



PRESS RELEASE

The European Week for Waste Reduction gets a fresh boost in 2013: let's reduce, reuse, and recycle!

Brussels, 7 October 2013

After four years of successful implementation, the European Week for Waste Reduction (EWWR) extends its scope to recycling in order to help increase awareness on resource efficiency and circular economy, and change the behaviour of European citizens regarding waste and resource management, in particular in countries where sorting and recycling rates are still low.

Launched in 2009, the EWWR originally focused on raising awareness of waste prevention, the highest priority stated in the European waste management hierarchy. Over the four past editions, the Week has seen a growing success in Europe (and beyond), with the implementation of over 25,000 communication actions in 28 countries and the development of a network of public and private actors working in the field of waste prevention. This shows the increasing interest in how to reduce the amount of waste we put in our garbage bins every day.

Despite this, on average a European citizen throws away over 500 kg of waste yearly, while recycling less than half of it – and in some countries almost none of it¹. More efforts are needed, in particular to change people's habits at home, at the office, or when shopping, for instance. Taking advantage of its past success, the EWWR will propose new features to help communicate on the 3Rs: Reduce waste, Reuse products, Recycle materials. In particular, the EWWR will develop and test communication tools targeting specific audiences: administrations and associations, businesses, schools, and individual citizens.

Waste prevention will hold a strong place in the EWWR, as it makes more sense to avoid or reduce waste at the source than to have to deal with it after it has ended up in our garbage bins. To highlight this, Prevention Thematic Days will be implemented during the Week. The first, in 2013, will focus on reuse and will promote actions such as second-hand markets, repair workshops and swap parties, among others. These activities will also put important stakeholders under the spotlight: actors from the social economy, like the European network RREUSE for instance.

To catch the attention of Europeans on one of the ugliest sides of waste, a European clean-up day will be implemented on 10 May 2014. The initiative, called "Let's Clean Up Europe", will call on volunteers to pick-up waste littered in nature, for instance on beaches, in forests and other areas.

The EWWR 2013, which will take place between the 16th and the 24th of November, is a federative project and benefits from wide political support, reaching beyond party affiliations. Indeed it will transpire under the patronage of Janez Potočnik, European Commissioner for the Environment, and with the support of several Members of the European Parliament, namely Gaston Franco (EPP – rapporteur on the 7th Action

¹ According to Eurostat, 503 kg of waste was generated per inhabitant in the EU27 in 2011, when only 40% of it were recycled or composted on average, with differences between Member States ranging from 1% to 63%. Source: http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_PUBLIC/8-04032013-BP/EN/8-04032013-BP-EN.PDF



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programme for the Environment), Vittorio Prodi (S&D – rapporteur on the plastic waste report), and Margrete Auken (Greens – ENVI Committee).

With the support of the LIFE+ programme from the European Commission, the new EWWR project includes the following partners: ACR+ (Association of Cities and Regions for Recycling and Sustainable Waste Management – European project coordinator), Brussels Environment (Belgium), the Catalan Waste Agency (Spain), the communication association AICA (Italy), and the Hungarian Waste Agency (Hungary). In 2013, the Week will be implemented under the coordination of 35 national or regional public administrations – or bodies acting on their behalf – in 19 countries. In this challenging time of economical crisis, their involvement is to be saluted.

Reduce, reuse, recycle: it is time to take action. So let's spread the word!

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