

Joint Declaration of Associations, Representatives, and Independent Individuals Concerning the Issue of Waste Incineration

By this Joint Declaration, we react on currently growing interest in constructions, reconstructions, and capacity increases, of waste incinerators, facilities for energy recovery from waste, and facilities similar from technological point of view¹, in the Czech Republic. This takes place in spite of the fact that any form of waste incineration (i.e., including energy recovery from waste) has very negative impacts both on the environment and on human health. Incinerators release a number of toxic substances (chlorinated, as well as brominated, dioxins, polychlorinated biphenyls, polyaromatic hydrocarbons, hexachlorobenzene, mercury, etc.) into the environment, not only in emissions into the air,² but also in wastewater, and, in particular, in incineration residues, often used as a construction material.³

Further, increase of the number of projects for constructions, reconstructions, and capacity increases, of waste incinerators is not in agreement with the intent of the Czech Republic and the EU to focus on circular economy principles, as it blocks development of much needed recycling and waste prevention. Reduction of mixed municipal waste production to a half should be expected by 2030.⁴ In this context, waste incinerators having a fixed capacity that has to be filled in the long term represent a significant obstacle in meeting the aims of our waste management. In March of this year, the European Commission even added facilities for energy recovery from waste to the list of unsustainable activities, together with coal and nuclear power plants.⁵ Attention to the fact that waste incineration blocks recycling is drawn not only by the Czech environmental organisations,⁶ but also, for example, by the Association of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises and Crafts of the Czech Republic.⁷

Last but not least, these projects are often promoted in spite of mass disagreement of local inhabitants, associations, and frequently also representatives of the affected towns and municipalities. In the case of smaller incinerators, we are afraid of the efforts to avoid assessment of their impacts on the environment and on waste management economy in the individual regions.

Because of that, we propose:

- 1) Enactment of an obligatory fee for waste incineration, including waste incineration with energy recovery (by the way, this is proposed, *inter alia*, also by the European Commission⁸, and OECD⁹);
- 2) Introduction of obligatory measurements of chlorinated, as well as brominated, dioxins in outputs from the facilities; in emissions into the air, this should be ideally semi-continuous;¹⁰

- 3) Adoption of concrete steps for waste prevention and development of recycling, instead of support for waste incineration and landfilling;
- 4) Introduction of a deposit-refund and take-back system for PET bottles and beverage cans;
- 5) Introduction of an eco-modulation system, i.e., economic advantages for products that are more environmentally friendly;
- 6) Maintaining of democracy principles and unlimited possibilities of participation of the public and associations in proceedings concerning these projects.

Signatories (in alphabetical order):

- Veronika Basta, representative of the municipality Rovinka, Slovak Republic
- Nikola Carić, chairman of the association Nádech, Ostrava
- Jiří Čečka, representative of the association Spolek Vysoká
- Vladimír Dvořák, deputy mayor of the municipality Srnojedy
- Ladislav Hegyi, assistant of a Member of the European Parliament
- Darek Horník, representative of the municipality Rybitví
- Jan Hrubeš, representative of the town Most
- Pavel Huspeka
- Petr Kowanda
- Ivo Kropáček, waste expert of Hnutí DUHA - Friends of the Earth Czech Republic
- Jan Linhart, chairman of the association Zelená pro Pardubicko
- Jiří Müller
- Sarah Ožanová, project coordinator of the Toxics and Waste Programme of the Arnika Association
- Jindřich Petrlík, head of the Toxics and Waste Programme of the Arnika Association
- Michal Pokorný, chairman of the association Spolek Vysoká
- Jiří Pykal, representative of the town Telč
- Tomáš Richta, chairman of the basic organisation of the Green Party in Prague 2
- Rostislav Řeha, deputy mayor of the municipal district Moravská Ostrava a Přívoz
- Edvard Sequens, chairman of the association Calla – Sdružení pro záchranu prostředí, České Budějovice
- Miloslava Štěřbová, representative of the association Spolek občanů Permanent, Nymburk
- Michal Tancoš, representative of the server PROCHEBSKO.cz

¹ Hereinafter „waste incinerators“.

² It is merely wishful thinking that pollutants released from waste incinerators into the air are fully controlled. The most toxic substances (dioxins) are measured twice a year for 18 hours only. Their real emissions in the

remaining time may be estimated only. See, for example:

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/332246919_Hidden_emissions_A_story_from_the_Netherlands_Case_Study

³ Waste incinerators, in fact mainly facilities for energy recovery from waste, produce up to a quarter of a million tons of bottom ash and fly ash in the Czech Republic annually, at their current capacity already. This waste after incineration contains the same amount of dioxins as released in emissions into the air by all the Czech sources altogether. A high portion of it ends in construction materials without any control.

⁴ This is proposed by the European Commission Action Plan.

⁵ https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/sustainable-finance-technical-expert-group_en#files

⁶ For example: <https://arnika.org/nespaluj-recykluj> or <https://www.hnutiduha.cz/nase-prace/odpady/temata/spalovny>.

⁷ <http://amsp.cz/nova-odpadova-legislativa-prinasi-citelne-zdrazeni-pro-podnikatele-obce-i-mesta/>

⁸ https://ec.europa.eu/environment/waste/studies/pdf/Screening_report.pdf

⁹ <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/9789264310377-cs.pdf?expires=1587566869&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=379E0EC1CE413275002BAD324C0D287E>

¹⁰ Measurements in the interval of two weeks.