

(English version)

**Priority question for written answer P-001372/24
to the Commission
Andreas Schwab (PPE)
(17 July 2024)**

Subject: Guidance on waste heat from the Commission

In the context of the energy transition, the efficient use of waste heat is important in achieving our climate targets.

Waste-to-energy (WtE) plants are essential in all countries with developed waste management systems. To transform to a climate-neutral energy supply, it is crucial to have a clear understanding of the waste heat that is generated during the thermal use of unavoidable waste.

We therefore turn to the Commission to ask for clarification on the EU guidelines on waste heat from thermal waste use:

1. How does the Commission assess the sustainability of heat and electricity from WtE plants and what measures does it plan to take to encourage investment in these technologies?
2. What measures does the Commission plan to take to encourage the WtE sector, as a point source of CO₂ emissions and potential carbon sink, to invest in carbon capture, utilisation and storage?
3. How does the Commission plan to establish a uniform definition of waste heat, and will heat from the non-alternative thermal treatment of non-recyclable and unavoidable waste be considered as waste heat from sustainable processes?

Supporter ⁽¹⁾

Submitted: 17.7.2024

**Answer given by Ms Simson on behalf of the European Commission
(16 September 2024)**

Energy from Waste-to-energy (WtE) is considered sustainable if the biogenic waste meets the criteria set in Article 29 of the Renewable Energy Directive (RED) and the Waste hierarchy ⁽¹⁾.

RED also states that Member States shall not grant direct financial support for the production of renewable energy from waste incineration (WI) unless the separate collection obligations in the Waste Framework Directive have been complied with ⁽²⁾.

The EU Taxonomy Environmental Delegated Act includes the activity ‘Treatment of hazardous waste’ which includes the incineration of non-recyclable hazardous waste.

The Commission, based on the recommendations of the Platform on Sustainable Finance, will assess in due course, which new activities could be added to the Taxonomy.

The Commission will assess the feasibility of including municipal WI installations and other waste management processes, notably landfilling, in the EU Emissions Trading System (ETS) by July 2026 in accordance with the ETS Directive ⁽³⁾.

In the ETS, allowances do not need to be surrendered for emissions that are captured and stored permanently. Under the Carbon Removals Certification Framework ⁽⁴⁾, the biogenic emissions from WtE, if combined with carbon capture and storage, could potentially benefit from the certification, whenever the quality criteria set by the regulation are met. The respective certification methodology is being developed.

¹ This question is supported by a Member other than the author: Dennis Radtke (PPE)

⁽¹⁾ Article 3(3) of Directive (EU) 2018/2001, as amended by Directive (EU) 2023/2413 (RED III), https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:L_202302413, and Article 4 of Directive 2008/98/EC, as amended by Directive (EU) 2018/851, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A02008L0098-20180705>, ‘the Waste Framework Directive’.

⁽²⁾ Article 3c.b) of Directive (EU) 2018/2001, as amended by Directive (EU) 2023/2413 (RED III).

⁽³⁾ Directive (EU) 2023/959 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 May 2023 amending Directive 2003/87/EC establishing a system for greenhouse gas emission allowance trading within the Union and Decision (EU) 2015/1814 concerning the establishment and operation of a market stability reserve for the Union greenhouse gas emission trading system.

⁽⁴⁾ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2014_2019/plmrep/COMMITTEES/ENVI/DV/2024/03-11/Item9-Provisionalagreement-CFCR_2022-0394COD_EN.pdf

The 2018 RED ⁽⁶⁾ already contained a definition of waste heat for the purposes of the relevant rules contained therein. The Commission is now working on a guidance document to help Member States implement the heating and cooling measures included in the revised RED, including on the application of the waste heat definition.

⁽⁶⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32018L2001>