



Zero Waste Europe
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Stockholm, Sweden

Brussels, 28/5/2018

Dear Vice-Mayor Ms. Luhr,

I am writing on behalf of Zero Waste Europe with regards to your recent meeting with representatives of the city of Buenos Aires, with whom you had the opportunity to discuss about waste management policies and, in particular, about waste-to-energy incineration.

As part of a global network supporting the transition of cities towards zero waste, we always encourage municipalities to share their experiences and best practices, and we are sure that Sweden and the city of Stockholm have excellences in waste prevention and waste management for Buenos Aires and Argentina to learn from. However, we are deeply concerned that this meeting has been used to promote waste-to-energy in Buenos Aires, and to push for the revision of a Zero Waste Law that used to be a beacon of progress for all Latin America.

Buenos Aires and Stockholm are very different cities, and so are their levels of waste generation per capita, the composition of their waste, and the weather conditions. Buenos Aires generates much less waste per capita than Stockholm, bio-waste making an even larger part of it - hence the calorific value is lower - and winters are much milder than in Sweden. All these reasons make waste-to-energy incineration and the use of heat for district heating a solution unfit for Buenos Aires.

Additionally, as it is the case for other cities of Latin America, Buenos Aires suffers from institutional weaknesses that need to be taken into account before promoting waste-to-

energy. These include intransparent decision-making processes, lack of effective control of polluting industries and governmental pressure on media and civil society organizations and green activists. Such weaknesses, which have been observed during the revision of the Law above mentioned, are even more problematic when it comes to capital intensive facilities with a long operational life, as it is the case for waste-to-energy incinerators.

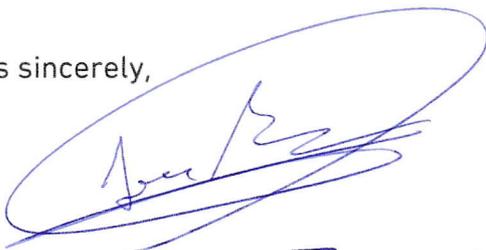
At the same time, Buenos Aires, as most of Latin America, relies importantly on informal recyclers to divert waste from landfills. Informal recyclers of Buenos Aires have managed to organize themselves in cooperatives and gain respect for their right to live from the waste they collect. At Zero Waste Europe we are very concerned about the impacts that any potential waste-to-energy infrastructure could have on the wages of local recyclers, as well as on the overall level of recycling in Buenos Aires, particularly knowing that the formal separate collection system is poorly efficient.

Knowing that Sweden is a role-model on environmental issues across the globe, we can only sound a word of caution and invite the city of Stockholm to take into account all these elements when meeting city representatives of the Global South, to avoid the risk of promoting technologies that may be socially, environmentally and economically unfit to other realities.

At Zero Waste Europe, we remain at your availability to discuss this and any other waste-related topic.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Joan Marc Simon', enclosed within a large, loopy blue oval.

JOAN MARC SIMON
DIRECTOR