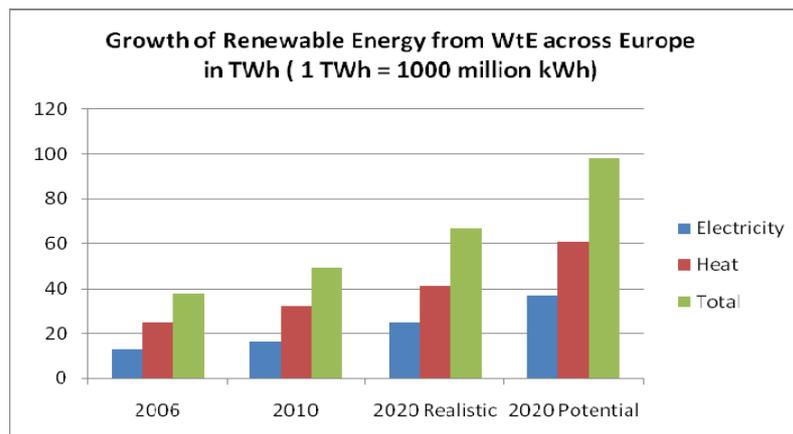


## Press release

### Waste-to-Energy – low hanging fruit for Copenhagen

“Waste offers a significant source of renewable energy. Incineration and other thermal processes for waste-to-energy, landfill gas recovery and utilisation, and use of anaerobic digester biogas can play important roles in reducing fossil fuel consumption and greenhouse gas emissions”. This is one of the key messages of the International Solid Waste Association’s (ISWA) white paper “Waste and Climate Change” with regard to the COP15 meeting in December 2009 in Copenhagen.

Waste-to-Energy (incineration with energy recovery) provides by far the largest quantity of renewable energy from waste. Waste-to-Energy supplies in Europe a considerable amount of renewable energy, some 38 billion kilowatt-hours in 2006, and by 2020 this amount will grow to at least 67 billion kilowatt-hours, but potentially reach 98 billion kilowatt-hours. This will be, in the latter case, enough to supply 22.9 million inhabitants with renewable electricity and 12.1 million inhabitants with renewable heat<sup>1</sup>.



In fact, Waste-to-Energy plants produce TWICE this amount of energy as their energy output is estimated to be about 50% Renewable. According to the European Directive on Renewable Energy Sources the biodegradable fraction of municipal and industrial waste is considered biomass, thus a renewable energy source.

Waste-to-Energy’s share of the Total Renewable Energy produced by a country can be significant as it was shown during 2006 for the following countries:

The Netherlands (14.3 %), Belgium (13.3 %), Denmark (12.5 %), Germany (7.5 %). Also in Sweden and France Waste-to-Energy makes a considerable contribution and has a substantial potential.

***Last but not least Waste-to-Energy is a cost-effective and reliable sustainable energy source.***

<sup>1</sup> Based on the assumption that electricity demand per capita equals 1.62 MWh/capita/yr and heat demand per capita equals 5.03 MWh/capita/yr.



## Policy recommendations

Waste-to-Energy can make a significant contribution to achieving renewable energy targets, ensuring security of energy supply as well as treating waste that is not otherwise recyclable in an environmentally sound way. In order to improve the contribution Waste-to-Energy can make towards climate protection, we recommend the following to decision makers:

- **Diverting waste from landfills** - burying waste means wasting precious energy. The EU Landfill Directive is a good tool to protect the climate, but it must be implemented properly. It is worth noting that some countries have gone further and reduced dependence on landfills dramatically (below 5%) using a combination of Recycling and Waste-to-Energy (Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, Sweden, Denmark).

- **Policies to foster Energy Efficiency** - European policy focuses on the generation of renewable energy. However, distribution is also a key element in order to improve energy efficiency, reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and ensure security of energy supply. There is a major opportunity to use even more energy from waste in the form of heat, if the appropriate linking of heat customers to Waste-to-Energy plants would be encouraged. Therefore we need drivers for improving **infrastructure for district heating and cooling** in addition to **incentives to maximize electricity production from waste**.

- **Electricity grid access – Waste-to-Energy plants should not be put at a disadvantage in comparison to other renewable energy sources.**

- **Recognise that energy from Waste-to-Energy plants is - at least in part - a renewable energy source** (about 50%) as the European Directive on Renewable Energy Sources' definition of biomass includes the biodegradable part of municipal and industrial waste.

For further information, please contact

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CEWEP (Confederation of European Waste-to- Energy Plants) represents about 380 Waste-to-Energy Plants across Europe. They thermally treat household and similar waste that remains after waste prevention, reuse and recycling by generating energy from it. This is how they replace fossil fuels, such as coal, gas and oil, used by conventional power plants. At the same time Waste-to-Energy plants help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by diverting waste from landfills.