

**VARIABLE PRICING SCHEMES IN URBAN WASTE MANAGEMENT - A WAY
TO ENHANCE THE REDUCTION OF WASTE FOR FINAL DISPOSAL AND
POLLUTER RESPONSIBILITY.
FIRST EXPERIENCES FROM THE EU CO-FINANCED INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH
CO-OPERATION "PAYT"**

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Solid waste is one of the largest outlays in the urban area. More and more there will be pressures to enhance sustainability in the area of municipal waste management based on efforts towards waste reduction and the principle to redistribute the costs of such system among the waste generators in the form of payments that correspond fairly to the burden with which they are straining the system (polluter pays principle). The application of variable pricing mechanisms known as Pay-as-you-throw (PAYT) from municipalities is a valid instrument where both components intertwine.

Research partners from six European countries have found together to jointly implement a project aimed at both broadening and deepening our understanding of the benefits and pitfalls of this instrument and the provision of structured information in a format useful for decision makers to introduce PAYT on a broader scale. It is broadening to the extent that it synthesises and spreads current experience with this approach to a wider audience, especially those interested in the adoption of such system. It is deepening in that it identifies gaps and shortfalls in both the knowledge and technology for successfully implementing variable pricing systems and takes first steps towards resolving them. In recognition of the fact that measures to implement waste reduction, re-utilisation, recycling and recovery (the four R approach of European waste management policies) in European countries have met different response and success, one particular focus is on the spectrum of factors influencing the effectiveness of these measures. Adequate information concerning for instance the interrelations of these factors are rare. The project which is funded by the European Commission under the environmental component "Energy, Environment and Sustainable Development" within the Fifth Framework Programme and started in January 2001 under the project acronym "PAYT" has made some effort to close this gap.

Some of the preliminary results of the research done under this project shall be presented here.

Key words: urban waste management, variable pricing system, waste reduction, pay-as-you-throw.