



TOPIC: Waste management

Even if we manage to drastically reduce waste, it is inevitable that we will have to live with facilities for recycling, disposal, composting and storage (including permanent storage) of waste. Although food waste is far less hazardous than industrial waste, a facility for the treatment, composting and storage of agricultural waste is a source of discomfort for any community (bad smells, security, the hustle and bustle of transport vehicles), and many communities are, therefore, opposed to the establishment of such facilities on their area.

PRO THESIS: "In the management of waste disposal, such as choosing a site for an incinerator or a composting plant, it is the local community and not the State/region that should decide."

AGAINST THESIS: "In the management of waste disposal, such as choosing a site for an incinerator or a composting plant, it is the State/region that should decide, rather than the local community."

Current situation and context.

According to Eurostat (2018), the European Union Member States produce 2.5 billion tonnes of waste as a whole. 10% is municipal waste, of which 46% is recycled on average. In Italy, the national production of municipal waste stood at almost 30.2 million tonnes in 2018, slightly up on 2017. The percentage of separate collection is 58.1% of national production (17.5 million tonnes), a growth by 2.6%. Waste management plants are often located on the outskirts of towns and cities and have a major impact on the quality of air, water and the environment in the municipalities where they are located. Every month, a municipality opposes the opening of a landfill, storage, composting, disposal or incineration plant on its area. Although there is a significant difference in environmental impact between an incineration plant and a composting plant, it is fair to wonder if local communities have the right to take the final decision on hosting a plant on their area.

Pro arguments:

- The competence of the public sector in waste management has been questioned on several occasions, as in the striking case of the waste emergency that devastated Campania for fifteen years.
- The local community has detailed information about its own context, which can be useful when defining a waste management service.

Against arguments:

- The State is the ultimate guarantor of the public interest and acts to protect the rights of its citizens. By virtue of this role, the State is the most appropriate entity to deal with waste management, i.e. collection, transport, recycling and disposal, and supervision of these operations.
- The protection of the right to health, which is closely related to the issue of waste, remains in the hands of the State, whose activity risks being threatened by the behaviour of private individuals who, in many cases, opt for their own short-term interests, or of local communities who have a territorially limited or local view of the problem.

Further Insights:

- Eurostat: [Municipal waste statistics](#)
- European Environment Agency: [Municipal waste management across European countries](#)
- European Environment Agency: [Waste management in the EU: infographic with facts and figures](#)
- EUR lex: [EU waste management law](#)