



## EWWR good practices and case studies

### 1. Details of Action:

EWWR Organiser: IBGE - Bruxelles Environnement  
Country/Region: Belgium / Brussels Capital Region  
Name of nominated project developer: Vrije Universiteit Brussel and Ecocampus  
Name of nominated action: Tap water: "cheers!" and less waste @ VUB  
Place: Etterbeek  
Town: Brussels  
Country: Belgium  
Nominee category: Educational institution  
Dates of action:  
Year: 2010

### 2. Please select the theme(s) highlighted in the action:

- Too Much Waste
- Better Consumption
- Better Production
- A Life for Products
- Less Waste thrown Away

### 3. Type of Action

- Action open to general public
- Action open to a target group
- Action based on the production of communication tools
- Other, please specify:

### 4. Please give a detailed and precise description of the nominated action:

In order to reduce the amount of waste (plastics, cans and drink cartons: the "blue waste fraction" in Belgium) generated by the students and the personnel of the VUB (Free University of Brussels), no disposable packaging was sold on November 22nd in the students' restaurant, a central meeting place at the university. The vending machines were unplugged and the individual wrapped deserts were replaced by home made yoghurt, fruit salads, cakes, etc. Only bottles which are reimbursed were sold that day. Reusable drinking bottles were sold for the symbolic price of 1 euro. These bottles could be filled with tap water or lemonade, made in a sustainable way without waste. Waitresses gave a glass of champagne, filled with tap water, to all visitors. Everywhere in the restaurant, messages announced the 'water day' and raised awareness about the importance to reduce waste. Lately, a charter on sustainability in the restaurant was signed. This charter was also displayed in the restaurant.



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**5. Please describe the target audience and how the action motivated its public/target audience, as well as the number of participants:**

**Target audience**

The target audience were the students, the personnel and the visitors of the university during lunch time.

**Motivation of the public**

The visitors of the restaurant were offered a free glass of water, served in a glass of champagne, which is festive, chique and cheap at the same time. People liked to be treated as real guests in the restaurants, even if it was just a simple glass of tap water.

The water bottles which were sold were of high quality, good looking and they were very cheap (1€). They were sold out very quickly. A glass of home made juice was offered to the people who bought a bottle. The 'customers' were also personally informed about the reasons for the action. The reactions were very positive, and a lot of people claimed to already undertake action to reduce waste of drinks. It's an easy gesture.

Last but not least: the vending machines were closed/unplugged, so the customers had no choice but to drink a waste free drink.

**Number of participants**

1850 people visited the restaurant that day and saw the action.

200 drinking bottles were sold

Based on the normal daily rate of sold beverages in the vending machines and refrigerators, 639 cans and cartons were avoided that day.



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**6. Please explain why you have decided to nominate this action for a EWWR Award, following the main criteria listed here below (you can add your criteria if needed):**

- 1) visibility and communicational aspects
- 2) good practice, originality and exemplarity
- 3) quality of content and focus on waste prevention,
- 4) European reproducibility
- 5) follow-up in long-term and lasting impact

**1) visibility and communicational aspects**

The location of the project, the restaurant of a university, is a well chosen location: it's a meeting place for students, professors, assistants, visitors,... whether it is for a lunch or just a snack or a quick coffee. Posters and messages were displayed all over the restaurant. There were also messages on the vending machines which were unplugged, to explain the reason why they were put out of order that day. People dressed like real waitresses offered a very nice looking glass of champagne filled with water, which attracted the attention of the other visitors. On top of the visibility in the restaurant, the location where the action took place, messages were diffused via the intranet and the external newsletter of the university.

**2) good practice, originality and exemplarity**

Raising awareness about the good quality of tap water in Brussels is a very good and healthy initiative. There are also a lot of foreign students, who are not always informed about the good drinking quality of our tap water. Drinking tap water is a perfect way to avoid waste. It's also an act people can do at home, not only at work or at school. The action in the restaurant was also very original. It is not always easy to make tap water 'sexy', but the waitresses and serving the water in glasses of champagne were a real eye-catcher. This in combination with vending drinking bottles made the project complete.

**3) quality of content and focus on waste prevention**

The message was very clear: drink tap water: it is healthy, it can be sexy and it avoids waste. The project was kept simple to ensure that the message was clear.

**4) European reproducibility**

Promotion to drink tap water can be done everywhere (on the condition that the quality of the tap water is good). Not only in universities or restaurants, but also at work, the hobby club, at home,... Serving tap water in champagne glasses at official receptions, why not? And everyone can buy (and use) a drinking bottle, they are sold at most stores.

**5) follow-up in long term and lasting impact**

As mentioned, the VUB has recently created a charter. Reducing waste is one of the commitments mentioned. This 'action day' fits within the action plan of the university. The management of the restaurant is aware of the importance of waste reduction (also food spill, composting,...), amongst other aspects (hygienic standards, safety, ...). They will soon participate at a 'sustainable canteens' project. Serving tap water will continue, efforts are made to offer vegetarian meals, the cutlery, plates, glasses are all non-disposable,...



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7. Please provide us with photos, videos, weblinks or any other material that would help the jury to better understand the nominated EWWR action. Where possible, provide basic translation into English.

Weblink:

<http://www.vub.ac.be/e-brief/index.php/newsletter/nl/extern/20101122/48/>



The refrigerators which are closed + information



The stand where the bottles could be bought



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Vending bottles and offering a sustainable drink



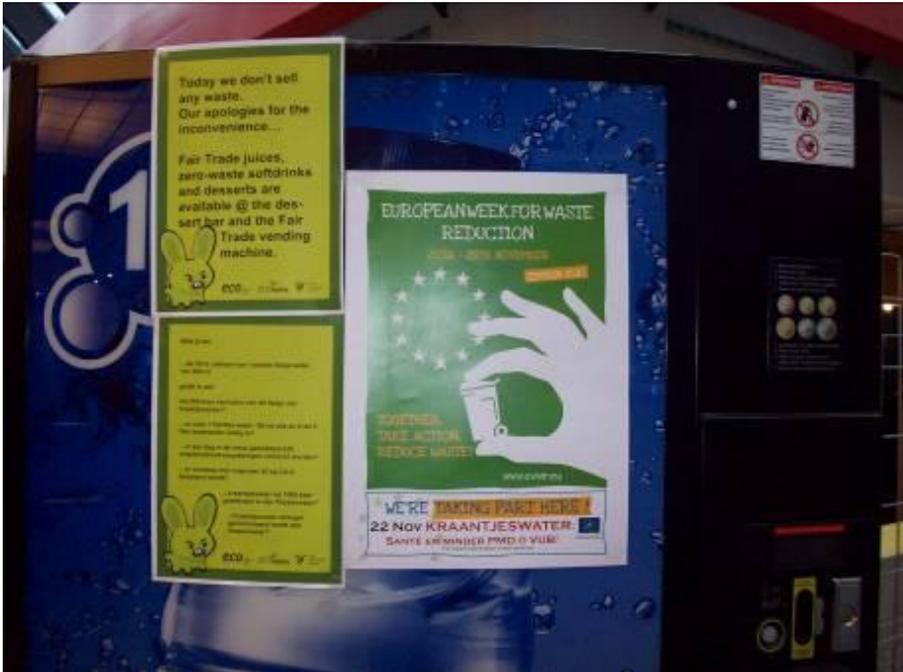
Offering the tap water in a glass of champagne



Water tap in the restaurant with information



Closed vending machine



Detail of the message on the closed vending machine



Sustainable cutlery, closed refrigerators