



24.7.2020

NOTICE TO MEMBERS

Subject: Petition No 0451/2020 by Erika Baldin (Italian) on the controversial expansion of a waste incinerator in Venice during COVID-19 pandemic

1. Summary of petition

The petitioner expresses concern about the imminent approval by the regional authorities of a project aiming at expanding a waste management plant located in Fusina (Venice). The extension of this waste management plant would increase the production capacity for the processing of residual urban waste aimed at the production of secondary solid fuel, which would grow from the current 258,500 t/ year to 450,000 t/ year. In her opinion, the current and future production of residual urban waste in the region does not justify the need for a plant of these proportions, taking also into account that the urban waste generation significantly decreased as a result of the COVID-19 emergency measures, which are restricting and will continue to restrict many economic activities over the coming months. In addition, the petitioner claims that the implementation of such project would be in breach of Articles 4 and 13 of the Waste Framework Directive 2008/98/EC. According to the petitioner, the current restrictions on citizens' freedoms of assembly and demonstration prevent citizens and environmental associations from taking any public initiative against this project. For these reasons, citizens and associations have asked for the authorisation procedure to be suspended for at least one year.

2. Admissibility

Declared admissible on 27 May 2020. Information requested from Commission under Rule 227(6).

3. Commission reply, received on 24 July 2020

Decisions on waste management and on the appropriate installations and their capacity are to be taken by the competent authorities in compliance with the relevant EU legislation, including

the EU waste hierarchy as set out in Article 4 of Directive 2008/98/EC¹ on waste.

In line with the waste hierarchy, energy recovery processes for non-recyclable waste are allowed. To this end, the competent authorities are called to take into consideration in their decisions the Commission's Communication on the role of waste to energy in the circular economy², adopted in 2017.

Following the latest revision of the EU waste legislation in 2018, Member States are requested to submit to the Commission their waste management plans and waste prevention programmes in line with the new objectives and targets set out in that legislation.

Conclusion

Based on the information provided by the petitioner, the Commission cannot detect a violation of EU waste legislation.

¹ Directive 2008/98/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 November 2008 on waste and repealing certain Directives (Text with EEA relevance), *OJ L 312*, 22.11.2008, p. 3–30.

² COM(2017) 34 final.