

## PACKAGING AND WASTE MANAGEMENT

### Waste framework directive not wood friendly, says MEP

Wood packaging should not be discriminated against in the waste hierarchy of the revised Waste Framework Directive (WFD). That was the message of Spanish Socialist MEP Andres Perelló Rodriguez last week.

Perelló and other industry representatives told the meeting organised by lightweight wood packaging sector organisation Grow International on 31 May that the bias against wood packaging, particularly seen in the food contact material Regulation (see story, p1-3) also meant that wood suffered from subsidies given to energy recovery.

Today, companies are given money if they use wood packaging to be burnt as “green” energy – however this means that less wood is used for recycling, so the rates are falling.

“Subsidies are high and take raw material away from us,” said Uwe Groll from Grow GmbH (the German association for environmentally friendly wood packaging). He said that subsidies for energy recovery should only be given for waste wood, although, “The problem is that in some countries, like Spain, waste wood is not recognised as biomass.”

Groll told *EE&PL* that the EU packaging legislation had “forgotten to make a special case for wood packaging”.

“Pressure on our sector started 20 years ago with the first recycling legislation which failed to look at the special situation of renewable materials”.

Olivier de Lagausie from SIEL, the French association for lightweight wood packaging, agreed, pointing out that “the EU packaging directive has a flexible hierarchy: as long as there is no landfilling, it is OK to use various solutions but under the Waste Framework Directive reuse is now considered the best solution,” something which does not work in favour of the wood packaging sector.

“We are worried that under the revision of the packaging directive, the strict hierarchy of the

Waste Framework Directive will have to be followed,” he told *EE&PL*.

### Reusable is not always the answer

Lagausie quoted a report from French Environment and Energy Agency, ADEME, which said that a lifecycle analysis of the wood packaging sector found that “there is not a single situation where the use of reusable plastic packaging is better than using single use wood packaging”.

“This is a scientific demonstration that it is a contradictory decision to insist on reusable packaging from an environmental point of view,” he said, adding that when it came to wood, the most sustainable use for it was in “cascade” (where the original wood packaging changes uses several times along the way) and ending up in furniture.

According to ADEME, carbon emissions per tonne of timber production are up to 100 times less than for the production of cardboard, plastic and aluminium.

“The production of wood packaging requires less water, less energy and has less environmental impact than other materials,” Lagausie said.

Fernando Trénor from FEDEMCO, the Spanish association for wood packaging, agreed: “Wood packaging does not present any risk to human health and is highly hygienic, both because of its natural antibacterial qualities, and because of the cleanliness that is used in all processes of manipulation.”

### Recycling is not enough, says waste expert

Recycling is only a partial answer to the impending resource scarcity, and the EU must now urgently turn to resource management, according to waste recycling expert, Martin Goorhuis.

Speaking at the International Solid Waste Association (ISWA) Beacon conference in Vienna last month, Goorhuis, who is the chair of the ISWA Working Group on waste recycling, said it was time to envisage such instruments as taxation as well as pay-as-you-throw and deposit systems to cut the