The European cement industry is continuously using waste as a resource, thanks to what is called ‘co-processing’. Co-processing is the combination of simultaneous material recycling and energy recovery from waste in a thermal process, which results in replacing natural mineral resources and fossil fuels such as coal and petroleum products.

Already, the cement sector in Europe is substituting an average 48% of its fuel with alternative sources, and it wants to grow this even further. Studies have shown that there are no technical barriers to raising this to 60% across Europe by 2030. Co-processing is already having a very real impact on the sustainability of the cement industry in Europe:

- Reducing the CO$_2$ intensity of cement manufacturing
- Reducing our dependence on virgin fossil fuels
- Decreasing the amount of landfill waste
- Minimising public investment costs in new dedicated facilities

In the cement industry more than 40% of thermal energy used to supply the clinker-making process comes from waste & biomass
Co-processing is already having a very positive impact on the sustainability of the cement industry in Europe:

- 21 million tonnes of avoided CO₂ emissions each year
- The use of alternative fuels, including waste biomass, is saving about 7.8 million tonnes of coal
- About 5% of the raw materials needed in the production of the cement clinker in Europe consisted of recycled material and ashes from alternative fuels

The potential of co-processing can be enhanced further through legislative and regulatory measures that recognise this form of material recycling and its contribution towards achieving Europe’s ambitious recycling targets.

Co-processing is a more efficient waste management solution than landfilling or incineration, and means the cement industry is a net consumer of waste and is at the heart of the circular economy.