PRESS RELEASE

12th June 2019

Achieved Circular Economy Targets Will Leave 40 Million Tonnes Residual Waste Gap in 2035

New peer reviewed CEWEP calculations show that 142 million tonnes of residual waste treatment capacity will be needed by 2035 in order to fulfil the currently set EU targets on municipal waste and assuming that ambitious recycling targets will be achieved for commercial and industrial waste. Current Waste-to-Energy capacity is 90 million tonnes and the capacity for co-incineration is approximately 11 million tonnes. This leaves a gap of around 40 million tonnes.

"The transition towards a circular economy is only just beginning. Today, a quarter of the EU's municipal waste is still landfilled. Less than half of municipal waste is recycled or composted. The new municipal waste recycling targets alone will not solve these issues. European Waste-to-Energy plants are running at full capacity. We will have a residual waste treatment crisis that will result in open fires, illegal shipments and dumping unless we act. I would like to invite the decisionmakers and all other stakeholders for a dialogue on this topic. We need to work together to find the most sustainable solution for this issue", says Paul De Bruycker, the President of CEWEP.

CEWEP believes it is crucial to ensure the security of residual waste treatment in order to enable a clean circular economy. Waste-to-Energy contributes to decontamination of the cycle by treating residual waste, e.g.:

- sanitary waste items that need to be treated in a hygienic way;
- plastics and many other waste streams that contain substances of concern: phthalates, brominated flame retardants, other persistent organic pollutants, heavy metals;
- rejects from sorting and recycling facilities: parts of the waste that are of lower quality (for example degraded material that has already been recycled several times), dirty or mixed and therefore impossible to recycle;
- residual waste remaining after separate collection.

These waste streams should not be returned to the resources cycle.

The calculation was made by CEWEP and peer reviewed by Prognos.

More information.

An interactive tool of the calculation will be uploaded to CEWEP website soon!

For further information, please contact CEWEP (info@cewep.eu), tel. +32 2 770 63 11

CEWEP (Confederation of European Waste-to-Energy Plants) is the umbrella association of the operators of Waste-to-Energy plants across Europe. CEWEP's members are committed to ensuring high environmental standards, achieving low emissions and maintaining state of the art energy production from remaining waste that cannot be recycled in a sustainable way.