

Background information

Technical committee "**TC343 Solid Recovered Fuels**" began its work in 2002. The standards will only relate to waste categorised as "non-hazardous" in the European Waste List, to waste which is not composed exclusively of bio-mass (CEN has drafted standard for waste composed of bio-mass in "TC 335 Biofuels") and to waste which can be considered to be "solid" (CEN intends to elaborate a separate standard for liquid and gaseous recovered fuels).

The production, trade and use of solid recovered fuels (SRF) for the generation of energy and the production of material products (e.g. cement kilns) increases rapidly. The estimated quantity of solid recovered fuels produced in the European Union in 2000 was 1.4 million tons (0.7 Million tons of oil equivalent = Mtoe). That figure is expected to rise to 13 million tons (6.5 Mtoe) in 2005 and to continue to grow as combustible waste that is not suitable for material recovery is diverted from landfill in accordance with the Council Directive on the landfill of waste (1999/31).

One of the major problems for the creation of a dynamic and sustainable market of SRF is that the quality of the traded recovered fuels may vary among the various producers. Indeed, SRFs are produced from non hazardous waste. The input waste can be production specific waste, municipal solid waste, industrial waste, commercial waste, construction and demolition waste, sewage sludge etc. It is thus obvious that SRFs are a heterogeneous group of fuels. Therefore the users are often reluctant to buy fuels whose quality and compositions are not well known. Manufacturers of equipment for the use of such fuels have the same concern regarding guarantees of new equipment.

European standardisation of solid recovered fuels is seen as a key to increase the safe and efficient use of solid recovered fuels and for their acceptability in the fuel market in Europe. The development of an overall quality assurance system is seen as a major element. Guaranteeing a certain fuel quality is a pre-condition to the fulfillment of the requirements of existing equipment and relevant regulations, as well as to increase public trust. ECOS tries to make sure that market considerations do not completely override environmental concerns in this field.