

# REPORT

## Prague Climate Talks: Waste as a driver of climate change: what are the solutions?

Monday May 13, 2019, 16:00-17:30  
European House, Jungmannova 24, Praha

- **The eighth debate from our cycle Prague Climate Talks took place on Monday 13th May at the European House. This project is co-organised by EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy and Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung Prague, under the auspices of the UN Information Centre Prague.**
- **The topic of this eighth debate was „Waste as a driver of climate change: what are the solutions?“. The panellists were: Ivo Kropáček (Friends of the Earth Czech Republic), Cyril Klepek (CYRKL), Vlad'ka Matušková (Nafigate) and Jaromír Manhart (Ministry of the Environment of the Czech Republic). The debate was moderated by Jana Karasová from Czech Zero Waste.**

**Ivo Kropáček** began the discussion with a presentation on the impacts that different ways of dealing with waste have on the climate. The worst of all is landfilling, which releases emissions of methane and has a high risk of catching fire, which further releases harmful substances into the air. The second worst is direct incineration of waste, which releases emissions of CO<sub>2</sub>. The most suitable way is recycling, where primary materials are replaced by secondary ones, as well as composting. While the Czechs are diligent at sorting out their waste, when it comes to recycling we are lagging behind. The Czech Republic is also not doing well at trying to reduce landfilling of biological waste. An important milestone will be the currently discussed legislation on waste, which however pushes the

date for landfill ban from 2024 to 2030. One of the possible solutions would also be to introduce a deposit scheme for PET bottles.

**Vlad'ka Matušková** highlighted that the production of waste keeps growing worldwide and that the best way to prevent its negative impact on the climate is to prevent the creation of waste altogether. She said the worst possible way of dealing with waste is landfilling, which is responsible for 5% of greenhouse gas emissions. She also discussed bio-plastics, which are biologically degradable, but only under certain conditions. Primarily we should focus on reducing all kinds of single use plastics, and only then replace them with bio-plastics.

**Cyril Klepek** also spoke negatively about landfilling. There are 180 official landfills in the Czech Republic and about 3,4 million tons of waste ends up there. Landfilling is also perceived as ineffective because lots of potential secondary raw material gets lost there. He also pointed out that it is necessary to change the economic system from linear to circular in order to prevent the increasing creation of waste.

**Jaromír Manhart** then reacted to the previous contributions, noting that according to him the situation in the Czech Republic is not so bad. The main problem, as he

sees it, is not plastic but the people who use it recklessly. He further highlighted that bio-plastics can cause more harm than good if they are put into the bins together with biological waste.

A questions and answers session with the audience ensued. The discussion revolved mostly around the levels of negative effects of waste landfilling versus waste incineration on climate and environment. Furthermore, the question of how more producers and consumers can be motivated to prevent the creation of waste was widely discussed.