



Brussels, 30 September 2025

To the kind attention of:

Ursula von der Leyen
President of the European Commission

and

The College of European Commissioners

and

National Ministers of Environment of the European Union Member States

Subject: Call for a moratorium on new waste incineration in the EU

Dear President von der Leyen, Commissioners, and National Ministers,

We, the undersigned, call on the European Commission and EU Member States to immediately halt the approval and construction of new waste incineration facilities across the European Union.

The EU already faces an **overcapacity crisis** of municipal waste incineration, estimated at 60 million tonnes.¹ After Europe meets its existing recycling and waste reduction targets, the current infrastructure will, without any doubt, meet all future needs. **Expanding incineration capacity will lock Europe into a burning materials system that directly undermines waste prevention, reuse, and recycling** — the top priorities of the EU waste hierarchy and a circular economy.

Waste incineration is increasingly recognised as a growing climate liability. As documented in recent analysis,² the carbon intensity of energy generated by incineration is higher than that of many conventional energy sources, especially when factoring in the high fossil content of residual waste — largely from plastics. The associated greenhouse gas emissions from incineration, even in energy recovery facilities, directly conflict with the EU's commitments to climate neutrality. Building new incineration facilities now would entrench high-emission infrastructure for decades, making it harder for Member States to meet their climate targets under the EU Green Deal and the Clean Industrial Deal.

¹ [The case for a moratorium on incineration](#) (2023)

² [Debunking Efficient Recovery: The Performance of EU Incineration Facilities](#) (2023)

Despite improvements in emission controls, growing evidence links waste incineration to serious contamination and potential health harms.³ Contrary to claims that incineration eliminates the need for landfills, up to 16 million tonnes of incineration residues (including hazardous waste) are landfilled annually.⁴ **Communities near incinerators across Europe are exposed to very persistent and toxic pollutants such as dioxins, heavy metals, and PFAS. These have been found in soil, food, and even human bodies, and are associated with cancer, immune dysfunction, and developmental disorders.**⁵ Even legally compliant facilities contribute to repeated, long-term, and cumulative toxic exposures that threaten public health, especially among vulnerable populations.

A moratorium on new waste incineration infrastructure would prevent very high construction costs, unnecessarily high emissions, and harmful pollution. It would also support a just transition toward circular economy infrastructure — such as reuse systems, composting, and advanced recycling — delivering far greater climate, health, and economic benefits. **It would also help achieve the goal of the Clean Industrial Deal: to make the EU the world leader in the circular economy.**

We call for:

- An immediate EU-wide moratorium on new waste incineration facilities (R1 and D10);
- National and EU strategies to phase down existing capacity; along with
- Investment in circular economy infrastructure that supports a climate-safe, environmentally-friendly, and resilient waste management.

We remain available should you require any further information or wish to discuss these recommendations in more detail.

Sincerely,

The signatories

³ [Waste Incineration and the Environment](#) (2024), [Biomonitoring report in Zubieta, Spain](#) (2025), [Biomonitoring report in Paris, France](#) (2025), [Biomonitoring report in Harlingen, The Netherlands](#) (2025).

⁴ [Incineration residues in the EU: Quantities and fates](#) (2022)

⁵ [The health impacts of waste incineration: a systematic review](#) (2020), [The life cycle approach for assessing the impact of municipal solid waste incineration on the environment and on human health](#) (2021), [Municipal Solid Waste Management and Adverse Health Outcomes: A Systematic Review](#) (2021), [Waste incineration and cancer mortality: a longitudinal controlled population-based study](#) (2023), [Residential exposure to municipal solid waste incinerators and health effects: a systematic review with meta-analysis](#) (2025)

5R Zero Sprechi

Alianza Residuo Cero

Amigos de la Tierra

Arnika – Toxics and Waste Programme

Association Green Istria- Udruga Zelena Istra

Association Zeru Frazu

Associazione Culturale Pediatri

Associazione Culturale Pediatri

Associazione Forumambientalista

Associazione Rifiuti Zero Sicilia

Biedriġba “Vides Sardze” (NGO Environmental Guard)

Biofuelwatch

BirdLife Slovakia

Bond Beter Leefmilieu

Bund für Umwelt und Naturschutz – FoE Germany

CEE Bankwatch Network

Center for Environment

Centro di Ricerca Rifiuti Zero

CEPTA

Changing Markets Foundation

Child Rights International Network (CRIN)

CI Maksimir for Zagreb

Cittadini per l'aria onlus

ClientEarth

COLLECTIF 3R

Comitato Collesalviamo l'Ambiente

Comitato NO quarta linea inceneritore Padova

Cornwall Waste Forum St Dennis Branch

Corporate Europe Observatory

Cyklo Kuchyňa

Deutsche Umwelthilfe e.V.

Dorset Climate Action Network

Društvo Ekologi brez meja

ECO EVENTI O.d.V.

EcoDigital

ECOS

EKO UDRUGA "NAŠ ZAVIČAJ"

Eko-Logiczna Lubelszczyzna

EKO-UNIA Ecological Association

Environmental association Za Zemiata

Environmental Investigation Agency

EPINE

Errausketaren Aurkako Mugimendua

European Environmental Bureau

Everyday Plastic

Fair Resource Foundation

Fare Eco

Forum Plastikfrei

Friends of the Earth – CEPA

Friends of the Earth – SPZ, Slovakia

Friends of the Earth (Cyprus)

Friends of the Earth Cyprus	National Society of Conservationists – Friends of the Earth Hungary
Friends of the Earth Europe	Naturvernforbundet
Friends of the Earth Malta	NGO Ecopatriotism
Fundación Vida Sostenible	No Incinerator 4 Horsham Community Group
Futuro in Cenere	No Plastic In My Sea
Gallifrey Foundation	Noarc21
Générations Futures	Nottingham Friends of the Earth
Générations Futures	Nuovi Orizzonti Ecologici
GLOBAL 2000	o.z. SOSNA
Green liberty	Ocean. Now!
GURAS.O.S.	OIKOLOGIKI ETAIREIA ANAKYKLOSIS
Health and Environment Justice Support	Plastic Change
Hnutí DUHA – Friends of the Earth Czech Republic	Plastic Soup Foundation
Humusz Szövetség	Polish Ecological Club Pomeranian Branch
ISDE	Polish Zero Waste Association
KlimaDocs e.V.	Priatelja Zeme-CEPA
Klimatická koalícia – Climate Coalition (Slovakia)	Public Environmental Center for Sustainable Development
Komitet społeczny STOP wrocławskiej spalarni	Reading Against the Incinerator
Krizni Eko Stozer Mariscina	rehab republic e. V. (Zero Waste München)
Kyoto Club	Réseau Environnement Santé
Legambiente arca di noè della saccisica	Reset Livorno ODV
Les Amis de la Terre – Belgique asbl	Residents Against Preston Incinerator
Mallusk Community Action Group	Rete Tutela Roma Sud e Castelli Romani
Milieukontakt Albania	Rethink Plastic alliance
Montpellier Zéro Déchet	Retorna

Rifiuti Zero Piemonte – Zero Waste Piemonte

Rinascimento Green

Rifiuti Zero Abruzzo

Shireoaks and Rhodesia Against Plastic
Pyrolysis (SRAPP)

Skalica je pekné miesto

Società cooperativa di mutuo soccorso

Spolek T.G.M. novevrat.cz

Stop Incineration North East (SINE)

Stop Ratcliffe Incinerator

Stop the Edmonton Incinerator Now! StEIN!

Stop the South London Incinerator

Surfrider Foundation Europe

TAT Montefoscoli

The Scarab Trust

Towarzystwo na rzecz Ziemi

Training and consulting center E-Circular

Trash Hero World

United Kingdom Without Incineration Network
(UKWIN)

Unverpackt e.V. – Verband der
Unverpacktläden

VšĮ "Žiedinė ekonomika"

We say No

Westbury Gasification Action Group / No
Westbury Incinerator

WisWin

Za Zemiata/FoE Bulgaria

Zelena akcija

ZERO – Association for the Sustainability of the
Earth System

Zéro Déchet Cébazat et Alentours

Zéro Déchet Dordogne

Zéro Déchet en Mayenne

Zéro Déchet Lyon

Zéro Déchet Pays Dacquois

Zéro Déchet Saint-Étienne

Zéro Déchet Strasbourg

Zero Waste Austria

Zero Waste Bad Vilbel e.V.

Zero Waste Bordeaux

Zero Waste e.V.

Zero Waste Estonia SA

Zero Waste Europe

Zero Waste France

Zero Waste Germany

Zero Waste Italy

Zero Waste Itzehoe e. V.

Zero Waste Kiel e.V.

Zero Waste Köln

Zero Waste Latvija

Zero Waste Lombardia

Zero Waste Marseille

Zero Waste Montenegro

Zero Waste Nederland

Zero Waste Pays d'Auray

Zero Waste Romania

Zero Waste Toulouse

Zero-Waste Haute-Vienne

Znepokojené matky