The EU Waste Hierarchy
-from a communication perspective

Gunilla Carlsson, Communications Manager, Sysav Sweden
Chair of the ISWA Working Group on Communication
The "Waste hierarchy"

"/The following waste hierarchy shall apply as a priority order in waste prevention and management legislation and policy.

a) Prevention
b) Preparing for Re-use
c) Recycling
d) Recovery
e) Disposal

When applying the waste hierarchy, Member States should take measures to encourage the options that deliver the best overall environmental outcome./"
Key words in the waste hierarchy

„/The following waste hierarchy shall apply as a priority order in waste prevention and management legislation and policy.

a) Prevention
b) Preparing for Re-use
c) Recycling
d) Recovery
e) Disposal

When applying the waste hierarchy, Member States should take measures to encourage the options that deliver the best overall environmental outcome.„/"
What does the word hierarchy mean?

“an arrangement of items (objects, names, values, categories, etc.) in which the items are represented as being "above," "below," or "at the same level as" one another.”

Visualization of a hierarchy

- **Physiological**
  - breathing, food, water, sex, sleep, homeostasis, excretion

- **Safety**
  - security of body, of employment, of resources, of morality, of the family, of health, of property

- **Love/Belonging**
  - friendship, family, sexual intimacy

- **Esteem**
  - self-esteem, confidence, achievement, respect of others, respect by others

- **Self-actualization**
  - morality, creativity, spontaneity, problem solving, lack of prejudice, acceptance of facts
Visualization of the Waste hierarchy
DC 2009/98
Visualization of the Waste hierarchy in European countries
What happened
-from a communication perspective!

- Context
- Culture
- Language
- Experience
- Education and Knowledge
- Existing systems
- Opinions
The Waste Hierarchy

Stages

- Prevention
- Preparing for re-use
- Recycling
- Other recovery
- Disposal

Includes

Using less material in design and manufacture.
Keeping products for longer, re-use.
Using less hazardous material.
Checking, cleaning, repairing, refurbishing, repair, whole items or spare parts.
Turning waste into a new substance or product including composting if it meets quality protocols.
Including anaerobic digestion, incineration with energy recovery, gasification and pyrolysis which produce energy (fuels, heat and power) and materials from waste; some backfilling operations.
Landfill and incineration without energy recovery.
The Waste Hierarchy

REDUCE
REUSE
RECYCLE
CREATE ENERGY
DISPOSE
How can the 8 'R's impact your choices as consumers, designers, scientists & global citizens?

Recycle
Close the loop and remake.

Refuse
Don't consume what you don't need to.

Recover
Energy and materials recovery. And upcycle!

Rethink
Be mindful of your consumption, your relationship with 'things' and your relationship with the Earth.

Reduce
Reduce consumption of energy and materials.

Re-use
Share with others. Find new uses for old objects.

Repair
Fix or upgrade your objects rather than throwing them away.

Re-gift
Share, and be a part of the gift economy.

Start here

1. Eliminate
   Avoid producing waste in the first place

2. Reduce
   Minimise the amount of waste you produce

3. Re-use
   Use items as many times as possible

4. Recycle
   Recycle what you can only after you have re-used it

5. Dispose
   Dispose of what's left in a responsible way
The Waste Hierarchy

1. REDUCE
   Use less stuff

2. REUSE
   Use stuff again

3. RECYCLE
   Make old stuff into new stuff
PREVENTIE
HERGEBRUIK
RECYCLAGE
VERBRANDEN
STORTEN
LADDER VAN LANSINK 2.0

A Reduce
B Re-use
C Recycling
D Energy
E Incineration
F Landfill

Powered by Recycling.nl
The waste hierarchy based on environmental systems analysis research during the last years.
Rough estimation of the climate effect from the steps of the waste hierarchy.
Conclusions

The hierarchy were supposed to be used for waste management purposes,

- not to explain how consumers should behave
- not to create discussions about what treatment methods are good or bad
- not to exclude levels or create new ones

- Most important – if you want to communicate effective – make it simple and positive.
- And remember - Legislation is more effective than interpretations if you want changes!
Thank you very much for listening!

gunilla.carlsson@sysav.se

www.sysav.se