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PLASTEKO NEWSLETTER

PLASTEKO
Interreg Europe

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European Regional
Development Fund

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THE PLASTEKO CONSORTIUM



PLASTEKO project

Dear reader,

Welcome to the fourth edition of the newsletter series of the **Plasteco Project**, which, as part of the dominant EU mindset for curbing plastics waste and littering, aims to help the participating regions exchange experiences, benefit from the provisions and momentum of the EU plastics strategy, and, ultimately, achieve their goals in terms of protecting the environment, increasing resource efficiency, alleviating health effects, and boosting innovation.

To that extent, PLASTEKO is expected to:

- Ameliorate the economics and quality of plastics recycling.
- Conduct regional plans, raise awareness, and improve the recycling of agricultural plastics.
- Guide investments and innovation towards circular solutions.

In the following pages, you will find material on the overall context and objectives of the project, as well as information on the latest and upcoming developments and events. We will also keep you informed about our progress and key outcomes through the project website, thematic events, and newsletters.

The PLASTEKO project team



PLASTEKO 4th Virtual Meeting

The fourth project meeting of the PLASTEKO project took place virtually on the 9th and 10th of June.

During the first day of the meeting, project partners were informed about the latest updates from the Joint Secretariat and discussed on the foreseen project activities and outcomes.

AURA EE presented the overall organization, implementation and results of the workshop activity A.3.2.a over the support of regional businesses to invest on eco-innovation in plastic production and reuse. SZ-REDA continued with the presentation of the second part of this workshop activity A.3.2.b over the facilitation of market placement of alternatives for single use plastics and gave very concrete results in relation to the entire activity.

As regards interregional learning and capacity building, ADR BI gave a short overview of the organization of the interregional workshop on how to raise awareness on plastic littering and promote the purchase of products from recycled plastics while the Regional Government of Styria promised for the first in situ organization of an event in early November, a study visit on effective waste management policies and measures to reduce plastics waste landfilling and incineration.

Communication and dissemination strategies that will boost awareness for PLASTEKO project was also in the center of interest of this meeting.

During the second day of the project meeting, the discussion was mainly dedicated to project financial management and implementation issues. There were presentations by Municipality of Rethymno and the Regional Government of Styria of future policy advancement activities that are scheduled to take place in autumn 2021.



Workshop on how to support regional businesses to invest in eco-innovation in the production and reuse of plastics



As in charge of Activity A3.2a, AURA-EE organized the interregional workshop on supporting companies to invest in eco-innovation on May 27, 2021, with approximately 50 participants.

In order to provide useful and new data for the 2021 workshop, there was a prior distribution of an input paper, which was focused on recycled plastic production and reuse in EU countries.

This online meeting allowed international dialogue between private and public actors from several European countries.

The nine speakers addressed four topics related to the regional support of eco-innovation:

1. The criteria for public co-funding in research and development
2. The promotion of eco-innovation through a network of complementary actors and awareness-raising among companies
3. The lift of technological barriers related to eco-innovation to remain competitive
4. The support of businesses to access EU-fundings

The list of speakers includes the following:

Mr Leonard Boniface, expert of the French Agency for ecological transition

Mr Jordane Charbonnier, Field director of Barbier Group

Mr Mattieu Hebert, Director of Veka company

Mr Simon Gourgaud, member at the Professional organization for plastic and composite processors

Mr Gilles Dennler, representative of the Industrial Technical Centre for Plastics and Composites

Mr Nicolas Payre, representative of IndCo company

Mrs Annabelle Sion, Professional organization for plastic and composite processors, Department of competitiveness cluster dedicated to plastics, rubber and composites

Mr Vincent Mathel, representative of the Seabird company

The meeting ended with a workshop to exchange views on the main challenges that each region/country faces to promote eco-innovation and possible solutions.

The report and overview of the workshop is available [here](#).

Workshop on how to facilitate the market placement of alternatives for single-use plastics



On April 15, 2021, SZ REDA hosted an Interregional workshop on how to facilitate the market placement of alternatives for single-use plastics within Activity A3.2b of PLASTEKO project.

Originally scheduled to take place on site in the city of Linden, Stara Zagora, the pandemic situation necessitated its online conduct. Despite the difficulty in conducting a practical event in a virtual environment, SZ REDA's team offered an interactive seminar, including presentation and dialogue sections.

The workshop included 4 thematic panels, presented by established experts in the relevant topics:

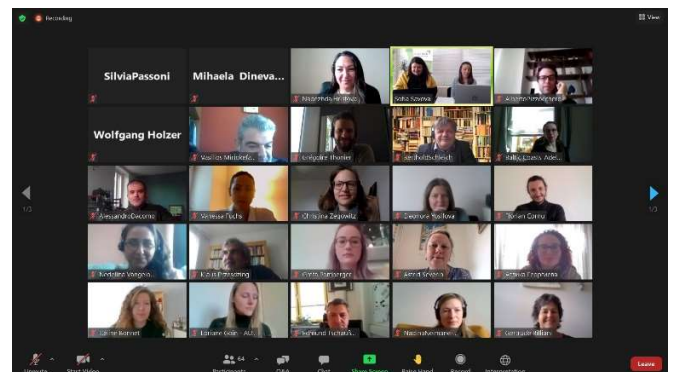
Green public procurement for generating initial demand for alternatives to single-use plastics – **Lecturer Mr. Nikolay Dimitrov, Head of the Defense Department, Gabrovo Municipality**

Eco-labelling schemes for boosting the use of alternatives to single-use plastics - **Lecturer Ms. Nadezhda Hristova, MoEW, BG, Representative of the European Eco-label for Bulgaria**

Development of secondary markets or how to support secondary raw plastic markets through effective policy & financial tools and influence societal behavior - **Lecturer Mr. Hristo Dikov, Operations Manager of Ecopack Bulgaria Inc., BG**

Barriers to market uptake or how to mitigate the impact of barriers to single-use plastics alternatives in PLASTEKO territories - **Lecturer Ms. Teodora Zhelyazkova, Sales Director of Ate Plast Ltd.**

Besides the thematic panels, the 70 participants in the event also took part in 2 interactive games, directly related to 2 of the panels: "What does this sign mean?" and "Find the Alternative!".



At the end of the workshop, they were divided into 4 discussion groups similar to the panels, in which they had the opportunity to discuss with each other their experience, upcoming challenges and possible solutions in the future.

The report and overview of the workshop is available [here](#).

Stakeholder meetings overview in PLASTEKO regions

FRANCE

In the framework of PLASTEKO project and in connection with the animation of the Regional Network for Eco-responsibility and Sustainable Development (RREDD), AURA-EE organized the 3rd stakeholders meeting on March 30, 2021, in order to interact with local authorities and plastics companies and encourage public purchasing of products incorporating recycled plastic.



The involvement of local authorities through public procurement is an important lever of the regional strategy. The [French law](#), voted early 2020, sets out an obligation for public purchasers to buy products with a re-use component or incorporating recycled material. Some of the products listed in the decree are made of plastic and present an opportunity for regional manufacturers to develop the production of recycled plastic products if the market is supported by public purchase.

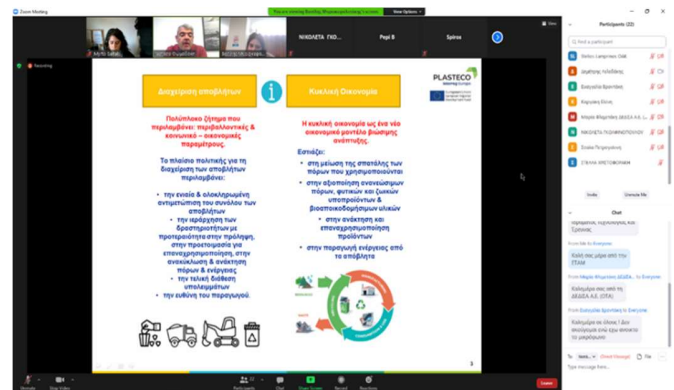
Around 50 participants discussed about the need of exchanges between public and private actors. Indeed, companies in the region are already offering products made from recycled plastic but public actors need guarantees proving the rate of recycled material in the product.

On their side, companies need access to quality recycled material and the challenge of improving the collection and recycling of plastics is important.

GREECE

The Municipality of Rethymno has effectively conducted the first two stakeholder meetings. The 1st regional stakeholder meeting was held via zoom platform on February 23rd, 2021 in order to achieve stakeholders' engagement. The attendees included representatives of

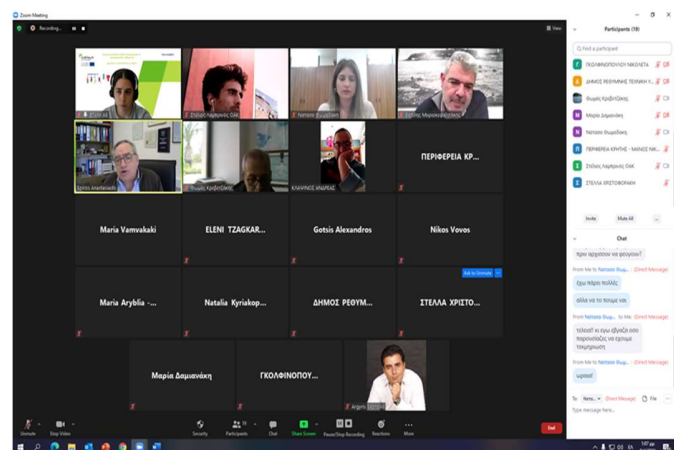
regional authorities, research institutions, academia, enterprises, and business associations.



During the meeting, the basic information of the PLASTEKO project; its goals, the partnership and the outcomes to date were presented. Moreover, the results of the evaluation of social and economic barriers against sustainable development in the Municipality of Rethymno were introduced and the following were highlighted:

- Stakeholders' willingness and excitement about the Project
- Public's lack of knowledge about recycling.
- The importance of the Municipality of Rethymno to raise awareness about recycling.

The 2nd regional stakeholder meeting took place via zoom on April 9th, 2021.



The Municipality of Rethymno presented the key elements of two studies prepared by the Association of Baltic Coasts and the Auvergne – Rhone – Alpes Energy Environment Agency and the main outputs of the 1st interregional workshop organized by the Cluster of Environmental Technologies Bavaria (UCB). The key conclusions were:

- The important role of the Municipality of Rethymno to formulate policies and support recycling actions
- The lack of information about microplastics'/ plastics' use for the HORECA sector in Greece
- The existing environmental legislation and circular economy action plan and a territory ready to implement them

BULGARIA

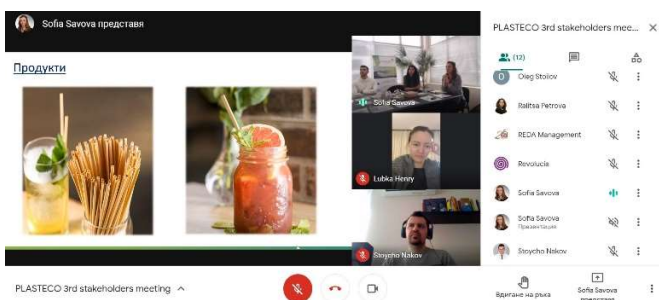
On March 18, 2021, Stara Zagora Regional Economic Development Agency held the third meeting with stakeholders on INTERREG Europe project PLASTEKO. Given the deteriorating epidemic situation in the country, participation in the meeting was mainly online.



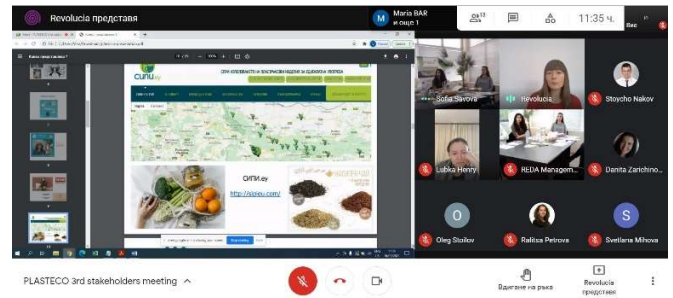
The main topic of conversation was the market placement of alternatives to single-use plastic products, given the upcoming interregional workshop on the same topic.

Two presentations were given during the meeting:

-An alternative to plastic straws made of wheat by Alexandra Nissimova, SLAMka



- The first zero waste online shop in Bulgaria by Vera Markova, Green Revolucia



The presentations provoked a lively discussion on the topic of alternatives to single-use plastic products, especially in view of the EU Directive coming into force in July 2021, which bans the use of 7 of the most common disposable plastic products. Of course, the meeting passed under the motto "zero waste", generating no plastic waste.

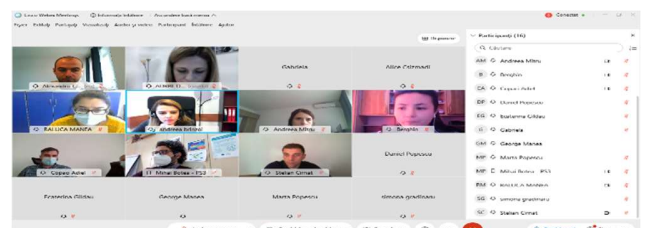
ROMANIA

Bucharest-Ilfov Regional Development Agency organized on the 20th of January 2021 the second stakeholders group meeting of PLASTEKO.

The agenda of the event included:

- the presentation of the implementation stage of the project
- the A1.1 Report on territorial-specific economic and social barriers against more sustainable plastic consumption
- the A1.3 Report on measures to curb aquatic litter and production of patterns
- the campaign "My Sea" as a successful example of reducing plastic waste in the coastal area.

The participants were representatives of the Romanian Ministry of the Environment, Waters and Forests, the University of Bucharest - Centre for Environmental Research and Impact Studies, the Agency for Environmental Protection Bucharest, Bucharest 3rd District City Hall and associations engaged in the field of waste management and environment protection.



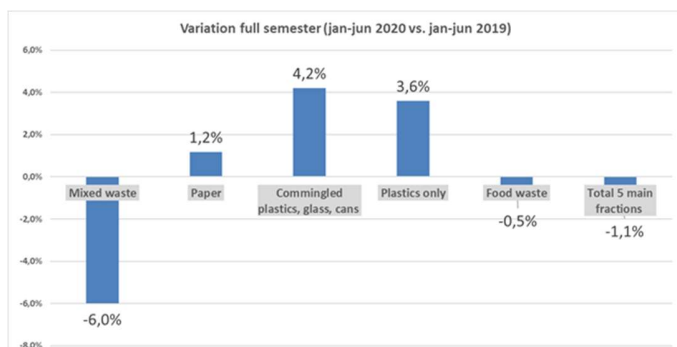
The information presented and the topics discussed had a real potential of adding value to the work carried out by the Romanian stakeholders and of contributing to the improvement of the regional development policies and programs in the field of environmental protection.

ITALY

As the Lombardy Government is reviewing its overall waste management programme, the 4th regional stakeholders meeting in Lombardy Region, held online on 2 February, focused on the PLASTEKO project updates, the broader plastic waste management issues and their perspectives for the regional strategy: in particular, project reports and outcomes of the micro plastics workshop were presented.

Updates to Lombardy’s regional waste management programme, currently in progress, focus on urban wastes, special wastes and prevention, besides a regional programme to better manage the wastes derived from packaging. The process has started in October 2020 with a Scoping Document and assessments of the measures are being gathered until October 2021. The evaluation is based on a participative approach that includes public forums and technical tables as well as environmental assessment conferences.

A focus on urban plastic waste was presented by the consortium composed of ARS Ambiente srl, Oikos Progetti, the Milan Polytechnic University and ETRA. Estimates on the first semester of 2020, that included the strictest lockdown periods, show a 3.6 percent increase in the separate collection of plastic-only wastes: the second highest compared to the same period in 2019 after the mixed plastic, glass and multi-material collection, that grew by 4.2 percent.



The new Regional Waste Management Programme (PRGR) plans to increase both quantity and quality of plastics capture. Separate collection may grow from 29.3 kg per resident per year in 2019 to 39 kg in 2027. Overall, plastic waste is expected to decrease thanks to prevention: in line with existing and upcoming regulations on circular economy, and the SUP – Single Use Plastic directive in particular, single-use will be prevented by promoting short supply chains, tap drinking water and reusable containers for food and drinks.

Break spaces in schools will be reshuffled in sustainable form based on the pilots at Palazzo Lombardia, the regional government’s headquarters, while purchases of loose food products with reusable containers brought from home will be supported. As to recycling, chemical recycling will be encouraged to retrieve also the plastic components that can’t be retrieved mechanically. The PRGR will also include actions to raise awareness on microplastics through a dedicated Best Practice web portal.

The discussion highlighted how the programme is also a valid tool to implement the virtuous policies and best practices shared thanks to the PLASTEKO project and is helping the regional government’s efforts to support companies in investment for sustainable innovation and enabling the positioning of alternative materials on the market.

The Great Styrian Spring Clean Up 2021

"I am proud that I was part of this initiative"

Article by Greta Teresa Pomberger, PLASTEKO assistant project manager in Styria region



The Great Styrian Spring Clean- Up is an important anti-littering campaign in Styria. This year, this initiative took place in collaboration with the PLASTEKO project for the first time. Since its start in the year 2008, a total of more than two million kilograms of litter left behind in nature has been collected by volunteers guided by the motto "Stop Littering". With good reason this event is the largest litter collection campaign in Europe.

This year, the Spring Clean- Up took place for the 13th time – of course in compliance with all necessary prevention measures with respect to the current pandemic situation. From April 14 2021 to May 29 2021, participants could register themselves and were provided the necessary equipment to collect the waste. In this way citizens made an extremely important and even fun contribution to environmental protection in Styria. And not to forget, there was also something to win for the participants.

In my position as a PLASTEKO project member (Department Waste and Resource Management, Directorate 14- Office of the Regional Government of Styria) I didn't need to be told twice and so I planned a whole weekend for the Styrian Spring Clean- Up. I motivated my eco-conscious friends to join me and, while taking all Covid-19 measures into account, the collection of litter in the natural areas around Graz got started. Equipped with special pink trash bags, gloves and chocolate - everything was delivered conveniently to

our homes by the organizers - we set out into nature in the morning.



To be honest, we didn't expect to fill more than two bags with litter. But it was shocking how much waste we found in the nature. From the "typical" items that end up in the trash every day, such as used tissues, plastic bottles and other packaging, to items that you would never expect to find in nature, such as an oriental carpet, pieces of clothing and tiles, everything was found. This deeply shocked us.



It was also particularly exhausting to pick up the many cigarette butts that some smokers still throw on the ground, despite the availability of trash cans nearby.



Our collection path was also crossed by a small lake and a creek. We therefore showed full physical effort and fished the litter out of the waters as well. Here were

mainly metal cans and old plastic bottles (partly still full and unopened) to find.



Many passers-by thanked us collectors and this motivated us to collect even more litter, even though this was quite exhausting after a few hours. At the end of the trash collection weekend, we were out in nature for a total of 10 hours. The result of our cleaning were 8 garbage bags, full of all kinds of objects that people had carelessly thrown away.



The Styrian Spring Clean Up is now over for us. Nevertheless, we have been inspired and we have decided to pick up litter in nature once a month at weekends. The feeling you get afterwards is just great. You did something meaningful for nature, you were out in the fresh air and also the two dogs that were in the litter picking team had their well needed run. For me it was a special moment at the end of the Clean Up-weekend when one of my friends (whom I had to persuade to join me) said: "I am proud that I was part of this initiative". This newsletter article is based on my own

experience and I can only recommend all convinced PLASTEKO colleagues to be inspired by this Styrian initiative.



You can read more about the Styrian Spring Clean Up initiative on the PLASTEKO Interreg page in an additional article:

<http://www.interregeurope.eu/plasteco/news/news-article/11819/the-great-styrian-spring-clean-up-2021/>

More information (in German) can be found here: www.facebook.com/steirischerfruehjahrsputz

Microplastics flows in the Baltic Sea region



On May 21, 2021, a seminar on the protection of the marine environment took place, gathering experts with knowledge on sea pollution, biodiversity, and ecosystem services in the Baltic Sea. During the event, a presentation on the current state of microplastics within the Baltic Sea region was held by the Latvian Institute of Aquatic Ecology (LHEI).

Ieva Putna-Nīmane from the LHEI presented the preliminary findings of the INTERREG project Fanplastic-sea. The project aims to remove microplastic pollution before it enters the sea. Within the project, samples are gathered in various locations and pilot projects are developed to retain microplastics. The sampling sites cover lakes, waste water treatment plants, rivers, rainwater drains on high-speed roads, football fields and more.

The preliminary results from sampling sites in Norway show that the concentration of microplastics is low in the mountain lakes compared to football fields covered with

artificial grass. The variety of microplastics is also much higher near the football fields.

Within the project, several pilot projects are developed to filter microplastics in waste water treatment plants, from melting snow, and rainwater. Reed beds are mentioned as one of the solutions for filtering runoff from streets, however, the question of filter utilization still remains crucial to avoid the transfer of microplastics to the environment.

The seminar was organised within the project “Improving knowledge on the state of the marine environment”, financed by the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund 2014-2020. The project is led by Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development of the Republic of Latvia, with the consultative support by Baltic Environmental Forum-Latvia.

Tourism sustainability in European Coastal Areas

The **Municipality of Rethymno** in the context of promoting PLASTEKO, consistently disseminates the project goals and actions to achieve raising public awareness. Therefore, an interactive meeting was arranged with high school students who already participate in an “Erasmus+” project entitled “*Tourism sustainability in European Coastal Areas*”.



During this interactive meeting, the correlation to sustainability, tourism, and circular economy were discussed and the connection between the two projects was concluded. Further collaboration between the projects was decided and the participants/representatives renewed their meeting.

Additionally, the PLASTEKO project was introduced to Rethymno’s Tourism Committee. This Committee

consists of around 40 participants of all touristic sectors of the municipality (hoteliers, shopkeepers, restaurant owners, etc.). A fruitful discussion was conducted aiming the follow up actions to comply with single-use plastics and enhancing plastics’ recycling in the touristic sector.

German Cabinet passed amendment of packaging law

The German Cabinet acknowledged the duty to offer reusable packaging for take-away.

Restaurants, bistros and cafes that sell food and drinks for to-go will be obliged from 2023 to also offer their products in reusable packaging. The reusable options must not be more expensive than the product in the disposable packaging.

Mandatory deposit in the beverage sector will be extended. From 2022, a deposit will also be mandatory on all non-returnable plastic beverage bottles. And from 2025, PET non-returnable beverage bottles must contain at least 25 percent recycled plastic, from 2030 this quota will increase to at least 30 percent and will then apply to all non-returnable plastic bottles.

Both German packaging policy and amendments are available [here](#).

Looking forward to...

- The lessons learnt from the A3.3 workshop on how to raise awareness on plastic littering and promote the purchase of products from recycled plastics.
- The lessons learnt from the A.3.4 study visit on effective waste management policies and measures to reduce plastics waste landfilling and incineration that will take place in the Region of Styria.
- The results of the new policy advancement activities on public procurement practices, territorial targets for the uptake of recycled plastics, the phasing-out single-use plastic packaging & sustainability strategy development
- The 5th newsletter.
- The forthcoming activities of the PLASTEKO consortium.



PROJECT PARTNERS



MUNICIPALITY OF RETHYMINO



LOMBARDY REGION



REGION OF STYRIA



STARA ZAGORA REGIONAL ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT AGENCY



CLUSTER OF ENVIRONMENTAL
TECHNOLOGIES BAVARIA



AUVERGNE-RHÔNE-ALPES ENERGY
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