

## European Commission - Press release

Environment: Commission urges Italy to ensure adequate pre-treatment of waste landfilled in Rome  
Brussels, 31 May – The European Commission is asking Italy to comply with the requirements of EU landfill legislation in Rome. Due to a narrow interpretation of what constitutes sufficient pre-treatment of waste by the Italian authorities, the Malagrotta landfill in the Lazio region contains waste that has not undergone the required pre-treatment, and the Commission is concerned that this might also be the case for other landfills in Lazio. Landfills operating in breach of EU waste legislation constitute a serious threat to human health and the environment. On the recommendation of Environment Commissioner Janez Potočnik, the Commission is sending a reasoned opinion and asking Italy to comply within two months. If it fails to do so the Commission may decide to refer the case to the EU Court of Justice.

The [Landfill Directive](#) stipulates that waste must be treated before it is landfilled. This means it has to undergo physical, thermal, chemical or biological processes, including sorting, to reduce its volume and hazardous nature, facilitating handling and recovery.

An EU Pilot investigation revealed that in the Malagrotta landfill, and possibly in other Lazio landfills, some waste is landfilled without being treated. The waste management plan for the Lazio region adopted in January 2012 contains inconsistencies between the mechanical-biological treatment capacity in Lazio and the amount of waste produced in the region. The deficit in capacity amounts to 126.891 tonnes per year in the nearby Latina province and over a million tonnes per year in the Rome province. Consequently a significant amount of waste is landfilled without undergoing an adequate treatment.

The Commission sent a letter of formal notice on 17 June 2011. The Italian authorities consider that the waste landfilled in Malagrotta should be considered as treated as it is crushed before being landfilled. According to the Commission, however, merely crushing or shredding unsorted waste prior to landfilling is not sufficient as waste needs mechanical-biological treatment to stabilise its organic content, a process designed to reduce possible pollution. The Commission is concerned that not all of the waste that ends up in the landfills has undergone the mechanical-biological treatment required.

The Commission is also concerned that the Italian authorities are not taking sufficient measures to reduce possible negative effects on the environment and any risk to human health in accordance with the [Waste Framework Directive](#). It is therefore sending a reasoned opinion giving Italy two months to reply.

### Background

Directive 99/31/EC on the landfill of waste is a key instrument to prevent or reduce as far as possible negative effects on the environment from landfilling of waste, during the whole life-cycle of the landfill. According to the Landfill Directive, landfills must meet certain conditions in order to operate. The legislation aims to protect human health and the environment from the negative effects caused by the collection, transport, storage, treatment and disposal of waste.

For details about EU waste legislation in general, see:

<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/waste/index.htm>

For current statistics on infringements in general see:

[http://ec.europa.eu/environment/legal/implementation\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/legal/implementation_en.htm)

[http://ec.europa.eu/community\\_law/infringements/infringements\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/community_law/infringements/infringements_en.htm)

See also [MEMO/12/387](#)