



Sustainable Phosphorus Management: meeting the needs of civil society

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European Economic and Social Committee

The role of the EESC

- **The EESC is an advisory body established by Treaty to act as a bridge between the EU and ‘organized civil society’**
- **It represents** the views of employers, employees & special interest groups via studies, public hearings and opinions on new proposals from the Commission, at the request of the other institutions and member states, or on its own initiative
- **It can comment** on the process and content of proposals and can suggest alternative strategies or further actions
- **DS was appointed rapporteur on COM(2013) 517 final in July 2013; opinion was adopted by EESC in January 2014**



To sustain life...

- Need *sustainable* **food, fuel, fire & finance** ...
- Need *sustainable* raw materials and processes
 - **Physically available** in known 'sufficient' quantities
 - **Economically extractable**, usable and recoverable
 - **Politically secure** in a competitive globalized world
 - **Technologically adaptive** to changing best practices
 - **Socially acceptable**, within framework of law
- **Role of government** (including EU) is to **facilitate**
- **Regulation** only required when other efforts **fail**
- **ESPP/EU** (and **EIPs** on Agricultural Sustainability & Raw Materials) provide models for others to follow



... and to minimise waste

- **All inputs should be seen as limited; waste is simply a missed opportunity to add value, to make money**
- **Need to redefine approach:** waste streams are not necessarily hazardous, restrictions on distribution are counter-productive, re-use must be encouraged
- **Clear** for paper, metals, wood residues, glass, plastics, buildings, cars, manufactured goods ...
- **Less clear** for other human, animal and agricultural solid & liquid wastes, food surpluses, wood char ...
- **All are critical to development of 'circular economy'**



Avoid circular politics!

- **July 2014:** Commission published a package of 5 proposals for a circular economy dealing primarily with manufactured goods and end-of-life disposal
- **November 2014:** role of EU Chief Scientific Adviser abolished (after positive comments on GMO use!)
- **December 2014:** Commission work plan for 2015 announced intention to withdraw package
- **February 2015:** package formally withdrawn
- **Long term intentions now unclear, confused reactions from member states and institutions**



Maintain priorities for P

- **'Peak P'** is confused by references to 'Peak Oil' – but supply side issues for raw materials cannot be ignored
- **LCA** is needed from 'mine' to 'farm' to 'fork' to 'sea' – or much better, back to re-use in 'farm' and 'factory'
- **Quality standards and a level playing field** for products and processes are essential; best practices and new technologies need to be identified and supported
- **Solutions** should be local for 'precision agriculture' and community/regionally driven if commercially necessary
- **Policies should be based on evidence, not vice-versa!**

