

## Position paper

### Situation in Slovak Republic

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#### ***General situation***

Per capita production of municipal waste in Slovak republic is one of the lowest in frame of EU, but on the other hand – rate of recycling and reuse is also one of the lowest in EU. Communal waste production in 2013 was 1,74 million tons which means 325,25 kg per capita in Slovakia with population of 5,4 million. Amount of waste production is continually rising; especially share of organic waste (45%) and plastics (about 7 % of total amount). Share of other items: paper (20%), glass (12%), textiles and metals (4%) and hazardous waste (1%). In 2013 the Slovaks collected by separated waste collection 64,000 tons of paper and cardboard, 48,890 tonnes of glass, 29,000 tons of plastics, 105 500 tons of biodegradable waste and 7,850 tons of electronic waste. The biggest fall was recorded in the separate collection of metals, which fell by more than 57 % to 5,200 tons. Total amount of packaging waste was 463 613 ton in 2014. Share of separated packaging was 17,69 kg per capita in 2014.

#### ***Landfills***

Long-term negative trend in waste management in Slovakia is landfilling up to 76% of municipal waste (1.3 million tons) in 2014. This number is in fact even higher, due to big amount of waste located in illegal waste dumps. Apart from managed landfills, there are thousands of illegal waste dumps around Slovakia as a long term unsolved problem. In 2012 was put into operation TrashOut mobile application was created with an immodest goal "to locate and report all illegal landfills." This system has localized 2018 illegal dumps regardless of their size in 2014. However, the real number is much higher. This system is in fact not supported by legislation and in spite of big investments, there has been not achieved any important reduction of this illegal waste dumps. Therefore, this system is criticized by civil sector as a waste of money.

#### ***Incineration***

In 2013 55 000 tons of waste was incinerated without energy recovery and with energy production only 3% was from total amount - about 300 000 tons of waste per year.

There are about 100 large communal waste disposals and 2 big, and 5 medium size incinerator plants and 5 „other” utilizers of waste as a source of energy (mostly cement kilns) with not defined capacity of burned waste.

In spite of that, there is a strong criticism from part of enterprises that EU is „not supporting incinerator plants” as the „best way of waste management and energy production“.

Concerning the share of recycled communal waste and composted waste, there is a contradiction between information of Eurostat (12% of recycled communal waste and composted waste) and information of Ministry of Environment (MoE) of Slovakia (more than 20% of recycled communal waste and composted waste). Following the statement of MoE, share of recycling has raised from 10,3% (2014) to 20,11% (2015). Validity of this statement is questionable.

Following the most optimistic calculations of Eurostat, Slovakia will achieve by 2020 only about 20% recycling rate.

Waste management is the municipalities' responsibility. EEA pointed out that in Slovakia there is no landfill tax, but the municipalities pay for the storage of garbage in a landfill which is around €10 per ton of unseparated waste and € 13.20 per ton of biodegradable waste. Fee is charged in the municipality where the landfill is located, and this income can be used to support investments in waste management. Existing infrastructure for recycling, according to the agency is sufficient, but separate collection systems need to be further improved.

### ***Recycling***

Separate collection rate is very low: according to Slovak statistics it is 8% and to EUROSTAT only 6%! Total proportion of separated waste represents about 27 kg per capita, but not all of this separated waste is recycled or reused – for example, part of separated plastics and paper are burned in incinerator plants. Annually an average if only about 190 thousand tons of waste is recycled (2013). According to the report Euroactiv, due to the unclear system it is currently not possible to adequately control the flow of waste. According to several experts, Slovakia still separates less waste than declared.

Slovakia as EU Member State must take measures to promote recycling and to this end ensure efficient assorted garbage. At present the obligation for municipalities is to introduce and ensure implementation of separate collection of paper, plastic, metal, glass and biodegradable fraction of municipal waste.

Despite this, separate collection is inadequate and in many municipalities this obligation is not met. If Slovakia wants to achieve by 2020 a 50% rate of recycling, it is necessary to create an effective system of separate collection.

To meet recycling targets, the level of separate collection must move at least up to the level of 150-170 kg per capita, which will be very difficult to meet up to 2020.

### ***Legislation***

In order to reduce consumption of plastic bags in Slovakia, Ministry of Environment prepared the amendment to the Waste Act, which came into force on 01.07.2016.

In Slovakia, annually eight billion plastic bags end up in waste, and per capita annual consumption is 466 bags, while the average consumption in the EU is only about 200 bags per citizen. For plastic bags in shops it will be mandatory to pay from March 2017 and only pastry bags will be free of charge. Plastic bags will be identified by a bar code and accurately recorded, and this evidence will be reported to MoE. Sellers will also have to provide consumers with other kinds of bags or reusable bags.

### ***Assumptions***

Some basic problems of the waste management system not supporting circular economy:

- Part of separated plastic and paper is burned in incinerators.
- There is no motivation for those who consistently separate waste and reduce its amount.
- Illegal landfills are around the whole country, and there is nothing like environmental police.
- For storing tires or construction waste, fee is paid, so it is often thrown to illegal landfills.
- With the exception of beer bottles there is no take-back system.
- Buying up of PET bottles or cans of beverages is not working.
- Circular economy is taken by many enterprises as only another “Magic formula” for obtaining EU funds.

Municipalities should encourage their citizens to create as little waste as possible by:

- A fair system of charges for waste based on pay-as-you-throw principle - people would have an incentive to reduce the amount of waste, because the waste fee would be proportional to the actual production of waste.
- Building of Reuse Centers for collection of products and materials transmitted to individuals and legal entities (e.g. through charities, where people can bring worn clothing, which then distributes socially weaker).
- Support of development of “Repair café” type places. In these centers there may be brought things (clothes, appliances, furniture, books, toys) repaired and offered to sell or donate to the socially marginalized groups.
- Support of distribution of unsold food to poor people.
- Support of local enterprises to use local sources, to distribute their products locally and to reduce their waste production.

Cities and municipalities must not forget education and therefore should at least annually publish and distribute information materials to citizens with specific advices how to avoid unnecessary waste generation, etc.

In fact, these solutions are promoted and realised in many cases only by NGOs through activities as Food not bombs, Exchange (bourse) of clothes, shoes, books, consumer goods, electronics and other things, Repair Cafés, distribution of unused food, etc. Environmental

education on waste reduction and separation are also realised in most of cases by NGOs. The sad reality is that these organizations have almost no financial or material support from governmental sources.