THERE IS NO TIME TO WASTE

ZERO WASTE EUROPE 2019

ANNUAL REPORT
CONTENTS

ZERO WASTE EUROPE INTRODUCTION

NOTE FROM THE DIRECTORS

IMPACT ACROSS THE WORLD

IMPACT AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

SUCCESS STORIES FROM THE NETWORK

IMPACT AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

IMPACT ON POLICY

SHAPING THE CONVERSATION

IMPACT EVENTS

THE PEOPLE BEHIND IT ALL

OUR LIFE SUPPORT

THANK YOUS
Zero Waste Europe (ZWE) is the European network of communities, local leaders, experts, and change agents working towards the elimination of waste in our society and to empower communities to redesign their relationship with resources, and to adopt smarter lifestyles and sustainable consumption patterns in line with a circular economy.

Movement building and coordination
Our expertise in coordination, movement building and process facilitation is well recognised. We coordinate a network of 31 European members, we facilitate the Break Free From Plastic Movement (BFFP) in Europe with 80+ organisations, and the Rethink Plastic Alliance (RPa) with 10 international organisations. We also facilitate negotiations with big companies and empower small companies to get organised.
Advocacy work to EU policies
We have a strong record of being influential in EU policy making. We are a regular contributor and credible actor, with good access to institutions and media. We are well-respected by pressure groups, policy makers and stakeholders in the field of circular economy and the climate agenda.

Implementation of zero waste strategies
Our credibility as an organisation stems from the fact that we have expertise on the ground and in Brussels in the implementation of zero waste strategies at local and regional level. We provide expertise, technical guidance and facilitation to those willing to walk the zero waste path.
NOTE FROM THE DIRECTORS

Dear all, we are excited to share with you our 2019 annual report!

Our efforts to push for solutions have resulted in an ambitious Single-Use Plastic Directive being approved by the European Union and a myriad of policy initiatives that we have managed to steer in the right direction. We continue to push out resources that shape the political agenda such as a pioneer study on chemical recycling, the first ever European wide study on the impact of single-use menstrual items, nappies and wet wipes, and a study on waste prevention indicators at the European level among many others.

Our Zero Waste Europe Academy is now online and kicking with sold out webinars and well-attended study tours on the ground. Our resources for the local entities that want to implement zero waste now count with a cost savings calculator as well as a methodology document to guide their steps.

Last but not least, we invest in the structures to organise positive change through the coordination of the ever-growing Break Free From Plastic movement in Europe, as well as supporting new national zero waste alliances and local groups.

Our impact and our network have continued to grow and so has our team. We often say that the difference between utopia and reality is political will. Rest assured that this is where all our energy goes in order to make this transition possible. Thanks to those who support us in this journey, this is also your annual report!

Esra Tat & Joan Marc Simon
IMPACT ACROSS THE WORLD

ALLIANCE FOR FLAME RETARDANT FREE FURNITURE
A coalition of stakeholders ranging from environmental and health NGOs to industry, organisations working on cancer, firefighters and labour unions working on the implications of the presence of harmful flame retardants chemicals in furniture products.

BREAK FREE FROM PLASTIC EUROPE
#breakfreefromplastic is a global movement envisioning a future free from plastic pollution with over 1,900 organisations worldwide. We coordinate and sit within the European branch demanding massive reductions in single-use plastics while pushing for lasting solutions to the plastic pollution crisis.

GIA
GAIA is a worldwide alliance of more than 800 grassroots groups, non-governmental organisations, & individuals in over 90 countries, whose ultimate vision is a just, toxic-free world without incineration. Our work falls under the European chapter, coordinating with other regions (Asia Pacific, Africa, North & South America).

PREVENT WASTE COALITION
A new coalition of NGOs based in Brussels working on waste prevention policy at the EU level.

RETHINK PLASTIC ALLIANCE
An alliance of 10 leading European NGOs, representing thousands of active groups, supporters and citizens in every EU Member State asking for policy change to tackle plastic pollution.

FOOD CONTACT MATERIALS COALITION
A new formalised coalition of European organisations, including consumers, chemicals, environmental and health organisations, working towards stronger EU rules on food contact materials.

EU FOOD POLICY COALITION
A coalition of over 50 organisations acting for an European transition toward sustainable food systems.
A GROWING MOVEMENT

Building a powerful and well-organised Zero Waste Europe network and Break Free From Plastic Europe movement, is necessary to amplify our impact, both locally and globally, and to show that a zero waste future is possible! In 2019, Zero Waste Europe had 31 members present in 27 countries, some of which are individual organisations and some are networks themselves, coming together to have a stronger voice at the national level. In 2019, the Break Free From Plastic Europe movement grew significantly by more than 20 new core member organisations. The movement - with more than 80 members now - has not only broadened but, more importantly, grown in quality with important partnerships, impactful joint projects, and deeper collaborations. ZWE and BFFP Europe members share expertise, exchange best practices, and engage in joint campaigns locally, and also on cross-regional and global levels, increasing our ability to strategically impact and initiate change.

TRADEMARKING ZERO WASTE

In order to avoid the ongoing misuse of the zero waste brand, ZWE took the initiative to trademark the Zero Waste Cities work. This was the first step to protect the brand from being used for projects that are not consistent with the zero waste philosophy - a key step for shaping the narrative around zero waste.

OUR GLOBAL STRATEGY

Our brand new Global Strategy Programme was born in May 2019 with the mission to ensure that European zero waste victories on EU policy, zero waste business models, city and grassroots fronts, are seen as a global gold standard and taken on board to develop environmental policy and practice around the globe, effectively preventing the expansion of European incineration technology in the Global South.

We engage with internationally relevant policy and scientific processes to ensure they take into account European zero waste victories on various fronts; we provide systematic support to groups in the Global South to bust the European incineration myth (the myth that incineration is working well in Europe and therefore is desirable everywhere else) together with GAIA regional offices and the global GAIA policy unit, increasing the visibility and connectivity within the global zero waste movements through specific projects and collaborations across different regions.

Our main highlights in 2019

Providing expert input towards the Climate Bonds Initiative, which developed eligibility criteria for climate bonds in the waste management sector. Promoting the European Sustainable Finance Taxonomy Report at the global level. Developing a European Incineration Myth Communications Framework, to be launched in 2020. Providing support to GAIA members to respond to the European Incineration Myth, i.e. Asia Pacific Region and Massachusetts, US.
The Zero Waste Europe network connects and supports 31 local and national organisations present in 27 countries across Europe who promote the zero waste strategy as a way to make Europe more sustainable. In 2019, we welcomed three new associate members from Belgium, Latvia, and Ukraine to further our knowledge and action base across Europe.

Our members have also been joining forces on a national level for a greater impact with Alianza Residuo Cero in Spain and Zero Waste Alliance Ukraine - which has been ensuring stronger campaigning at the national level. Three new alliances are forming on a national level in Bulgaria, Cyprus and Germany too. In 2019, ZWE members participated in many joint campaigns, such as Plastic in the Spotlight, a survey on packaging-free shops, zero waste labels, a study on single-use menstrual products, the DRS manifesto, and our communications campaigns #WinterWasteWishes and Plastic Free July, helping to establish our expertise and reputation across Europe.

During the Campaigners’ meeting and the Annual General Meeting, ZWE members learnt from one another by sharing their victories, strategised and found intersections in their work that served as basis for these impactful collaborations, because the closer we work with each other, the stronger we are!
SUP DIRECTIVE AT EU AND NATIONAL LEVEL

ZWE, together with other members of the Rethink Plastic alliance, has developed materials to support the ambitious implementation of the SUP Directive, including a policy briefing and an implementation guide. ZWE members have each actively worked towards the adoption of strong measures in their countries, with positive ongoing developments in several countries (e.g. Portugal, Spain) and the adoption of an ambitious new law in France in early 2020. The hard work that took place in France resulted in bans on several single-use plastics items, such as plastic packaging on fresh fruits and vegetables (2021), plastic tea bags (2022) and a ban on the free distribution of bottled water and of single-use plastic in the administration has been initiated. France also made it mandatory to use reusable plates, glass, cutlery and packaging for on site consumption in restaurants by 2023 at the latest. Meanwhile, Zlarin in Croatia, became the first single-use plastic free Croatian Island and Flanders region in Belgium prohibited the use of single-use cups during festivals.

INCINERATION SUCCESS STORIES

In Portugal, we increased the ambition of the new national waste management plan (PERSU 2020+) by excluding €200 million of funding (40% of budget) originally set aside for increasing the capacity for burning waste, thus making more funds available for door-to-door collection systems, compulsory bio-waste separate collection, and composting.
SUCCESS STORIES FROM THE NETWORK

BELARUS - CENTER FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SOLUTIONS (CES)

In 2019, our member, CES, organised several actions to raise awareness such as an action plan aimed at reducing the use of plastic polymer packaging in Belarus reaching a wide audience. But also a great exhibition about zero waste, showing different practices of waste management.

GERMANY - ZERO WASTE KIEL

Zero Waste Kiel has been working hand in hand with Kiel municipality in pursuing the development of a zero waste city concept. In 2019, they managed to help in the organisation of the Waterkant festival 2019 making it the first truly zero waste festival in Germany.

FRANCE - ZERO WASTE FRANCE (ZWF)

In 2019, ZWF celebrated the approval of the landmark national law “Anti-Waste” which bans companies from destroying clothes, cosmetics and other unsold or returned items. Our members also saw an impressive growth in new members now representing over 100 local groups.

SPAIN - REZERO

Our member, Rezero organised strategic campaigns and projects throughout the year, such as the creation of the first Library of Things in Barcelona where people could rent different kind of objects (not just books) and their Zero Beach project about marine litter prevention measures in coastal municipalities.
CZECH REPUBLIC - **HNUTÍ DUHA**

Hnutí DUHA focuses on the fields of energy and climate protection, resources and nature protection. In 2019 thanks to its campaigning work, the Czech Government accepted the proposal to incentive sorting of waste with specific discounts while increasing the landfill fee.

IRELAND - **VOICE**

In 2019 VOICE Ireland won the 2019 Green Award for Green Non Governmental Organisations of the year while Zero Waste Cashel won the Silver Award at the Local Community Awards (LAMA).
IMPACT AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

ZERO WASTE CITIES

In 2019, we continued to see the growth of Zero Waste Cities across Europe. Led by our local member, Kiel became the first German city to announce its commitment to go zero waste, which was followed later in the year by a similar announcement from Munich. We saw new Zero Waste Cities announced in Bulgaria, Italy and Romania as well, with further potential commitments coming soon from municipalities in Northern Ireland, Slovenia, Belgium, Spain and more.

To help with these zero waste commitments we have developed a number of new resources for ZWE members to use with their municipalities to increase the effect of zero waste local strategies, including a guide on running a zero waste programme, the methodology for zero waste municipalities, a savings calculator and waste assessment guide. These online tools are supplemented by a growing number of offline meetings held to build the capacity of members, such as the 2019 Campaigners Meeting and specific ad-hoc training tailored for local members. The growth of our Zero Waste Cities work has resulted in ZWE being invited to partner on new projects that support municipalities across the Mediterranean region to prevent waste. 2019 also saw two successful Study Tours organised in Europe’s best practice municipalities within Slovenia and Italy.

ZERO WASTE EUROPE ACADEMY

Our Zero Waste Cities work is underpinned by ZWE’s network of local members supporting the design and implementation of effective zero waste policies on the ground. In 2019 we built the foundations for our ZWE Academy. The Academy is designed to improve the capacity and expertise of ZWE members, helping them become the “go-to” players within communities and regions, by providing tools, resources and expertise which can be used to effectively guide municipalities towards adopting strong zero waste policies. The expansion of this work has strengthened the capacity of cities and our members to lead the change to a zero waste future.
WASTE PREVENTION

We have contributed to better waste management and prevention at the local level in two different ways. Within the work on Zero Waste Cities, we have helped with implementation, at the local level, of zero waste strategies putting recycling and prevention first. This was done by showcasing good practices such as the waste management strategy implemented in Salacea or the decentralised composting system in Pontevedra. Then, through our work on implementation of the European Waste Directive at the local level, we advocated for the most ambitious legislation possible at the national level. This is reflected by the ambitious policy voted in the Baleares setting waste prevention targets, or the Portuguese ambitious transposition of the Waste Framework Directive.

ZERO WASTE BUSINESS MODELS

We’ve seen many successful stories of zero waste business models that are growing in Europe. In 2019, we highlighted how reuse systems for packaging are growing in the e-commerce business and how packaging free shops are helping prevent waste throughout the supply chain.

Our Case Studies have helped to bring these innovative business models to light, reinforcing the zero waste solutions narrative and proving that the transition towards zero waste is possible across Europe and beyond.

ANTI-INCINERATION

In the Spanish province of the Canary islands we were able to mobilise the support of all political groups for the exclusion of funds for waste incineration, and invest instead in the development of separate collection and recycling as part of their European elections campaign.
CLIMATE, ENERGY & AIR POLLUTION

In 2019, we were successful in influencing EU institutions’ position on waste-to-energy (WTE) incineration. As a result, we are now seeing many new draft EU legislative proposals condemning waste incineration as harmful to the circular economy, as was the case for the EU Taxonomy regulation, or excluding WTE incineration from the scope of Regional Development and Cohesion Funds for the period post-2020. Our constant work to reinforce the fact that WTE incineration is a false solution has clearly taken up roots in environmental legislation.

WASTE PREVENTION

Through the Green Deal and the new Circular Economy Action Plan, the new European Commission, in place after the May 2019 elections, has made waste prevention one of their key priorities. Within the circular economy framework, strong and ambitious measures are to be expected at the European level, which has so far focused mostly on recycling. General waste prevention targets are being discussed while the establishment of binding food waste prevention has been announced in the new Circular Economy Action Plan. This work has, and will be continuously framed by our contributions to policy on waste prevention, as part of the Prevent Waste Coalition.

CONSUMPTION & PRODUCTION

As a result of our work over the years, and specifically in 2019, we’ve seen many developments in policy particularly for single-use plastic items with the entry into force of the ‘Single-use Plastic Directive’ in July 2019. Product design too saw a step forward on the 1st of October 2019 when the Commission adopted 10 ecodesign implementing regulations setting out energy and resource efficiency requirements for refrigerators, washing machines, dishwashers, etc. Furthermore, on the biggest waste stream - packaging - the Commission is currently reviewing the Directive (PPWD) that sets up the requirements for packaging to be placed on the EU market, which seems to be opening horizons towards reusable packaging. Progress has also been seen on Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) with current work on the guidelines for the implementation of EPR schemes across Europe. The latest Green Deal and Circular Economy Action Plan seem to move towards more sustainable and circular products with an upcoming Sustainable Product Policy Framework which we will continue to input to by pushing for alternative solutions and zero waste business models.
WASTE TRADE

In May 2019, the UN took a major step in limiting the impact of plastic pollution and shipment all over the world – something we fought for in 2019. The Basel Convention – a treaty controlling waste movements around the world – has been updated to include a more stringent regulation on plastic waste. These amendments compel exporting OECD countries to get the consent of the receiving non-OECD countries before sending the shipment. Such provisions, efficient as of 2021, will greatly help curbing the plastic waste trade around the globe, serving both the environment and social justice agendas.

UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT ASSEMBLY

At the 4th UNEA in March 2019 in Nairobi (Kenya), Zero Waste Europe worked with its Break Free From Plastic partners to influence a few key resolutions, in particular a resolution on Single-Use Plastic and a resolution on marine litter and microplastics. Both resolutions were adopted with improved language on zero waste and prevention measures for plastics pollution, despite the efforts of certain countries to waterdown the texts and/or prevent their adoption.

PLASTIC

In 2019, the EU adopted its landmark legislation on single-use plastics, putting in place a number of measures (from bans to producer responsibility schemes) to reduce single-use plastics and its related pollution. The attention of the EU and its plastic action has also shifted upstream, with a stronger focus on prevention and reuse, as confirmed in the European Green Deal and the Circular Economy Action Plan.

The EU has also taken positive steps towards increasing transparency on chemicals in products, with the establishment of the EU SCIP database of substances of concern, following the work of the Rethink Plastic alliance on this field specifically.

In addition, the Rethink Plastic alliance and the BFFP movement have played an important role in securing a stronger restriction of microplastics intentionally added to products in the ongoing process led by the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA).
Communications have the power to change minds, influence key stakeholders and shape narratives. At Zero Waste Europe our main communications contributions come from our groundbreaking publications, expert knowledge hubs and far reaching content.

**KNOWLEDGE HUB**

In 2019 the *ZWE Live!* Project evolved to become a proper Academy providing tools for the implementation of zero waste strategies at the local level. The webinars saw a record of registrations with 1220 registrants for 8 webinars.

**AMPLIFYING OUR NETWORK**

Each month, we feature a monthly interview with a campaigner from our network in our “Meet our members” blog series to make the work of national and local groups known at the international level. This activity further showcases the impact of our powerful network. Establishing our position as a broad network with a wide array of national, regional and European level expertise.
PUBLICATIONS IMPACT

In 2019, we worked on some impactful publications that contributed to wider work towards a zero waste future.

Our study on Chemical Recycling was the first of its kind, and provided important European context to this wrongly promoted solution to waste disposal. It was one of our most downloaded studies, filling a knowledge gap that desperately needed to be addressed.

Similarly, our report on the economic and environmental impacts of menstrual items, baby nappies and wet wipes was one of our top-hits online. Another subject with little known about it, and part of our attempt to address an often ignored area of the waste system.

Our Deposit Return Systems Manifesto also had a far reaching impact gaining around 90 signatures from various organisations across Europe. This tool proves the power of DRS and has helped bring solutions to a wider audience.

Our research study on holistic indicators for waste prevention success proved that “the best waste is the one which is not produced in the first place”. The enthusiastic reception of this study showed how going upstream is the right move towards a zero waste future.

COMMUNICATIONS SUCCESSES

Our most successful Facebook post reached over 15,000 people and gained 1,000+ reactions for the announcement of Svilengrad going zero waste - good news stories really do motivate people!

Over the year, the ZWE and ZWCities website had 8,415 publication downloads, showcasing the reach of our educational tools and increased knowledge capacity.

ZWE gained 3,857 twitter followers, 3,427 facebook fans, and 2,129 LinkedIn followers, showing a steady increase in growth across our platforms indicating our continued relevance.

We contributed to the media and general zero waste landscape by writing 34 press releases, and 63 blogs commenting on policy, victories, challenges and the work of our members.
**INTERNATIONAL CITIES CONFERENCE**
29 March, Kiel
The international Zero Waste Cities conference happened in Kiel right before our AGM. It gathered around 200 people and more than 20 speakers coming from all over Europe to recognise the power of cities in the transition to zero waste.

**ZERO WASTE EUROPE AGM**
30-21 March, Kiel
During the annual general meeting we assessed the impact of our work in the previous year, and found ways to better communicate and work together. We identified joint campaigns and strengthened the trust that holds us together as a network.

**STUDY TOUR**
8-9 May, Slovenia
We organised a study tour in Slovenia, with around 15 participants from all over Europe. The tour contained the best Slovenian waste prevention and waste management practices from one of the most advanced countries in Europe, showcasing solutions and tangible steps towards zero waste.

**BFFP EUROPE ANNUAL MEETING**
17-21 June, Netherlands
In this strategically crucial meeting, 60 participants representing 48 European organisations took stock of the progress and impact of the movement so far; and discussed strategy for the coming years to move closer towards a future free from plastic pollution.
ZERO WASTE EUROPE STAFF RETREAT
3-4 September, Brussels
In September our team came together to strategise, and re-organise. We analysed our work culture, priorities, and where we could better streamline our operations to make us a stronger, more efficient team.

WRITING THE NEW STORY OF PLASTIC
13 November, Brussels
This joint RPa and ZWE event brought community and local level change-makers together with those who help write and shape EU policy on plastics and waste as part of the Brussels Week of Action. It was a critical event for stakeholders to better understand the ways EU policy works on the ground.

CAMPAIGNERS MEETING
26-27 November, Prague
The meeting successfully built expertise and capacity on key topics surrounding zero waste today, through skill-sharing and strategy planning sessions on the EU’s 10% Landfill target, SUP Directive and organic waste management.

COMMUNICATIONS STAFF RETREAT
6 December, Brussels
The Communications Team spent a day together thinking about how best to improve our communications procedures internally and externally. We created new processes and discussed ways to skill-up as a team to make our work more effective.

STUDY TOUR
10-11 December, Northern Italy
We organised a study tour in Northern Italy, gathering 15 participants from all over Europe. The tour included the discovery of Milan’s successful bio waste management system and Capannori, the first European zero waste city.
THE PEOPLE BEHIND IT ALL

JOAN-MARC SIMON
Executive Director, joined in 2010.

ESRA TAT
Associate Director, joined in 2017.

MARIEL VILELLA
Director of Global Strategy, joined in 2010.

JANEK VAHK
Climate, Energy & Air Pollution Coordinator, joined in 2015.

DELPHINE LEVI ALVARES
European Coordinator of the Break Free From Plastic movement & Coordinator at Rethink Plastic alliance, joined in 2016.

JUSTINE MAILLOT
Consumption & Production Campaigner and Policy Coordinator at Rethink Plastic alliance, joined in 2019.

LARISSA COPELLO
Production & Consumption Campaigner, joined in 2018.

IVETA CADROVA
Network & Administration Officer, joined in 2019.

JACK MCQUIBBAN
Cities Programme Coordinator, joined in 2019.

PIERRE CONDAMINE
Waste Policy Officer, joined in 2018.

AGNESE MARCON
Communications Coordinator, joined in 2018.

ESTELLE EONNET
European Communications Officer for Break Free From Plastic Movement, joined in 2020.
ROSSELLA RECUPERO
Communications Officer, joined in 2019.

EILIDH ROBB
Communications Officer, joined in 2019.

HELI PARNA
Finance & Administration Officer, joined in 2019.

JAN-LARS LAGAS
Finance & Office Manager, joined in 2017.

NEW
NEW
NEW

STAFF WHO LEFT US IN 2019–2020 AND TO WHOM WE OWE A HUGE THANK YOU

MATT FRANKLIN
ZAKLINA ZNAJDER
ROBERTA ARBINOLO
SARAH MARTIN
A MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

One of the Board’s main tasks this year consisted of finalising the transmutation process that will transfer the governance of the association from the Board to its members through the General Assembly with the adoption of the new statutes. Other notable work centered on oversight of the certification and labelling processes; representing the organisation within the international movement and external representation at events. We also worked on the internal development of ZWE and provided sharing opportunities and continuous support to members.

From left to right:
Rossano Ercolini - President of the Board
Xiaowei Liu - Treasurer
Huub Scheele - Secretary
Elena Rastei - Board Member
Antigone Dalamaga - Board member
Alexandra Aubertin - Board member

ENZO FAVOINO - CHAIR OF SCIENTIFIC ADVISOR COMMITTEE

“The role of the Chair has been to ensure the technical support of member networks and staff, while ensuring a solid, credible, convincing scientific background to the zero waste vision and practice, and to papers and proposals elaborated by the network. Last year, notable fields of activity were supporting the consolidation of plastic strategies in the EU and worldwide, implementation of strategies included in the Circular Economy Package, and their enforcement in various countries.”
OUR FUNDERS

EU Grant: EASME - EU LIFE Operating Grant
EU Grant: Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation - Collectors
EU Grant: EACEA - Erasmus+
EU Grant: Interreg ERDF - CapOnLitter
Plastic Solutions Fund
MAVA
Adessium Foundation
Changing Markets Foundation
Network for Social Change
GAIA
Participation Fees and re-invoicing
Donations

OUR 2019 INCOME

- Foundation Grants €712,240.00
- EU Grants €395,238.00
- Donations & Membership fees €15,353.00
- Other income €25,427.00

In 2019 we increased our income from the year before through a combination of increased fundraising and new grants, receiving a total of €1,148,259.00.

VICTORY

We met our 2019 fundraising goals early in June, and were able to channel more money to our members both directly and indirectly during 2019.
In 2019 we spent a total of €1,148,259.00, plus €339,855.00 in sub-granting. This created an annual turnover of €1,488,115.

Another way to envision our spending is by considering what proportion of our spending went towards the following areas of strategic importance.
A HUGE THANK YOU TO

Mike Walker
Bryan Mathers
Juliana Maruri
Grainne Murphy
Blush
Noiza
Karakas
Friends Productions
Carlos Arribas Ugarte
CEE Bankwatch
ToxicoWatch
An de Smet / Aragon BVBA
Eunomia Research & Consulting

Our precious zero waste volunteers who helped us with translations and writing

Our fantastic Members

Our Donors

Our critical Funders