

POLICY BRIEF

European Parliament draft report on the EU Commission proposal for the recast of the Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive

BACKGROUND

On 26/10/2022, the European Commission released its proposal for the recast of the Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive (UWWTD). The EU's UWWTD currently in force (Council Directive 91/271/EEC) was more than 30 years old. In its proposal, the EU Commission (DG ENV.C.2):

- Extended the obligation to set up urban wastewater collecting systems to all agglomerations with a p.e. of 1.000 or more (article 3)
- Introduced an obligation to **achieve energy neutrality for all wastewater treatment plants above 10 000 p.e. by 2040** (article 11).
- Introduced a new article to **promote the prevention, re-use and recycling of sludge** (article 20).

In the EU Parliament, the recast of the UWWTD was referred to the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI). MEP Nils Torvalds (Renew; FI) was appointed rapporteur for this directive and shadow rapporteurs are Deirdre Clune (EPP/IE), Marek Paweł Balt (S&D/PL), Margrete Auken (Greens/DK), Pietro Focchi (ECR/IT) and Nikolaj Villumsen (GUE/DK). Jan Huitema (Renew/NL) is rapporteur for opinion in COMAGRI.

On 27/03/2023, MEP Torvalds released its [draft report on the EU Commission proposal for the recast of the UWWTD](#).

USEFUL LINKS

- o [European Commission proposal](#) for the recast of the UWWTD 2022/0345 (COD)
- o [EBA Policy Brief](#) on the recast of the UWWTD
- o [EBA position](#) on the recast of the UWWTD
- o [Council Directive 91/271/EEC](#) of 21 May 1991 concerning urban waste-water treatment (consolidated version)
- o [Draft report](#) on the EU Commission proposal for the recast of the UWWTD

WHAT'S IN IT FOR BIOGAS/BIOMETHANE?

The draft report UWWTD covers smaller agglomerations than proposed by the EU Commission i.e. the obligation to set up urban wastewater collecting systems would be extended to **all agglomerations with a p.e. of 500 or more** (instead of 1000 or more).

Regarding **article 11 on energy neutrality** which is of strong interest for the biogas/biomethane sector, the rapporteur clarified the means by which energy neutrality can be reached. The draft report indicates in amendment 29 **that off-site generation of renewable energy, as well as energy bought from external sources, must be allowed to reach the target**, as suggested by EBA secretariat. In amendment 8 to recital 16, the rapporteur specifically acknowledges the standard practice of *“sending sludge to a centralised biogas production facility”*. If this amendment was maintained in the final version of the directive, this would be a positive development for the biogas/biomethane sector and would tackle the main concern that exists on the EU Commission proposal.

The rapporteur did not propose any amendments on **article 20 on sludge**.

NEXT STEPS

The rapporteur's draft report should be discussed in ENVI Committee on 27/04/2023. The deadline for amendments in ENVI Committee is by 5/05/2023. The draft report will then be further amended and discussed in Plenary. Meanwhile, the Environment Council will adopt its general approach on the EU Commission proposal. Co-legislator will strive to adopt the proposal by the end of the legislature.

EBA Secretariat will continue to monitor this issue.

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