very important that we take a lifecycle perspective, not just at one stage as end of life but through the lifecycle of the product.

“Why is this all relevant to waste? The whole political attention on resource efficiency has created a new momentum for waste policies.”

She explained that in terms of waste objectives, this was an important policy area with the Commission seeking the use of waste as resources. “There are two angles to it, very strict and clear. There is the application of the waste hierarchy, landfilling reduce to nearly zero and energy recover of non-recyclable waste. And, the new roadmap, will develop an indicator for the proportion of secondary raw materials used in the EU economy on the production of new products. Our intention is to put forward proposals in 2014.”

On reuse and recycling, Mrs van der Vlies said that there will be a review of existing targets to be raised to their “maximum feasible level”. And there will be new targets for other waste streams, likely in 2014. “In 2014 there will also be a review of the landfill diversion target and for the diversion of other waste streams.”

The official emphasised that there is a “need for synergies between product policies on the one hand and waste policies on the other.”

Separately, the Commission, she said,

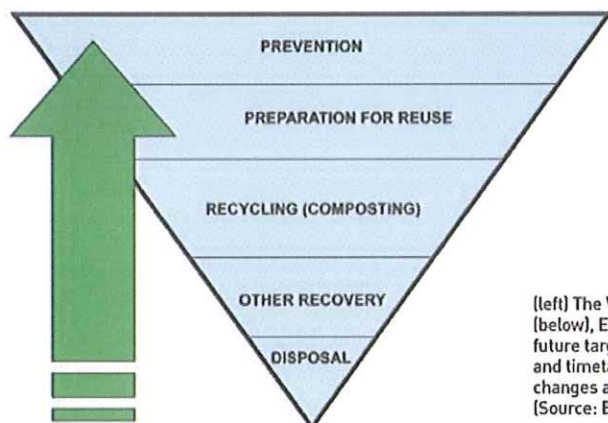
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(left and below right) Conference venue was the Hilton Hotel; (below) MEP Riika Manner; and (below left) FEAD vice president Mike Helligs with Rosalinde van der Vlies



Towards a resource-efficient recycling society



(left) The Waste Hierarchy and (below), European Commission future targets and milestones and timetable of legislative changes and proposals (Source: EU Commission)



Christophe Cros: called for common tool for data

And, Mr Cros also called for the Commission to try to produce common tools for analysis of data and waste performance. "There is a need for common tools for analysis. We debate about important topics but often in a void of comparable data."

He also queried rules about recycling, saying that SITA had to import used PET bottles from Mexico for use at its European PET facility. There was a demand for recycled content but he queried whether the carbon footprint of importing the bottles from Mexico was ok.

"Beware of the immediate zero waste dream," said Mr Cros, "always be very wary". He claimed that the waste industry is very comfortable with the concept but care had to be taken to stop there being zero waste in one place, but not zero elsewhere as a result.

"It is very legitimate, you can increase taxes, bans – you can ban everything you want and will open the door to illegal shipments."

The final session of the conference was chaired by Mike Hellings, a FEAD vice president and managing director of Viridor. He welcomed back Mrs van der Vlies for a separate presentation on developments in waste legislation.

This saw her confirm that the Commission intended to be more ambitious on recycling targets, including for waste electrical and electronic equipment and ensuring member states met the landfill directive.

She noted that 13 member states were not conforming with the landfill directive and this was a priority area for the Commission. Paper recycling was very positive at 72.2%

On WEEE, she said: "Electrical waste has been identified as a very important waste stream, only 10 countries have made the 4kg targets per year."

And, she expressed surprise how member states had not seemed very keen to increase the targets. "The Commission's thoughts are to be more ambitious. It is very important to increase this recycling in terms of resource efficiency and we are surprised at the reluctance in member states."

One of the proposals was to make producers responsible for collection which would have meant that WEEE was properly treated, said Mrs van der Vlies. There was now a debate between Parliament and the Commission on WEEE and she said that she was confident that there will be more ambitious targets.

FUTURE TARGETS AND MILESTONES

WASTE PREVENTION

→ A MILESTONE OR TARGET WILL BE CONSIDERED FOR THE REDUCTION OF WASTE GENERATED BY 2020

REUSE AND RECYCLING

→ REVIEW OF EXISTING TARGETS TO BE RAISED TO THEIR MAXIMUM FEASIBLE LEVEL.

→ NEW TARGETS FOR OTHER WASTE STREAMS WILL LIKELY BE PROPOSED IN 2014;

→ REVIEW OF THE EXISTING LANDFILL DIVERSION TARGET AND NEW DIVERSION TARGETS FOR OTHER WASTE STREAMS WILL LIKELY BE PROPOSED IN 2014.

TIMETABLE

2011/2012 PROPOSALS FOR STRENGTHENED WASTE SHIPMENT INSPECTION REQUIREMENTS

2012 PROPOSALS FOR ECODSIGN MEASURES AND EXTENDED PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY

2012 FITNESS CHECK OF SPECIFIC RECYCLING DIRECTIVES

2013/2014 ECONOMIC INCENTIVES AND END OF WASTE CRITERIA

2014 PROPOSAL FOR NEW RECYCLING AND LANDFILL DIVERSION TARGETS

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wants to change the direction of EU public money in the waste and recycling sector to being spent on activities featuring highly on the Waste Framework – "it has not always been like this", she remarked.

A response to the presentation by Mrs van der Vlies, came from Rikka Manner, a Finland Liberal Democrat MEP, who is a substitute member of the Environment Committee working with Dutch MEP Gerben-Jan Gerbrandy, the Parliament Rapporteur on the Roadmap.

Ms Manner said that it was not just Europe but the whole world which needed to make more efficient use of resources. And she pointed out that the Roadmap is not yet a legally binding proposal.

A waste management industry perspective came from Christophe Cros, who has responsibility for SITA's worldwide waste activities for parent Suez Environnement, and

who is also director general of SITA France.

He warned that the UK could be exporting its waste "problem" to Europe through the export of refused-derived fuel and explained that waste management in the UK had in the past been below average.

Mr Cros said: "Now the UK is one of the most ambitious in Europe, today seeking to divert material from landfill with PFI, LATS, and significant increases in tax. But the timeline is a very significant problem, you need time to build those facilities for waste management."

And, he added a warning that simply exporting waste for incineration on the continent was running counter to the concept of the proximity principle of handling waste near to where it arises.

Mr Cros remarked: "There is a growing flow of waste to R1 incinerators on the continent, a temptation to export your problem to another place – there is a proximity principle and we should bear that in mind."