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› “WASTE MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT IN GERMANY IN THE PAST DECADES”

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Overview

- › Short presentation of VKU
- › Basic tenets of German waste management
- › Development of German Waste Policy
- › Status quo and future

Short presentation of VKU

- The Verband kommunaler Unternehmen e.V. (VKU) is the German Association of Local Utilities of municipally determined infrastructure undertakings and economic enterprises.
- These are companies that provide services of general interest in Germany within the framework of local self-government.
- The VKU is the association of local public utilities, which do not primarily pursue private commercial objectives but are guided by public welfare obligations.
- The VKU represents the interests of the local public utility sector in Germany, which includes both supply and disposal services
- The 1,428 member companies organized within the VKU are primarily active in the fields of energy supply, water supply and sewage, waste management and municipal cleaning.

Short presentation of VKU

- Municipal enterprises in the mentioned fields
 - employ about 246,000 persons
 - had a turnover of about 115 billion Euro in 2013
 - invested about 9,1 billion Euro in 2013

Basic tenets of sound waste management

- Promotion of the saving of resources (waste prevention)
- Promotion of a closed-circle economy → recycling and energy recovery from waste
- Clear framework of rules for waste disposal in landfills (compulsory standards for landfills and restriction of waste streams eligible for disposal in landfills)
- Clear rules for the financing of waste management

Further criteria for sound waste management

- Definition of binding
 - collection and
 - recycling/recovery targets for certain waste streams
- Clear obligations of waste holders/producers
- Clear responsibilities of waste management according to waste stream (municipalities or private industry)
- Clear responsibilities for the enforcement of waste law (competent authorities)
- Clear rules of the financing of the waste sector

German waste policy

- activity on different political levels
- Federal level lays down basic waste management standards/ rules and policies
- Regional level (“Länder”)
 - implements national laws
 - Works out regional waste laws (some margin for adding standards)
 - Works out waste management plans (how much waste? Waste treatment installations?)
- Local level decides about the concrete design of waste management concepts (mode of collection, treatment, pricing) in line with national and regional legislation

Development of German waste policy

- › Up to the beginning of 1970s: rather „savage“ waste management, uncontrolled pits as landfills, waste policy rather part of health and pest combat policy
- › 1972: waste disposal law →
 - focus on hazard control
 - standards of landfills
 - wild landfills were closed
- › 1986/1991: Waste law laid down priority of waste prevention before waste recovery, which in turn had priority over waste disposal (waste hierarchy), one example: Packaging Ordinance

Development of German waste policy

- › 1990s/2000s: myriad of new laws and ordinances (new closed cycle economy law, specific laws for WEEE, End-of-life vehicles, batteries) fostering recycling, tightening of standards for waste incineration, restricting waste disposal in landfills,
- › 2005: absolute ban on disposal of mixed municipal waste in landfills → requirement for pre-treatment :
 - waste incineration or
 - mechanical biological treatment.
- › 2011: new closed cycle economy law

Financing of waste management

- › Specific waste fees are charged by the municipalities on citizens and companies as waste producers/holders („polluter pays principle“)
- › Fees have to cover all costs related to public waste management
- › Other instruments are licence fees that are charged for example on packaging that is subject to the management by private industry
- › There are no state subsidies for waste management
- › Waste is not financed by general taxes

Conditions for good waste management

- › Clear legal framework for waste management
- › Coherent implementation and enforcement of waste legislation
 - Conditions: clear responsibilities of authorities and institutions, well-trained staff, sufficient financing of the authorities
- › Fee system guaranteeing the financing of a sustainable waste management system and that is only used for waste management
- › Overall condition: political will

Thank you very much for listening!

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