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PLASTEKO NEWSLETTER

PLASTEKO
Interreg Europe

 European Union
European Regional
Development Fund

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THE PLASTEKO CONSORTIUM



PLASTEKO project

Dear reader,

Welcome to the fifth edition of the newsletter series of the **PLASTEKO 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 5th Virtual Meeting

The 5th project meeting of PLASTEKO was implemented virtually, although it was originally planned as a hybrid event, alongside the A3.4 Study visit on effective waste management policies and measures to reduce plastics waste landfilling and incineration.

During the meeting the overall progress of the project's activities were presented and the shortcomings-issues that the partnership is facing were thoroughly discussed. More specifically:

- The Lombardy Region presented the guidelines for the extended stakeholders' meetings and all partners presented their so far progress.
- ADRBI described the current state of the ongoing preparations for the A3.3 workshop, as well as Baltic Coasts regarding the A3.5 study visit.
- The Municipality of Rethymno presented the conclusions of the A4.1 peer-review, as well as the so far progress and the next steps of the A4.2 Joint strategic review of growth trajectories, funding mechanisms and incentives for the new plastics economy.
- The Municipality of Rethymno presented the guidelines, tips and timeline of the development of the upcoming region's action plans.
- Styria elaborated the sustainability strategy development and SZREDA presented the progress, shortcomings and way-forward of the project's Communication and Dissemination Activities.



Online-Study Visit hosted by Styria

In the 5th PLASTEKO-semester, a study visit in Graz, Austria was planned on the topic "effective waste management policies and measures to

reduce plastic waste landfilling and incineration". Just a few days before the study visit, the Austrian government announced a lockdown. In the last minute the Styrian team organized a virtual meeting of the planned workshop part. In the course of the virtual meeting, it became clear that the project partners do not want to miss the opportunity to visit the planned facilities and companies on site in the coming year. In this respect, this part of the study visit was postponed to April 2022, in hope that it will be possible for the partners to travel safely by then.



Some of the presentations shown during the virtual event are available, as videos, here:

<https://www.abfallwirtschaft.steiermark.at/cms/beitrag/12850608/163024559/>

PLASTEKO as a part of the 20th European Roundtable Sustainable Consumption and Production

PLASTEKO project was represented by the Region of Styria at the European Roundtable on Sustainable Consumption and Production (ERSCP).

On the one hand, it was a pleasure to be able to participate on site, at the University of Technology in Graz and, thus, have a personal exchange with international colleagues for the first time in a while. On the other hand, in the afternoon of September 9, 2021, PLASTEKO was also allowed to host a side event at the ERSCP 2021.

In 2021, the ERSCP set itself the task of covering a few UN Sustainable Development Goals. The core objective of the conference was the "Responsible Consumption and Production". Equally important were the topics of "Quality of Education", "Clean

Water and Sanitation", "Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure", "Sustainable Cities and Communities" and, finally, "Climate Action".



Speaker Dipl. Ing. Gudrun Obersteiner (University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences Vienna, Institute of Waste Management) and the Audience of the PLASTEKO Side Event.

PLASTEKO and its project objectives were therefore perfectly in line with the ERSCP agenda.

At the "PLASTEKO Dissemination Event", Dr. Ingrid Winter as the Head of Department, Office of the Regional Government of Styria – Directorate 14 – Department Waste and Resource Management, gave an introducing presentation of PLASTEKO, its activities and its so far achievements.

The presentation was followed by other 6 presentations, held from experts, on topics such as:

- Extended producer responsibility in the area of plastic packaging to achieve the EU collection quotas
- Sustainable photovoltaics - Increasing recyclability of PV modules
- Impact of Optimized Packaging on Food Waste Prevention Potential among consumers
- Circular Design Guidelines for Plastic Packaging - a Comparative Analysis.

In addition to these lectures, there were also two presentations on the projects "PlasticFreeDanube: Composition of macro-plastic waste in and along the Danube River" and "Development and assessment of sustainable packaging solutions in the logistics sector: The example of a German courier, express, and parcel service provider".

The topics, as well as the new interesting information they introduced us to, trigger off lively discussions between the speakers and the

audience. For example, Gudrun Obersteiner (University of Natural Resources & Life Sciences Vienna) reported which littered plastic waste was found along the Danube River during "PlasticFreeDanube". She showed littered products, some of which dated back to the 1980s (see picture below).



Even during the break between the presentations, the participants made contacts and planned potential further collaborations in the region.

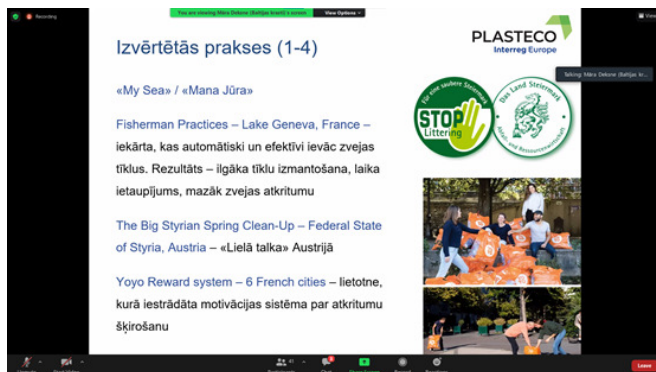
The PLASTEKO project team is grateful for the successful side event at the ERSCP 2021 with the opportunity for personal exchange and we hope that events of this kind can be held again more frequently in the future.

Website of ERSCP 2021: <https://erscp2021.eu/>

Online seminar on "Coastal litter – from challenges to solutions"

On November 17, 2021, an online seminar took place, focusing on "Coastal litter – from challenges to solutions". It was organized by the Foundation for Environmental Education in Latvia, which is the organizer of the coastal clean-up campaign "My Sea". Baltic Coasts, PLASTEKO partner in Latvia, were invited to participate with a presentation about the project and the key findings in regards to finding solutions to the plastics litter problem. During the presentation, Māra Dekšne, project manager of

PLASTEKO in Latvia, introduced the project and its objectives and presented the findings of the Report on measures to curb aquatic litter and facilitate clean-up efforts developed within PLASTEKO. The best practice examples from the report were explained to give ideas for solutions that could be transferred locally. Moreover, the key events taking place within PLASTEKO were presented and the audience was invited to join the interregional workshops and local stakeholder meetings.



Other topics of the seminar concerned the favourite recreational areas by the Latvian coastline and the summary of monitoring results from 10 years of the coastal litter monitoring and clean-up campaign “My sea”. The seminar was ended with an interactive workshop where the audience had the opportunity to discuss solutions on a municipal or community-action scale to curb littering in the coastal areas in Latvia.

The event was financially supported by the Society Integration Foundation. The funds were contributed by the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Latvia provided from the Latvian state budget.

PLASTEKO at Ecomondo: how to best manage plastics?

PLASTEKO meets Ecomondo: a natural affinity between a project with ambitious sustainability and circularity goals and one of Europe’s main events in these areas. Ecomondo is an Italian event dedicated to a circular and sustainable economy, meant by the use of renewable raw materials and the adoption of innovative energy solutions. In this scenario, on 28 October, Ecomondo became the natural stage for the Lombardy Region to present the PLASTEKO Interreg Project. The presentation explained how the project supports and shares initiatives from different European Regions, aimed

at reducing the amount of plastic waste that is disseminated and has to be disposed of.

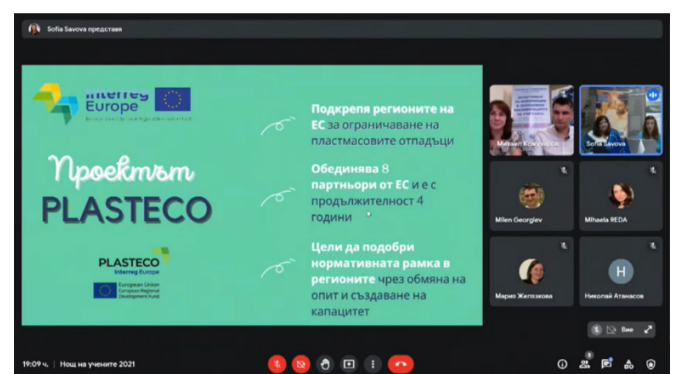
Attendees were introduced to how the project’s three-year-long first stage provides for an exchange of experiences and learning of best practices among partners, through meetings at both the regional and interregional levels and with contributions from local stakeholders. A particularly interesting initiative is the Stakeholders Group, where public and private project partners discuss and analyse how sector regulations evolve (the SUP Directive in particular) and share the main findings while also contributing to the new regional waste management programme, an important planning tool to achieve circular economy goals.



More information on the event here: <https://www.interregeurope.eu/plasteco/news/news-article/13464/plasteco-at-ecomondo-how-to-best-manage-plastics/>

PLASTEKO at 2021 European Researchers’ Night

The European Researchers' Night is a Europe-wide public event, which displays the diversity of science and its impact on citizens' daily lives in fun, inspiring ways. This year, the event took place in 29 countries on Friday 24 September 2021.



SZ REDA's team was proud to present what has been achieved so far within PLASTEKO project on

the event in Stara Zagora. Main focus of the presentation was the green future and the perspectives that the European Union opens with its regional policy.

The presentation included also ideas for alternatives of single use plastics that might be especially useful in the light of the SUP Directive that came into force earlier this year.

The event is available on [YouTube](#).

PLASTEKO at Eco-weekend on the beach

PLASTEKO project followed the hype and was also available on the beach - SZREDA took part in an eco-weekend organized jointly from "Burgas likes the youth", WWF Bulgaria and project Climate Heroes.

The focus of PLASTEKO's presentation was on single-use plastics in the light of SUP Directive, their alternatives and how to recognize eco-friendly products on the market.



SZ REDA and PLASTEKO project say a big THANK you to the organizers and the participants for their innovative spirit, excitement in their work and commitment for a better future!

European Week for Regions and Cities

In the context of the EU Regions Week, the Municipality of Rethymno (Greece) in cooperation with PROMEA & with the participation of Stara Zagora Regional Economic Development Agency

(SZREDA) co-organised an event on Green Transition, focusing on the policy response needed to restore regional value chains in a sustainable and resilient way, on 14 October 2021.



The main topics discussed were:

- How revamping waste management can support tourism-based local economies?
- What are the options in decarbonizing a regional economy?
- What is the policy response needed for the recovering regional and local economies?
- How green transition can trigger an endogenous and sustainable growth trajectory?

Stakeholder meetings overview in PLASTEKO regions

FRANCE

AURA-EE is currently preparing the 5th stakeholder meeting. During this meeting, the discussion with the regional stakeholders will be organised following 2 main thematic:

- Development of a regional Observatory to improve the quality of knowledge on regional plastic flows. The regional stakeholders show high interest towards this concern and the objective will be to discuss how to proceed in the following months implementing the observatory and addressing the remaining barriers related to data and confidentiality.
- The 2nd objective of the meeting will be to discuss about green public procurement issues, related to plastics (alternatives for single used plastics and

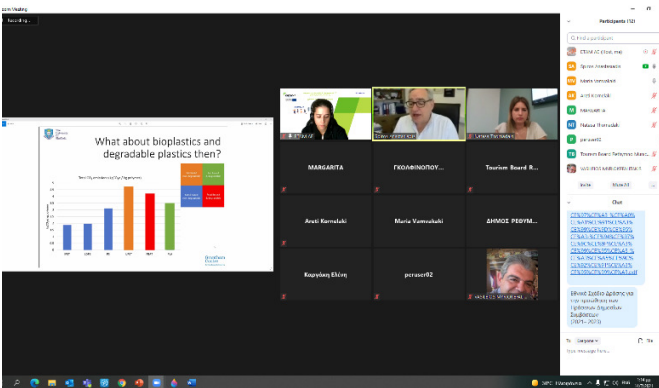
promoting plastic products with high rates of recycling content).

- It is quite possible that the use of disposable plastics might arise problems that have not been evaluated yet.



GREECE

The 3rd stakeholder meeting was organized by the municipality of Rethymno virtually via zoom platform on July 14. The attendees included representatives of the Region of Crete, the Municipality of Rethymno, research institutions, academia, and enterprises. In the context of the meeting, the findings, and conclusions of the interregional workshops entitled “How to support regional business to (a) invest on eco- innovation in plastic production and reuse and (b) facilitate the market placement of alternatives for single use plastics” were presented.



Moreover, a fruitful discussion regarding topics related to the Project emerged among the participants. The key conclusions were the following:

- Support should be provided to enterprises involved in the plastics sector so that they can be able to integrate the new data
- The waste sorting and management system does not seem to be ready in Greece to support industries

AUSTRIA

The region of Styria, organised its 4th regional stakeholder meeting, during the side event it hosted at the 20th European Roundtable Sustainable Consumption and Production. For more information on the event see above.

ROMANIA

On the 15th of July 2021, ADR-BI organised online the third regional stakeholders’ group meeting. The event gathered 20 participants from all sectors related to plastics/environmental protection activities: National Administration of Romanian Waters, University of Bucharest - Centre for Environmental Research and Impact Studies, City Halls of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Districts in Bucharest, private companies, and NGOs. ADR-BI started with the presentation of the implementation stage of PLASTECO project, future steps, and stakeholders’ involvement. During the meeting different items of interest have also been approached, such as the A.1.2 “Comparative analysis of policies to promote the separation, sorting and recycling of plastics waste at partners’ territories”, the input paper of the A3.2b Interregional workshop on how to facilitate the market placement of alternatives for single use plastics and the conclusions of the workshop and the organization by ADR-BI of the workshop on how to raise public awareness on plastic littering and to promote the purchase of products from recycled plastics.

The last point in the agenda was the presentation, discussions and debates on the draft normative act on the Guarantee-return system (SGR) in Romania, that can become a real solution for packaging in the beverage industry. Such a system will come with high collection targets and will contribute to separate sorting from the source of PET, aluminum, or glass packaging.



The discussions were very productive and in line with debating the main categories of PLASTEKO project. All stakeholders present at the meeting were surprised and pleasantly impressed of the main topics discussed.

GERMANY

The fourth regional stakeholder meeting organised by UCB (Cluster of Environmental Technologies Bavaria) took place online on July 7, 2021. The regional steering group of PLASTEKO including UCB, the city of Augsburg, the forum plastic-free Augsburg as well as the municipal waste management operator invited companies and other stakeholders to the event which was dedicated to the topic of avoiding single-use plastics in companies and institutions. Legal regulations, concrete measures in companies as well as initiatives on how unnecessary single-use plastics can be avoided were presented.

The sustainability officer of the city of Augsburg Reiner Erben welcomed the 25 participants of the online event. After his introduction, Claudia Bieloch from the Bavarian Environmental Agency presented the legal regulations in the field of single-use plastics. Afterwards, Sylvia Schaab presented the "the forum plastic-free Augsburg" and their offers to companies in the area of "Less Plastic - More Sustainability", for example in the office. Samuel Drews explained what is behind the initiative "plastic-free city" - namely a holistic concept with a certificate for companies that want to save unnecessary plastic.

One company that has already implemented many "zero waste" activities is HAWE Hydraulik. Josef Schweiger presented various measures from his company and introduced the "Zero Waste Network", in which twelve organizations are currently exchanging information on waste reducing actions.

After the very interesting and inspiring presentations, the participants exchanged views on various aspects on how to avoid single-use plastics.



Improvements of the Romanian legislation with impact on plastic waste

The Romanian Government adopted, on the 25th of August, the Emergency Ordinance on the transposition of the Directive 904/2019/EU. The objectives of this ordinance are to prevent and reduce the impact of certain plastic products on the environment, especially on the aquatic environment, and on human health, as well as to promote the transition to a circular economy with innovative and sustainable business models, products and materials, thus contributing to the efficient functioning of the internal market.

Certain categories of plastic products will be prohibited from marketing, and for other categories targets will be applied to reduce consumption. The first single use plastic products that will disappear from the market are: cutlery, straws, cleaning sticks for ears, plates (including cardboard plates with plastic wrap), sticks for balloons, polystyrene food containers, polystyrene cups and oxo degradable plastic. The stocks of disposable products that Romanian traders still have, can still be sold, the prohibition established by the new normative act refers to placing on the Romanian market of new plastic products.

A second encouraging initiative, which will have a significant impact on plastic waste, is the Romanian Government Decision on the 4th of October 2021 regulating the guarantee-return system for packaging (SGR). According to the guarantee-

return system, the quantities of packaging returned to stores will be sent in regional centers and then to recyclers. The entire infrastructure of waste collection from stores will be organized through a single system operator as it is similarly in states where the system already operates. The Government decision stipulates that, after selecting the national system operator, the whole infrastructure to be completed in October 2022.

Upcoming

In January 2022, AURA-EE will present the PLASTEKO project during a webinar, organised in Morocco. The objective of the webinar is to present and share good practices about the activities and policies implemented in France about the recycling of plastics and its integration. In this sense, we will present the activities already implemented in the framework of the PLASTEKO project. The following thematics will be examined thoroughly during the presentation: adaptation of public procurement for the end of single-used plastics; support to plastic producers to innovate for the implementation of a more circular economy (integration of recycled plastics in plastic products).

More information on the event will be uploaded in the near future on the project's website.

Looking forward to...

- The development of PLASTEKO consortium's action plans.
- The last semester of Exchange of Experience activities of the PLASTEKO project.
- The on-site realization of the A3.4 study visit, whenever the COVID-19 situation allows it so.
- The 6th newsletter.
- The forthcoming activities of the PLASTEKO consortium.





ARTNERS



MUNICIPALITY OF RETHYMNO



LOMBARDY REGION



REGION OF STYRIA



**STARA ZAGORA REGIONAL
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
AGENCY**



**CLUSTER OF ENVIRONMENTAL
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ASSOCIATION BALTIC COASTS

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