

# OUR IMPACT 2015



ZERO  
WASTE  
EUROPE

# COMMENT FROM THE DIRECTOR

I'm proud to present to you what is our first interactive, online annual report as Zero Waste Europe (ZWE). Indeed, whilst the zero waste movement has been around for decades the creation of ZWE as an organisation is rather recent. However, despite our very limited resources we have already managed to have an impact that is remarkable for an organisation our size.

During 2015 we have driven substantial change at local, national and European level. We have created a network of European municipalities moving towards zero waste together, we have produced groundbreaking research in the fields of waste and climate, and producer responsibility, we have denounced breaches in EU law by waste management installations, we have run international campaigns such as the plastic bag free day, supported the creation of new local groups and effectively lobbied European policy-makers in the field of waste, climate and products policies.

In December we co-organised the GAIA Global Meeting in Paris, along with Zero Waste France. This event brought together 80 representatives of the GAIA network from 35 countries, providing the opportunity for planning further collaborative campaigning on key areas such as zero waste cities, plastic and air pollution prevention, and climate justice. The meeting identified key trends in waste management in the different regions and common tactics to promote our zero waste vision worldwide.



# COMMENT FROM THE DIRECTOR #2

From an organisational perspective we have seen how the growing interest in zero waste has allowed us to increase our budget and our staff in the course of 2015. We have opened a new office in Brussels and in Manchester and we have started working in new countries such as Poland.

Nevertheless, waste, with all its might, continues to be one of the most iconic features of our civilisation; it is ubiquitous and it continues to grow in tonnage and complexity. In 2015 we have illustrated with real examples and citizen mobilisation that there is another way; that it is possible to create jobs, resilience, prosperity, fight climate change, close the loop and many other things without trashing the planet. Above all we have proven that zero waste is about respecting ourselves and the future generations.

Because there is no 'away', I can only expect that the traction and interest that zero waste has caught in Europe will continue to grow. And we will be there to help it.

Joan Marc Simon – Executive Director of Zero Waste Europe





# Waste Policy & Best Practice



The movement for a zero waste future has grown significantly over 2015, with a zero waste concepts and ideas feeding into European and national policy. Incredible actions from Zero Waste Europe Members across Europe have put zero waste practice firmly on the agenda for policy makers and municipal bodies. At Zero Waste Europe, Ferran Rosa joined the team in May as Waste Policy Officer, joining Joan Marc Simon and Mariel Vilella in working on waste policy and best practice, dramatically increasing the capacity of the organisation to support local groups in promoting visionary zero waste ideas and opposing out-dated dump and burn waste management models.

Over the course of the year working closely with local members we produced three new case studies of zero waste best practice, including a groundbreaking study of the best European district, that of Contarina, Italy that was released in February. We further published a study of the first Zero Waste European Capital; Ljubljana, Slovenia in May. The other case study being of Gipuzkoa, in the Basque Country in June. Together these studies were further able to demonstrate that zero waste solutions are possible for cities big and small alike, furthermore they are possible to implement without direct support from national legislation, and can be achieved in the short term.

On the European level, the development of the Circular Economy Package by the European Commission (EC) presented an opportunity to raise and enshrine zero waste policies across the EU. Sending a powerful message about the necessity to move beyond the paradigm of a linear economy, and into the future with a truly circular economy. Unfortunately the relatively ambitious original Circular Economy Package was withdrawn from the EC's 2015 work programme in January, and along with a number of other organisations we questioned this decision and asked for the evidence to justify the packages withdrawal, sending an open letter to Frans Timmermans, the Vice President of the European Commission. The European Commission had at this stage ostensibly committed itself to a more ambitious proposal, something supported by the European Parliament, and we continued to engage with the redrafting process and feed in over the course of the year.



It was not until December that the new package was released, and to our disappointment, it was weaker than the previous package, leading to us criticising it upon release. Our work on the Circular Economy Package has continued over into 2016, and we will continue to fight for a stronger and more comprehensive package.

We spoke in different forums and conferences, promoting zero waste in front of the European Parliament, the waste industry, local authorities, civil society organisations, and more. We also supported our members in the push for transition at the local level, for example in Madrid or Derry.

We organised two study tours: one in June for a Chinese delegation from Hua Foundation (Flanders, Sweden and Italy), and a second one in November for Spanish municipalities to Italy (Milan and Contarina). The second one has positively encouraged some of these cities to commit to zero waste or, at least, to have effective separate collection schemes.

In December we announced the results of our 'Power of Compost' video competition which saw a whole range of fantastic entries espousing the benefits and joy of composting. The videos stressed the community and creative aspects of composting and illustrated the transformative potential of compost.



# Products, Good Design & Plastics



To truly tackle the problem of waste we need to address the problem of bad design, superfluous products, toxic plastics and over-consumption. Our 'Products, Good Design & Plastics' campaign seeks to prevent the creation of this waste and wasteful products in the first place. In 2015, our campaign on these issues was developing and expanding, but nevertheless we were able to make a considerable impact and present policy influencing pieces at a number of key moments.

In May, we participated in the Stockholm Convention emphasising the problematic role that the European Union plays in international toxics negotiations. When the EU published new standards for three toxic flame retardant chemicals widely used in building insulation, upholstery and electronics (HBCD, PentaBDE, and OctaBDE), these chemicals listed in the UN Stockholm Convention for global elimination are dangerous endocrine (hormonal system) disruptors and present a threat to the safe recycling of products. In response to this standard, Zero Waste Europe together with Friends of the Earth Europe (FoEE), ChemTrust and the European Environmental Bureau (EEB), called on the EU to ensure suitable precautions and compliance with chemical waste legislation to ensure that these chemicals are not found in toys or other such products

# July 3rd International bag free day



[www.plasticbagfreeday.org](http://www.plasticbagfreeday.org)

The 3rd of July saw the sixth International Plastic Bag Free Day, this year with added significance due to the European Directive 2015/720/UE coming into force, to reduce the consumption of lightweight plastic carrier bags. The day itself saw incredible actions taking place over five continents. From flash-mobs and trolley races in Hungary, to a large forum exposing to truth about some of the false alternatives to plastic bags, in Manila, Philippines.

The feedback and questions raised as part of the Plastic Bag Free Day fed directly into our development of a position paper on oxo-degradable plastic bags as being incompatible with a zero waste future and misleading in their claim of biodegradability.

With packaging waste making up the most significant aspect of residual waste it is essential to tackle this waste stream by removing excess packaging made from un-recyclable materials. In our analysis of the EC's proposal for the Packaging and Packaging Waste Directive in December, we presented some key recommendations to the Commission on how to set ambitious and feasible targets for reducing packaging waste, which go far beyond their original suggestions.

The area of products, good design and plastics is set to become a key work area for Zero Waste Europe over the next year, with growing attention on the impact of plastic pollution on our oceans and the way in which redesign is an essential aspect of the principles of a circular economy.

# Climate, Energy & Air Pollution



2015 was a massive year for climate campaigning. With the COP21 climate summit taking place in Paris in December, this set the tone for much of the year. Our work on the potential for zero waste to contribute to a low carbon economy was ground-breaking and made it possible to demonstrate the true climate impact of waste management.

The lead up to the Paris COP21 was jump-started by the release of our new commissioned report produced with environmental consultants Enomia. This report, released in partnership with ACR+ and Zero Waste France, emphasised the importance of solutions from higher up the Waste Hierarchy having significantly more impact in the prevention of greenhouse gas emissions.

Our work to increase the understanding about the connections between waste and climate change centred on the massive impact that zero waste solutions can have for the creation of a low-carbon economy. In September we launched a series of blog posts in the lead up to the Paris Climate Summit laying out how zero waste strategies contribute to mitigate climate change and build resilient local economies with case studies in four different regions of the world, groundbreaking composting schemes in Brazil, the amazing progress towards zero waste made in Kerala, India, recycling workers the United States organising for a better livelihood, and the Alternatiba festival in Paris, France highlighting alternatives and zero waste solutions to climate change.

We also provided analysis and further accountability to the flows of European climate finance to the waste sector in the Global South, frequently misdirected to support the burning of waste in incinerators or cement plants. Our investigation focused on NAMAs (Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Action), in Costa Rica, India and Colombia, showing that there is a need to ensure that climate finance supports truly sustainable, low-carbon and toxic-free options in the waste sector.



In this way, we continued to challenge false solutions to climate change, such as extreme & dirty energy from waste, often proposed as a 'green-washing' of incineration technology with so-called 'Waste-to-Energy' incineration.

In the run-up to the COP21, we were able to highlight the continued threat to air quality caused by incinerators and cement kiln co-incineration, often promoted as "solutions" to climate change. In November we produced a report documenting multiple breaches of legally defined emission limits, limits which are already significantly higher than recommended safety limits by the World Health Organisation (WHO). The report included cases studies that illustrate air pollution standard breaches took place in at least 5 incineration facilities across Europe, presenting potential environmental and public health safety risks, particularly for surrounding communities. This report was released in the context of the Second International Gathering Against Waste Incineration in Cement Kilns, celebrated in Montcada I Reixach (Catalonia) and co-organised with the local organisation Montcada Aire Net.

Our presence in the Paris Climate negotiations opened with the conference 'Zero Waste: A Key Solution Pathway for a Low Carbon Economy', kindly hosted by Zero Waste France. The event brought together high-level policy makers, cutting-edge researchers, visionary local leaders, recycling and reuse workers and entrepreneurs, showing both the theory and practice of zero waste strategies as climate solutions. Whilst in Paris we also co-organised the international gathering of the GAIA (Global Alliance for Incineration Alternatives) network, along with Zero Waste France. This gathering saw 80 participants from 35 countries coming together to share strategy and tactics across regions about how to best tackle harmful and destructive waste management practice and extreme energy, whilst promoting zero waste alternatives.



The recyclers movement across the world has grown not only enabling their work to be recognised as a fundamental part of waste management programs in the Global South but also as environmental and educational agents that directly contribute to reducing emissions through the recovery of resources. Come and hear these amazing stories of recyclers from Africa, Asia and Latin



Waste and climate change are strongly connected. Zero Waste solutions present a real opportunity to mitigate climate change, and they are taking strong roots in many parts of the globe. More and more communities and governments are recognising it as a key solution pathway to reduce climate impacts.



## **Report**

November 2015

# **Air Pollution from Waste Disposal: Not for Public Breath**



Moreover during the COP, we organised and facilitated talks with waste-pickers from the global south and a number of other groups and individuals, and promoted new research which demonstrates the extraordinary potential of compost to reduce green house gas emissions and increase the fertility of soils. We simultaneously opposed the greenwashing attempts inside the COP21 where the incineration industry attempted to downplay their impact as polluters, as well as actively confronting ongoing incineration projects in Paris, with the proposed redevelopment of the Ivry Incinerator.

# OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

3

New Case Studies

34

Events Staff Participated  
in

4

New Members

1,300

Twitter Followers in  
January 2015

3,131

Twitter Followers in  
December 2015

18

Members in Total

# OUR ACHIEVEMENTS # 2

2,675

Facebook Followers in  
January 2015

4,762

Facebook Followers in  
December 2015

2

New Members

1,300

Twitter Followers in  
January 2015

3,131

Twitter Followers in  
December 2015

3,674

Publication Downloads

# OUR RESOURCES INCOME & FUNDS RAISED

**70.6%**

€361,502.31

EU Grants

**22.6%**

€115,693.91

Foundation Grants

**1.9%**

€9,750

Study Tours

**0.5%**

€2,706.22

Grants from Private  
Companies

**2.8%**

€14,095.97

Other Income

# OUR RESOURCES COSTS & SPENDING

**37.8%**

€193,205

Personnel

**5.7%**

€130,058

Travel & Subsistence

**25.6%**

€158,030

External Assistance &  
Subcontracting

**30.9%**

€29,358

Overheads

For more detailed financial information about Zero Waste Europe please see our entry in the EU Transparency Register: <http://bit.ly/1qvTwKZ4>

# OUR FUNDERS

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**Global Green Grants Fund**

# OUR FUNDERS #2



**Education, Audiovisual & Cultural Executive Agency**



**Patagonia**



**XminusY**



**GAIA (Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives)**

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# OUR NETWORK



- Amigos de la Tierra (Spain)
- Both Ends (Netherlands)
- Estratègia Catalana Residu Zero (Catalonia, Spain)
- Humusz Zero Waste Hungary
- Retorna (Spain)
- Residuo Cero Madrid
- UKWIN (UK)
- Za Zemiata (Bulgaria)
- Zero Waste France
- Zero Waste Italy
- Zero Waste Montenegro
- Zero Waste North West (Northern Ireland, UK)
- Zero Waste Slovenia
- Zero Waste Romania
- Zero Waste Alliance UK
- Zero Zabor - (Basque Country, Spain)
- Zelena Akcija (Friends of the Earth Croatia)
- Centre for Environmental Solutions (Belarus)
- Ecological Recycling Society (Greece)
- Association for a Clean Environment, Let's Do It Macedonia



# THANK YOU!

[REPORT.ZEROWASTE EUROPE.EU](https://report.zerowasteurope.eu)

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