

Working Group workshop on circular economy in urban areas: challenges of re-use and recycling of plastics and textile (7/11/2019, Brussels)

On 7 November, ACR+ and URBANREC partners animated a working group activity targeting specifically local and regional authorities, in order to facilitate transfer of URBANREC results, share good practices and help improve local and regional authorities' strategies. The workshop addressed how to develop and implement a step-by-step strategy about re-use and recycling of non-packaging plastics and non-clothing textiles. Experience and approaches from the participants were exchanged in order to support the development of roadmaps for implementation.

Discussions were aiming at addressing the following topics:

- Governance: what stakeholders to involve, how and when
- Targeting and Monitoring: how to set up quantitative targets, how to ensure that accurate data is gathered, how to make the link with climate policy and carbon impact
- Citizens' engagement: how to reach non-motivated individuals and move from awareness to commitment
- Costs: how to make sure that the costs for the municipalities are covered
- Public procurement: what tools (criteria, assessment tools) can efficiently support the use of public procurement

PARTICIPANTS

- ACR+ (facilitation and moderation)
- AIMPLAS
- ARC
- Berlin
- Bornova municipality
- BPP
- Consorcio
- DV – Province of Valencia
- Fraunhofer ICT
- Greater Copenhagen
- OVAM
- University of Amsterdam
- Vitoria-Gasteiz municipality
- Warsaw municipality
- IYTE



1. Workshop on recycling

Governance

- As a start, discussion focused on public-private partnership (PPP), and the difference to tendering. PPP are generally long-term, splitting risks and benefits between partners, and more flexible. Tenders include list of requirements (which could act as barriers) and are too restrictive when there is need for innovation.
- It is not one size fits all. Every country and material cycle maybe needs another model, customized for the specific context. Several models need to be provided by the EU, together with targeting and monitoring guidelines. These are probably already available, but none of the participants was aware of them.
- The industry needs the certainty to have good quality raw materials for a longer period (15-20 years) to be sure the investments are worth it. A clear long-term contract needs to be established with a fixed price. A contract like this is not possible at the moment in a public-private partnership. Contracts mostly go along with the duration of a political term. Also, innovation not always possible with long-term contracts.
- The situation of a PPP is different depending on the country. Warsaw for example would like to have their own treatment installations. And a public procurement procedure is only possible for 48 months. Furthermore, the collection and treatment price in Poland is €250/t. Why would private companies do business with the public authority if they can arrange it by themselves? Waste is a great business, but the city of Warsaw only has a small impact on the legislation.
- In Valencia CAS private. CAS have small space and have to make a choice.
- What is in the hands of the municipalities? The collection → importance of quality.
- What is not in the hands of the municipalities? The treatment of waste.
- In a PPP contract, multiple obligations should be mentioned (Recycling materials; Uses of recycling materials; General recycling targets; Targets on what you want them to do with your waste).
- Role public sector should be stronger in controlling.

Targeting and monitoring

- Set realistic targets
- How can municipalities control what is happening outside their hands? In Flanders they can decide where and who treats and collects the waste. But this is not the case everywhere

Citizens' engagement

- Trend for elections to go green
- Pay-as-you-throw (PAYT) systems to raise awareness and make the link with generation of waste

Costs

- Raw materials are mostly cheaper than recycled materials; this poses the main problem
- Collection costs are linked to price of the materials. But if more is recycled, the demand will be higher and the price will be lower.



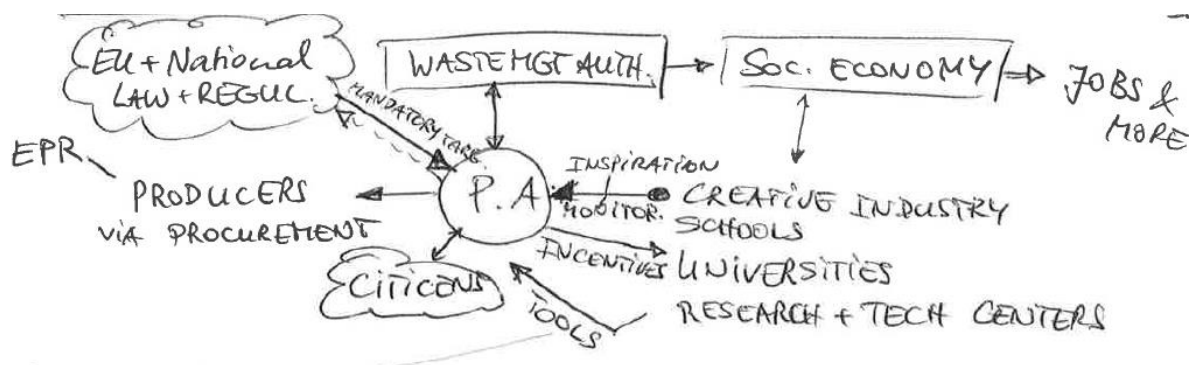
- Necessity to use another instrument in the legislation to make the public sector more attractive
- When price of landfilling is too low, the “business” is not attractive
- Incineration for energy is profitable but the recycling targets still need to be somehow reached
- Give subsidies in the direction wanted

2. Workshop on re-use

The workshop started with a discussion on the clarification of re-use. A specific point of discussion was whether re-use implies a transfer from one user to another user. The EU definition is that re-use means any operation by which products or components that are not waste are used again for the same purpose for which they were conceived.

Governance

From a public authority’s perspective, many stakeholders must be involved:



Targeting and monitoring

- Monitoring can be implemented via data collection system at re-use centres (support tools can help, e.g. RREUSE calculator)
- Make targets mandatory (local, EU level), in order to stimulate actions to increase re-use
- To be linked to subsidies to re-use centres and other initiatives (dependent on efforts)

Citizens’ engagement

- Objective to motivate the non-motivated
- Consumers could be incentivised via an action on price: re-used products cheaper (e.g. via VAT), original products more expensive (e.g. by including externalities like CO2 related costs)
- Education: start at very young age; action in environmental classes
- Showing good examples
- Rewards (e.g. tax reduction if items brought to specific locations)

Costs

- Reselling of second hand products by social economy actors
- EPR could include re-use
- Not only monetary benefits: also in terms of jobs and social value

3. Towards local and regional roadmaps on re-use and recycling of bulky items

This working group meeting is a contribution to the preparation of roadmaps at local and regional level about re-use bulky products and recycling of bulky waste. Within the URBANREC project, ACR+ drafted [guidelines](#) aiming at presenting a general overview on bulky waste management along with the main outputs of the URBANREC project to inform residents, promote re-use and source separation, and recover mixed bulky waste. The guidelines also include policy recommendations to improve the legislation related to bulky waste.

It is important to keep in mind that bulky waste management systems are not necessarily transferable, and that the choice of collection and management systems must be done according to the local specificities and possibilities. However, it is also important to highlight the importance of preserving the integrity of products and/or materials during collection, to make re-use and recycling possible, and to make the collection of mixed bulky waste as unattractive as possible to promote source separation.

To secure the population's involvement, it is important to provide them with:

- **Consistent and clear information** on the collection system, explaining the different possibilities to bring their items or waste for re-use and recycling, detailing how source-separation should be done, and presenting the most preferred solutions first (e.g. re-use).
- **A convenient collection system** that takes into consideration the possibilities and constraints of inhabitants: a dense network of collection point, easy to access and open at convenient time, and/or on-demand collection that ensure quality sorted items;
- **Motivations and incentives** to go for the best option (re-use, recycling, then energy recovery), either by charging for mixed waste collection, or rewarding for source separation. Another motivation can be to highlight and inform inhabitants on the positive outcomes of their behaviours: job creation, positive environmental impact, production of quality second-hand products or secondary raw materials, etc.

While more ambitious bulky waste management systems might be more demanding for inhabitants, it is also important to highlight the fact that the URBANREC surveys tended to show that residents show interest in contributing to re-use activities by making their items available to re-use organisations.

The URBANREC project identified different solutions to improve local bulky waste management systems; data show that there is a significant potential to improve the current management of bulky waste across Europe, which mainly relies on landfilling. It seems that the implementation of URBANREC technologies could contribute to significant improvement in climate mitigation, with interesting economic outlooks.

More information can be found on the [URBANREC website](#).

ACR+ will continue to work on the topic of bulky waste management with its members. More information can be found on [ACR+ website](#).

