

## Press Release

's-Hertogenbosch, 29 June 2010

### **MEP Judith Merkies visits Dutch recycling facilities**

**Sector transforms from waste processor into raw materials supplier**

**On Friday 25 June, at the invitation of the Dutch Waste Management Association, MEP Judith Merkies (S&D) visited a waste sorting and recycling facility in Vlaardingen and a plastic recycling plant in Waalwijk, both belonging to the Van Gansewinkel Group. Merkies praised the steer towards the recycling and reuse of wastes in the Netherlands. 'This example should be picked up in Europe and adopted more widely. By using wastes as raw materials you make a valuable contribution to combating the scarcity of raw materials and cut back on the use of primary raw materials. To work towards a European recycling society we will have to ensure better compliance with European regulations and think about introducing a European landfill ban and setting minimum standards.'**

The visit gave Merkies a better picture of the possibilities for the efficient recycling of wastes. As a waste service provider and raw materials supplier, the Van Gansewinkel Group (VGG) is specialised in waste sorting and recycling. The sorting takes place in advanced waste separation facilities using various innovative techniques. In the recycling process the company treats the separated waste so that it can be used again as a raw material for new products. Egbert Vennik, regional director of VGG: 'We turn 75 per cent of the wastes into raw materials and 25 per cent into energy. There are many opportunities in Europe to get more out of waste, but to exploit these Europe will have to ensure that recyclable wastes and combustible waste are no longer landfilled. To achieve this the European institutions will have to intensify supervision of the implementation of European waste policy.'

The Dutch minimum standards set for each type of waste (minimum levels of processing) lead to a maximum recycling of waste. 'This policy stimulates the whole sector to innovate,' says Pieter Hofstra, chair of the Dutch Waste Management Association. 'Early in the chain thought is given to how the amount of waste can be reduced further. For example, supermarkets review their production and procurement policy because processing products that are beyond their sell-by dates is costly. High quality waste processing therefore also encourages waste prevention!'

Judith Merkies: 'The European waste sector is becoming an increasingly important source of raw materials. Raw materials must be used and recycled much more efficiently. That makes it worth investigating whether European minimum standards could be introduced to prevent the landfilling of reusable and recyclable waste.'

The importance of proper implementation and enforcement of European legislation was further underlined for Merkies during her visit to the VGG facility for plastics in Waalwijk. The plastic waste is processed into granules for use in the manufacture of new plastic products, such as parts for cars, CD jewel cases and planters. Ton Goverde, Corporate Relations Director, VGG: 'Electronic waste is recycled in our Coolrec plant. The plastic fractions are then sent to the Waalwijk facility. This form of recycling is made possible by the Waste Electronic and Electronic Equipment Directive (WEEE). The Netherlands is one of the leaders in transposing and implementing this directive. In many countries electronic waste is still sent to landfills and that is a terrible waste of raw materials.'



*Note to the editor (not for publication)*

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