

Use of alternative fuels and raw materials at Holcim cement plants in Europe

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In 15 European countries Holcim operates 34 cement plants with an installed overall clinker production capacity of 26 million t/a. In 2002, 13 countries saw the respective Holcim kilns partially fed with alternative fuels and raw materials. An average fuel substitution rate of 22% and a raw material substitution rate of 3% were achieved. Individual fuel substitution rates ranged between 1% and 60%. High substitution rates have been characteristic for countries with a well-developed waste management and recycling sector. Since alternative fuels, as a rule, are separately collected, adequately prepared combustible waste materials, for safeguarding product quality as well as environmental and social compatibility, Holcim follows a set of principles such as for example:

- Trustworthy sources, large volumes
- Input control, trace ability
- Priority given to health, safety and environment
- List of excluded materials
- No final storage of heavy metals in the product
- Close cooperation with authorities and the public.

The valorization of combustibles and raw materials gained from waste streams is a welcome activity in the resources conservation and management sector. Unfortunately, this sometimes moves cement plants into the vicinity of outdated technical perceptions of garbage incinerators. Thereby it has been clear for many years that, if the basic rules are observed, the emissions of a cement plant remain, as they always did, almost exclusively dependent on the raw material, i.e. deposit characteristics. If there is a significant change, then as a rule, this is for the better. Therefore, for a country, there is no valid reason to prevent the local cement industry from using alternative fuels and raw materials. The respective benefit is considerable, sustainable and mutual. Countries like France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, Austria and Switzerland well prove this.