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GENERAL DIRECTION ENERGY AND TRANSPORT
New Energies and demand management
New and renewable energy sources

GENERAL DIRECTION ENVIRONMENT
Sustainable Development and Policy resources
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Mandate to CEN on Solid Recovered Fuels (SRF)

1. Background

Waste incineration practices are currently being diversified and optimised in terms of the efficiency of the recovery of the energy embedded in the waste. One of these tendencies is the preparation of non hazardous waste into an adequate form for utilisation in an efficient combustion process. Such prepared wastes are classified in the European waste list (Commission Decision 2000/532/EC as amended) in entry *19 12 waste from the mechanical treatment of waste (e.g. sorting, crushing, compacting, pelletising) not otherwise specified* sub-entry *19 12 10 combustible waste (refuse derived fuels)*.¹

The fact that Directive 2000/76/EC on the incineration of waste now covers both incineration and co-incineration is *inter alia* recognition of the above described practices. In recital (7) of this Directive it is stated that *Therefore, a high level of environmental protection and human health protection requires the setting and maintaining of stringent operational conditions, technical requirements and emission limit values for plants incinerating or co-incinerating waste within the Community. The limit values set should prevent or limit so far as practicable negative effects on the environment and the resulting risks to human health.* Directive 2000/76/EC excludes from its scope facilities treating only certain wastes including certain biodegradable materials that are considered biomass wastes that can be utilised for energy generation in facilities not subject to the incineration Directive. A separate mandate was given to the CEN by the Commission's services (M298) for development of relevant standards to be used in commercial transactions and utilisation of such fuels in energy generation applications.

The Community waste strategy (COM (96) 399 final) lays down the hierarchy of principles of waste management policy. Prevention of waste is the first priority followed by recovery, final disposal being the less favoured option. This hierarchy must be applied with a certain flexibility and its implementation must be guided by considering the best environmental solution taking into account economic and social costs. In particular, where environmentally sound, preference should be given to recovery of material over energy recovery operations. The evaluation of environmental, economic and scientific effects of either option could lead, in certain cases, to preference being given to the energy recovery option.

¹ This entry only includes non-hazardous wastes. Hazardous wastes are referred to in entry 19 12 11*

Directive 2001/77/EC on the promotion of electricity produced from renewable energy sources in the internal electricity market includes in its scope production of electricity from biomass. Biomass is defined as *the biodegradable fraction of products, waste and residues from agriculture (including vegetal and animal substances), forestry and related industries, as well as the biodegradable fraction of industrial and municipal waste*. In its recital (8) it is stated that *Where they use waste as an energy source, Member States must comply with current Community legislation on waste management*. The same recital includes considerations to the waste treatment hierarchy, in particular it is stated that *Support for renewable energy sources to be consistent with other Community objectives, in particular respect for the waste treatment hierarchy*.

As part of a research project within the Fifth Framework Programme an accompanying measure contract was given to a consortium of organisations (contract NNE5/1999/533) to initiate the drafting of a CEN report to describe solid recovered fuels and their use, and also to develop a work programme for drafting relevant standards. This resulted to the establishment of CEN/BT/TF118. The report has been prepared. Part 1 of the report describes the market practices and the needs for commercial standards. Part 2 presents more information about the composition of a range of solid recovered fuels following a survey that was carried out by the European Commission's Joint Research Centre at Ispra.

2. Reason for giving a mandate to CEN for development of standards concerning SRF

Solid Recovered Fuels (SRF) are fuels prepared from non hazardous waste to be utilised for energy recovery in waste incineration or co-incineration plants regulated under Community environmental legislation.

In practice co-incineration of SRF requires a stable supply of pre-treated and homogenised waste upgraded to a fuel quality that can be traded amongst producers and users of SRF. This implies specifications that are included in commercial transactions for SRF. For combustible wastes not suitable for environmentally sound recycling, such appropriate specifications for their preparation could usefully be included in European Standards.

SRFs may be composed of a variety of materials of which some although recyclable may have been made available in such a form that recycling is not environmentally sound. On the one hand materials collected and/or sorted and prepared into a recyclable form should not be considered as SRFs. On the other hand recyclable materials should not be excluded from SRFs because such an exclusion could lead to disposal of these materials and wastage of the resources embedded in them.

There is a need for a method for the determination of the fraction of SRF that falls under the scope of Directive 2001/77/EC. Such a method could usefully be included in a European Standard.

3. Description of mandated work

CEN is given the mandate to develop, as a first step, a set of Technical Specifications concerning the use of SRF for energy recovery in waste incineration or co-incineration plants.

As a second step, CEN is given the mandate to transform this set of Technical Specifications into European Standards.

These European standards shall be presented as a “package”² (i.e. a group of inter-related Ens).

These standards shall include:

3.1 All standards listed in appendix 1 of CEN document CEN/BT/TF 118 N 35

3.2 A set of standards on the determination of the biodegradable fraction, as defined in Directive 2001/77/EC and/or the biogenic fraction of SRF and the higher and lower heating values of these fractions. CEN will provide the Commission within 18 months after the acceptance of this standardisation mandate with a report on the relative difference between these two fractions of waste in order to decide whether there is need to develop two different standards or only one.

4. Execution of the mandate

- 4.1 CEN must provide the EC with a detailed Workprogramme based on items 3.1, 3.2 referred above and a timetable for the adoption of the standards. CEN will execute the Workprogramme agreed by the EC.
- 4.2 A validation will be carried out on a minimum number of Technical Specifications to be decided between the Commission and the CEN Technical Board before these Technical Specifications are transformed into European Standards.
- 4.3 The European standards adopted will have to be transposed into national standards and divergent national standards will have to be withdrawn from the catalogues of the Member States' national standardisation bodies within six months of the adoption of the European standards.
- 4.4 The standstill period referred to in Article 7 of Directive 98/34/EC¹ of 22 June 1998 will commence on acceptance of this standardisation mandate by the CEN.

¹ OJ L 204 of 21.07.98, p. 37, as amended by Directive 98/48/EC (OJ L 217 of 5/8/98, p. 18).

² In CEN, the aim of a “package” is to avoid circulating EN(s) that cannot be used independently due to lack of supporting standards, quoted or not as reference documents. It is necessary to wait until the last one of these inter-related standards is available before any practical use of the EN(s) and before any withdrawal of national conflicting standards.