

Press release

Brussels, 17 September 2014

Cities and regions need clearer guidance on waste monitoring and efficient tools to improve their recycling strategies

The R4R conference held on 17 September 2014 in Brussels contributed to the debate on waste management targets currently under revision by giving a local and regional perspective to the discussion. The conference also debated some key economic instruments helping to improve waste prevention and recycling performances, in particular “pay as you throw” (PAYT).

Organised by [ACR+](#) in the framework of the R4R project (Regions for Recycling) with the support of the Committee of the Regions, the conference gave large room to experience sharing on waste management during two debates. Questions focused in particular on the impact of EU waste targets for European regions, on progress monitoring and on the opportunity to have differentiated targets between regions or in time. Participants also addressed success stories and challenges related to the implementation of PAYT systems and possible alternatives or complements to PAYT linking cost recovery and waste generation, more specifically landfill and incineration taxes and Extended Producer Responsibility schemes (EPR).

Large differences exist between territories, not only among Member States, but also between cities and regions – within the same country. ACR+ has been working extensively on this issue within its Observatory of municipal waste performances and its brand-new report “The EU capital cities waste performance benchmark”. No systematic pattern can be drawn from this research, but what is clear is that benchmarking is even more complicated when definitions and indicators vary from one territory to another. There is indeed a lack of harmonized and clear guidance at European level regarding the definition of municipal waste and how to monitor it.

Based on the work of ACR+’s Observatory, the [R4R project](#) led by ORDIF, OVAM and ACR+ developed a methodology highlighting waste quantities that are really aimed at being sent to recycling (dubbed DREC, for “Destination RECYcling”) thus providing a more accurate basis for comparison between European territories. Such a comparison and benchmarking is facilitated thanks to the [R4R online tool](#) based on the DREC methodology.

The package on circular economy recently proposed by the European Commission paves the way for the revision of the European waste legislation and in particular the waste management targets. Achieving ambitious waste targets is possible. Several ACR+ members and R4R

partners have demonstrated this. Such aspiring targets are welcome to push strong local and regional policies if the appropriate framework and tools are used. A variety of instruments are available to cities and regions, non-exclusive and complementary, for instance in the case of economic instruments such as variable charges (PAYT), taxes and EPR. Those instruments will not have the same effect in all territories, but networking and the exchange of good practices between cities and regions with similar characteristics and constraints can help local and regional authorities improve their waste and resources management performances and reach the targets.

ENDS

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