

MOVING TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE
RESOURCE AND WASTE MANAGEMENT
CONFERENCE REPORT

 UNICE THE VOICE OF BUSINESS IN EUROPE

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EDITORIAL

On 28 March 2000 UNICE organised a multi-stakeholder seminar on “Integrated Resource and Waste Management (IRWM)” in the premises of the European Parliament. Commissioner Wallström addressed the 160 participants as guest of honour and confirmed her interest in partnership with all stakeholders involved in the debate. High-level speakers representing the Commission, Parliament, Council, consumers, trade unions, environmental NGOs, municipalities and business took an active role in two panel discussions. The conference was organised in co-operation with DG ENTR and hosted by P. Rübiger, MEP.

UNICE considers this seminar a success for future co-operation in particular with the Commissioner and the Parliament and will continue the multi-stakeholder debate on waste management in the near future.

Further information on the programme and the IRWM concept is available at www.unice.org or g.fehlinger@unice.be



INTRODUCTION - DIRK HUDIG

UNICE has repeatedly emphasised its commitment to the principle of sustainable development as a balanced economic, social and ecological approach.

European Business and industry believe that a more holistic approach to environmental policy is required: a sound overall EU environmental policy framework is needed to clarify the fundamental principles for EU initiatives, the definitions used in some legislations as well as the role of actors and tools.

This framework should facilitate development and implementation of innovative solutions by all stakeholders concerned, in a spirit of shared responsibility.

The conference organised by UNICE on “Moving towards Sustainable Resource and Waste Management” in the premises of the European Parliament on 28 March 2000, aimed to simulate a multi-stakeholder dialogue with a

view to finding common ground for a more integrated approach to waste and resource policy. The conference was organised in cooperation with DG

Enterprise and hosted by Mr. Paul Rübig, MEP.

UNICE considers this conference a success for future cooperation with the commissioner and the Parliament and would like to thank all high-level speakers for their active contribution.

Commissioner Wallström’s speech as guest of honour confirming her interest in partnership with all stakeholders encouraged UNICE to continue the multi-stakeholder debate on waste management.

I believe that the conference delivered a dynamic contribution to the process of policy integration of EU level.



Dirk Hudig - Secretary General UNICE

INTRODUCTION - PAUL RÜBIG

The reason for my initiative of hosting this conference is to increase communication between stakeholders in the environmental debate: consumers, manufactures, environmental NGOs, Parliament, Commission and Council. Partly following the example of the social dialogue the Inter Governmental Conference should seek to ensure that all stakeholders have a regular opportunity for constructive exchanges of views and concerns organised by the Commission.

This “environment and business dialogue” should involve all sides of the debate in the discussion of the EU legislation, and it should be as wide as possible in order to produce the desired result: an environmental policy which is realistic, environmental friendly, and which promotes sustainable competitiveness. It is important for the Commission to consult with everybody in the proper way in order to check the long term impact of such initiatives on business, jobs and the environment as a whole.



Paul Rübig
Member of the European Parliament

SPEAKERS



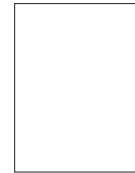
Margot Wallström
Commissioner for Environment



Heidi Hautala
MEP
Leader of the Green Group in the
European Parliament



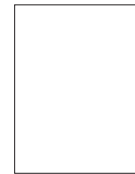
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Secretary General UNICE



Christian Hey
EU Policy Director
European Environmental Bureau



James Currie
Director General
Environment of the European
Commission



Antonio Lobato de Faria
Chairman of Portuguese Institute
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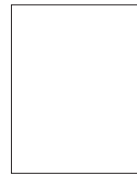
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*Moving Towards
Sustainable
Resources and
Waste Management
28 March 2000,
European
Parliament Brussels*

REPORT OF THE UNICE SEMINAR

The UNICE initiative was welcomed by all stakeholders. The event triggered a more open discussion especially between industry, the EU Commission, Members of European Parliament and NGOs.

UNICEs claim for more flexibility of the Hierarchy of Waste Management towards IRWM was openly discussed:

- UNICE requests to broaden the waste management discussion towards IRWM and Sustainability including the whole environment, economics and social aspects. Current EU Waste Policy focuses on solid waste optimization only.

- Several members of European Commission, Parliamentarians and NGOs (e.g. Mr. James Currie, Director General DG Environment, Heidi Hautala, MEP, Christian Hey, European Environmental Bureau and others) prefer the Waste Hierarchy vs. IRWM. Their arguments are the amount of solid waste is still growing in the European Union and There is enough flexibility within the waste hierarchy which is not always used so very strictly as industry claims.

Other topics with a lack of alignment are esp. Producer Responsibility and the Waste / Non-Waste Definition

Overall UNICE believes that a more detailed discussion and information exchange towards fact based information between all stakeholders

will be helpful. UNICE therefore proposed to continue the multi-stakeholder discussions towards a structured dialogue. UNICE will initiate a "multistakeholder" expert team... and a high rank working group to further stimulate discussions ???

Executive summary

1 UNICE / or: European Industry calls for flexibility in waste hierarchy

Industry representatives called for a more flexible approach on the existing waste hierarchy. This implies that:

- According to UNICE the IRWM approach is the approach towards Sustainable Waste Management in the future... some key paragraphs from UNICE position paper.
- For the legislators and NGOs the quantity of waste is growing faster than economic growth. Therefore legislation needs to be based on the waste hierarchy
- The debate on the waste hierarchy focused on material recovery (through reuse or recycling) on one side vs. energy recovery on the other.

2 Integrated Resource and Waste Management

- Industry calls for a more flexible approach on waste management where there is more room for innovation. IRWM is part of this approach. Commissioner Wallström admitted that innovation was an important part to allow further developments in the environmental sector. She agreed to add this item to her three other priorities which are: integration of environmental policy in all other policies, implementation of EU legislation into national legislation, information and involvement of the citizens.
- Industry has developed a computer model on IRWM which allows so far the integration of environmental and economic aspects and can be used for planning and optimizing waste management systems towards Sustainability. IRWM case studies are available for Europe.
- The “R” within IRWM needs to be addressed.



3 Producer Responsibility

- UNICE / European industry calls for Shared Responsibility which is also included in the current EU Waste policy. All players need to be involved including the municipalities and the consumers.
- Environmental and consumer organizations call for Extended Producer Responsibility because it is the only way to guarantee that product development and material use are done in an environmental conscious way.

4 Sector Waste Streams vs. Material Waste Streams

At this moment the Commission is developing legislation per sector waste stream (packaging, cars, batteries, demolition products...) irrespective of the material used.

Further exchange of experience and data is needed in order to understand the view point of all involved parties. While this approach might make sense for some waste streams this approach might lead to increase environmental burdens, costs and social impact, esp. in the area of MSW (Municipal Solid Waste). Data are available for Europe to be further discussed.

ANDREW GRIFFITHS

Degussa-Hüls AG - Member of Unice Waste WG

“A weed is just a flower growing where we do not want it to”

This quotation from the well-known botanist Sir Edward Salisbury, can be extended to waste.



Since Europe is faced with more than 1 billion tonnes of waste, it is time that we started thinking of waste as a resource.

The principle of Sustainable Development requires that we make the best possible use of this huge resource without unacceptable environmental, social or economic impact.

Waste management options can be grouped into three categories :

- Prevention
- Recovery
- Final disposal

Each of these categories includes a range of possible specific strategies . The choice is the responsibility of the waste generator or holder (unless he is legally required to let someone else make the choice). The waste hierarchy tells us to prevent waste from occurring if at all possible. Obviously this is the best approach in many cases, but the question must be asked, whether prevention is always better than recovery?



Prevention of waste is only one option open to the waste holder. Whether it is the best option depends on a number of factors, which should be considered for each available waste option.

Waste prevention may not always be better than waste recovery, if every aspect is considered.

For example, a chemical process may yield more product (and less “waste”), the higher, the temperature and pressure. If an appropriate recovery route is available for the waste, the environmental impact caused by the higher energy needed to prevent the waste from occurring must at some point outweigh that caused by its recovery.

To compare waste management options

A full assessment addresses the environmental, social, technical and economic aspects of each option. It also looks at all the steps of the recovery chain - not just the waste generation stage

The concept of Integrated Resource and Waste Management

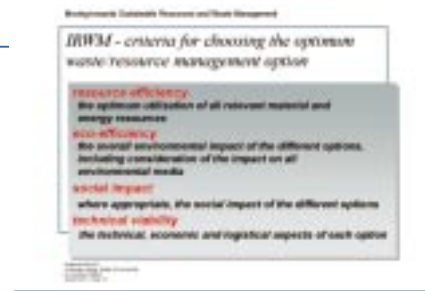
IRWM is UNICE's proposed way of mobilizing the resource called waste. It is defined as follows :

The management of resources and waste in an optimised way, taking into consideration environmental, social and economic aspects.

IRWM integrates...

- all three aspects of Sustainable Development (environmental, economical and social)
- and the relevant aspects of every step in the waste management cycle.

The following criteria may also be applied to proposed legislative initiatives to see if they conform to the principles of sustainability.



The way forward

Not by

- inflexible application of the waste hierarchy
- bureaucratic hurdles
- stigmatizing secondary raw materials as wastes
- imposing taxes and levies that distort markets
- artificial recycling quotas

But by

- actively encouraging recycling and recovery
- giving secondary resources a more positive public image
- harnessing market forces
- enacting legislation of an “enabling” rather than “prohibiting” nature

The next step

The concept of Integrated Resource and Waste Management has been proposed by European Industry as a strategy aimed at making the best possible use of the more than one billion tons of waste produced every year in Europe. It is hoped that the concept can be developed further through an intensive dialogue with all stakeholders to develop solutions that meet the criteria of IRWM.



JAMES CURRIE

Director General - Environment DG of the European Commission

Mr. Currie welcomed the Unice initiative because it implied a change of attitude towards a structured dialogue.

- Waste is a problem but also an opportunity, but we face growing quantities of hazardous waste and a greater variety of packaging waste;
- Disposal and recovery of waste does have an impact on the environment;
- We are far from reaching a sustainable approach, especially the South of Europe has to make a bigger effort;
- Contrary to what happened with the Auto Oil programme, we face many players, many decision makers and many traders. However, the model used at the Auto-Oil programme should be used for the waste management sector as well.

This implies: dialogue with all the players involved, sound economic evaluation, cost effectiveness...

- The overall objective is to reduce the impact of waste on the environment. Therefore, Commission strategy includes :
- Call for Shared Responsibility and the specific role of producers who determine the material used and the final product;
- More energy is saved through source reduction and materials recycling than through energy recovery from waste;
- The LCA approach is essential for preparing decisions in waste management
- The link between consumption and production is essential and if we want to reduce waste, we have to

- influence both the demand and the supply market.
- The IPP approach is essential, but it does not make the rest of the legislation redundant. It implies that best industry practice has to be promoted.
- EC will support retailers to focus on environmental responsible products.
- EC is very influential on developing economies, e.g. China, India look to Europe when discussing waste management
- Major Comment on the Unice position paper:
- Waste management is still a prerogative of national legislation and this is not going to change rapidly. EU waste policy should only provide for framework legislation. The existing EU policy on waste management allows for a range of options. It is not true that one option (i.e. reuse) is favoured or imposed and specific targets per material are not imposed.



ANTONIO LOBATO DE FARIA,

Chairman of Portuguese Institute for Waste management

Mr Chairperson,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Mr José Socrates, the Portuguese Minister of the Environment and the Planning of the Territory, has been cordially invited by UNICE - Union of Industrial and Employers' Confederations of Europe to address this Conference as their guest of honour.

As Portugal is holding the Presidency of the European Union at this time, UNICE would like to hear the main viewpoints of Mr Socrates on the subject of sustainable resources and waste management, mainly through the definition of European strategic objectives and the establishment of multi-stakeholders dialogue process to help in a new environmental policy framework.

To his great sorrow, our Minister could not overcome some big difficulties of agenda, so he was forced to delegate in me as his representative. I am currently the President of the Portuguese Institute for Waste Management and Professor of Environmental Health at the University of Lisbon.

I bring from Mr Socrates a word of regret and apology but also his best wishes of success to this Seminar and his appreciation for the work of UNICE in organising this Seminar.

I hope I will bring his ideas to this floor, ideas which are also the thought of Portuguese profes-

sionals on the subject. Concepts, principles, and roles of players in the process of resource and waste management, all represent genuine concerns for the environmental policy to follow in the next few years.

As a matter of fact, the following words may summarise the general state of the art about the environment in the European Union at the year 2000 : "Despite more than 25 years of environmental European policy, we cannot say that the environment in the European Union has recovered".

These pessimistic views may be read in number 3/1999 of the official EU publication "EUR-OP News", referring to the recent book entitled "Environment in the EU at the turn of the Century".

We may go further and note that the progress verified in certain areas, as the quality and the acidification of rivers, is negatively compared to other areas in which there has been no progress,



HEIDI HAUTALA

MEP, Leader of the Green Group in the European Parliament

Some challenges for industry are:

- Develop standards on refill packaging;
- Total waste generation has grown; what can we do about it?
- Waste hierarchy should be introduced in all waste management legislation (cf. In the recently adopted incineration directive this was not accepted)
- Indicators are needed to follow progress on waste management This is esp. required on the release of hazardous substances and the emissions of greenhouse gases.

Political items:

- Legislation on waste streams is necessary. Therefore the EP has asked the Commission to come forward with legislation on packaging, electronics, construction and demolition waste, batteries and accumulators.
- The 6th Environmental Action Program calls for more environmental standards, an appropriate timetable, and clear indicators to follow the development (parameters).
- The item of producer responsibility should be further developed.
- IPP is the route to follow in the future



CHRISTIAN HEY

EU Policy Director – European Environmental Bureau

Congratulates UNICE on involving NGOs on their discussion.

Waste is growing faster than economic growth, which certainly means there are many reasons for concern. Therefore it is essential to control all the waste streams, (both the household and the industrial waste stream), especially in the light of the enlargement policy and the 'Acquis Communautaire'.

EEB will publish a study discussing the Waste Hierarchy which concludes:

- The hierarchy has to be maintained as it is (if not reinforced);
- The hierarchy is still not correctly implemented in a lot of EU member states (it is by no means certain that prevention is always given priority over recovery. Landfilling is still the method most frequently used within EU.
- Waste contains a lot of hazardous substances and it is imperative that we take care of these hazards properly. Therefore Unice's claim that prevention is not always the best option is not acceptable. Prevention allows to avoid "cleaning up" the damages !
- The closing of the recycling loop is essential and to develop proper markets for recycled materials.
- To apply producer Responsibility is essential. Responsible companies need to be awarded !
- LCA should be used to prove environmental performance of products



- According to the EEB, Integrated Resource and Waste Management (IRWM) is a typical industry concept and not a management option. It can therefore not be accepted. We should move away from a purely technology approach and move towards an environmental performance approach.
- The development of products with an extended life time are required.



www.unice.org/irwm

MARGOT WALLSTRÖM

Commissioner for Environment



Sustainable waste management is crucial to achieve sustainable development. All players involved have to take their responsibility. Environmental policy should be based on: integration, implementation and information

Integration

- We should further examine and develop the link between waste management and IPP. Quantitative waste is increasing too fast and we should make better use of the existing resources (promoting prevention) and of the waste as resource material (promoting material recovery).
- Despite the 5th Environmental Action Program, the quality of the environment is not improving. We have to find substitutes for dangerous substances in Europe; the accidents in the Danube, with the Erika and in the food chains indicate how closely the environment is linked

with economic development. It is therefore impossible to separate the environment from the economic and even the social development. One aspect should not be traded against another, but should be complementary and mutually supportive.



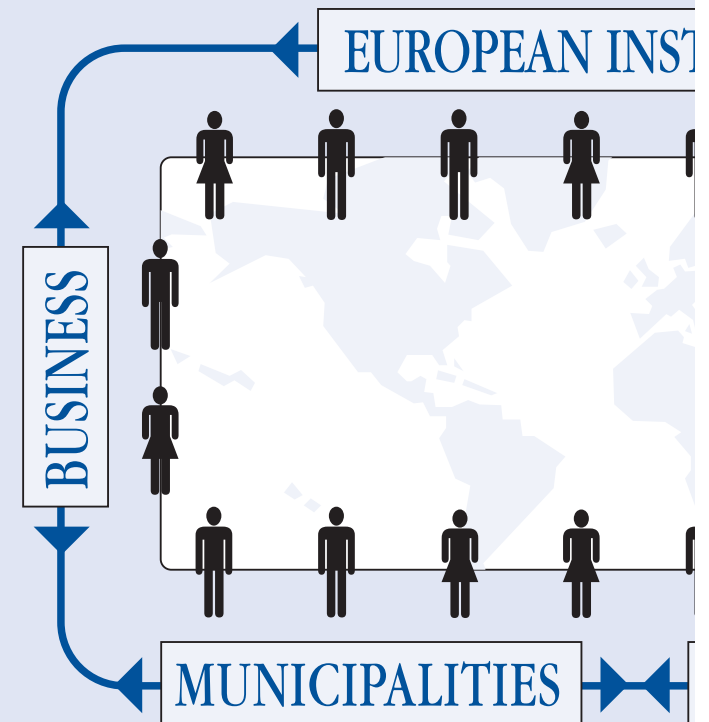
- Contrary to what Unice wants, the waste hierarchy should be further developed and supported with standards. Companies should also do more to thank individual consumers who contribute actively in waste collection systems.



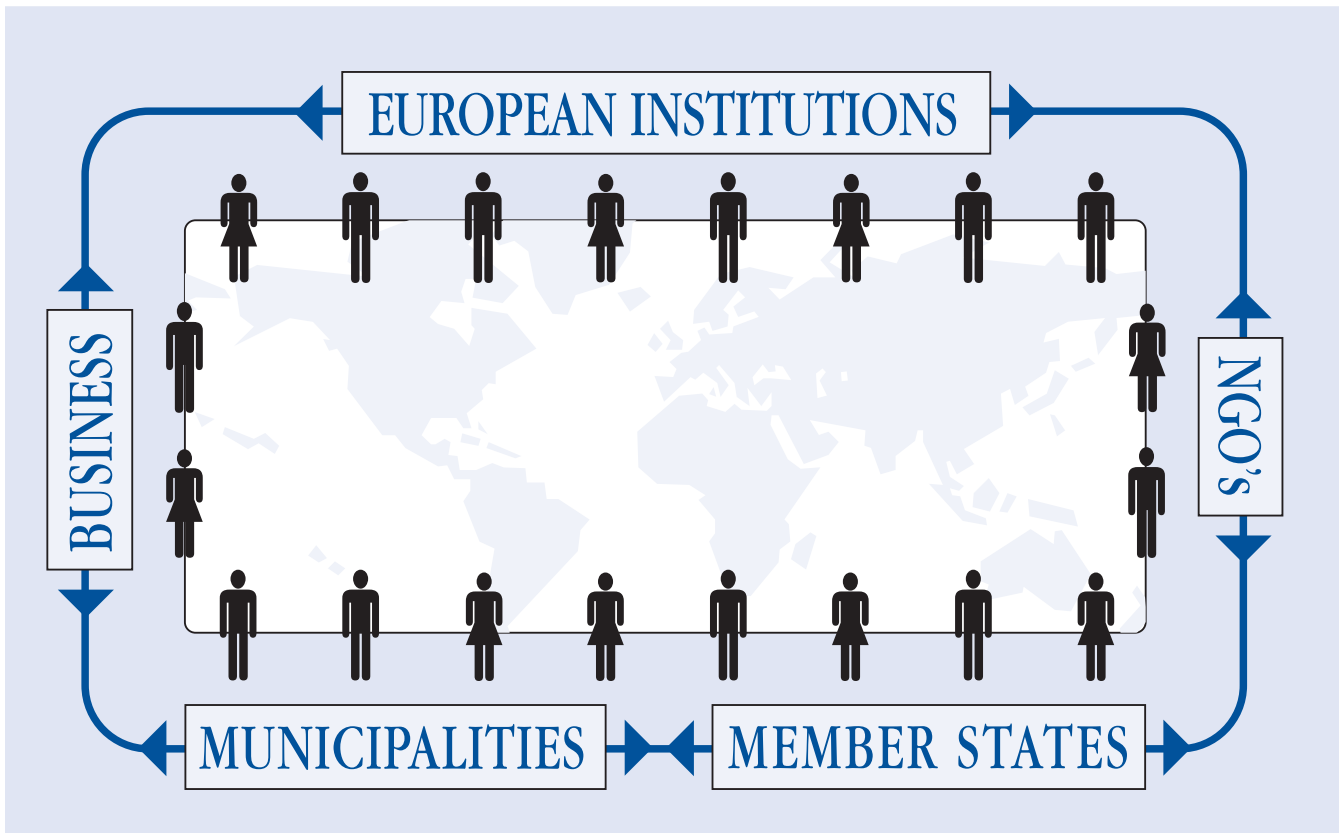
MULTI-STAKEHOLDER THE WAY FORWARD

Today's environmental challenges concerns all European citizens. Further improvement in the protections of our environment requires the ownership of all stakeholders.

UNICE is convinced that a multi-stakeholder dialogue organised in a structured way will be essential to define a holistic approach to environmental policies.



STAKEHOLDER, THE WAY FORWARD



Implementation

- In the 6th environmental action programme, implementation of legislation at national level remains a high priority.
- Commission has started a series of environmental infringement procedures against Member States. It is the Commission's intention to start a "name and shame" policy if environmental legislation is not better or quicker implemented in EU Member States.



Information

- Information from companies to citizens remains a crucial part in involving the citizen in the further development of an environmental policy
- The IRWM concept is not fully justified. The crucial role that producers play is fundamental. Some new directives are based on Shared Responsibility, e.g. End-of-Life Vehicle Directive.
- LCAs are an essential tool for assessments
- Application of EMAS, ecolabels are a good sign in the right directions.

The EC will develop goals and strategies for the 6th EAP soon. Consumers and industry are key stakeholders here.

www.unice.org/irwm

THE LUNCH...



MARINA FRANKE

Procter & Gamble - Member of Unice Waste WG

IRWM - Integrated Resource and Waste Management - The Concept Towards Sustainability

In line with the three pillars of sustainable development, solid waste management needs to be environmentally effective, economically affordable and socially acceptable (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Sustainability balances Environment, Economy and Society



- **Environmental effectiveness** requires that the overall environmental burdens of managing waste are reduced, both in terms of consumption of resources (including energy, water) and the release of emissions to air, water and land.
- **Economic affordability** requires that the costs of waste management systems are acceptable to all sectors of the community served, including householders, commerce, industry, institutions and government.
- **Social acceptability** requires that the waste management systems meet the needs of the local community, and reflects the values and priorities of that society.

A key question is to assess the overall environmental effectiveness and economic affordability of waste management systems, so that we can plan more sustainable waste management for the future? The tool of Life Cycle Inventory (LCI) is being used to answer this question. Along with the overall need for sustainable waste management, it is also becoming increasingly clear that no one single treatment method can manage all materials in Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) in an environmentally effective way. Following a suitable collection system, a range of treatment options will be required, including materials recycling, biological treatment (composting/biogasification), thermal treatment with energy recovery and landfilling (Figure 2). Together these form an Integrated Resource and Waste Management (IRWM) system.

Figure 2: Elements of an Integrated Resource and Waste Management system



PATRICK HENNESSY

Director - Enterprise DG of the European Commission

DG Enterprise has set up a system for business impact assessment. This has been used very often but it is difficult to evaluate how this could be integrated in sound sustainable development policymaking.

One of the instruments used by industry is the request for more voluntary agreements.

However, in order for the commission to accept voluntary agreements, a number of essential requirements have to be met:

- Highest possible standards have to be set
- The agreement has to imply comprehensive and ambitious goals
- External auditing has to be allowed.

JOHANNES BLOKLAND

MEP, Member of the Committee on Environment

- The objective of environmental legislation is to provide high protection of the environment. Sustainable development, of which IRWM is a part, is an instrument to be used for environment preservation. It seems that it has now become an objective in itself.
- As to the waste hierarchy, it should be kept as it is because it is the most environmental friendly way to treat waste. This goes against the Unice statement, but I am willing to listen to examples given in this field.



EDWARD CAMERON

Waste Management, Council of European Municipalities and Regions

Local authorities want to work together with industry on new measures and achievements in the field of sustainable development. He therefore welcomed the Unice initiative to include the cities and local communities in the total integrated waste management approach.



CHARLOTTE DE ROO

Policy Advisor - European Consumer Organisation



Most consumers are not willing to give up products they are used to. However, 100% producer responsibility is the only way forward because it is the only way to guarantee that product development and material use are done in an environmentally friendly way.

SABINE SCHLÜTER

Manager Foundation “Work & Environment” of the German Trade Union / Chemicals

.....



www.unicef.org/irwm



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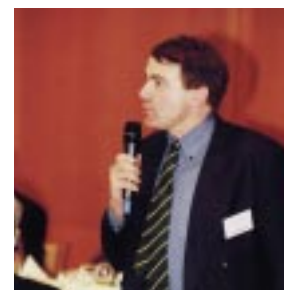
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FLEXIBLE SOLUTIONS FOR A BETTER ENVIRONMENT

- **Resource Efficiency :**

The optimum utilisation of all relevant material and energy resources.

- **Eco-Efficiency :**

The overall environmental impact of the different options, including consideration of the impact on all environmental media.

- **Social Impact :**

Where appropriate, the social impact of the different options.

- **Technical Viability :**

The technical, economic and logistical aspects of each option.

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