



ZERO WASTE EUROPE 2020

ANNUAL REPORT



CONTENTS

<u>ZERO WASTE EUROPE INTRODUCTION</u>	PAGE 4
<u>NOTE FROM THE DIRECTORS</u>	PAGE 6
<u>IMPACT ACROSS THE WORLD</u>	PAGE 9
<u>IMPACT AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL</u>	PAGE 11
<u>SUCCESS STORIES FROM THE NETWORK</u>	PAGE 14
<u>IMPACT AT THE LOCAL LEVEL</u>	PAGE 16
<u>IMPACT ON POLICY</u>	PAGE 18
<u>SHAPING THE CONVERSATION</u>	PAGE 23
<u>IMPACT EVENTS</u>	PAGE 26
<u>THE PEOPLE BEHIND IT ALL</u>	PAGE 28
<u>OUR LIFE SUPPORT</u>	PAGE 33
<u>THANK YOU</u>	PAGE 35

ZERO WASTE EUROPE

[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. We advocate for sustainable systems and the redesign of our relationship with resources, to accelerate a just transition towards zero waste for the benefit of people and planet.

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 100+ organisations, and the [Rethink Plastic Alliance \(RPa\)](#) with 11 international organisations. We also facilitate negotiations with big companies and empower small companies to get organised.



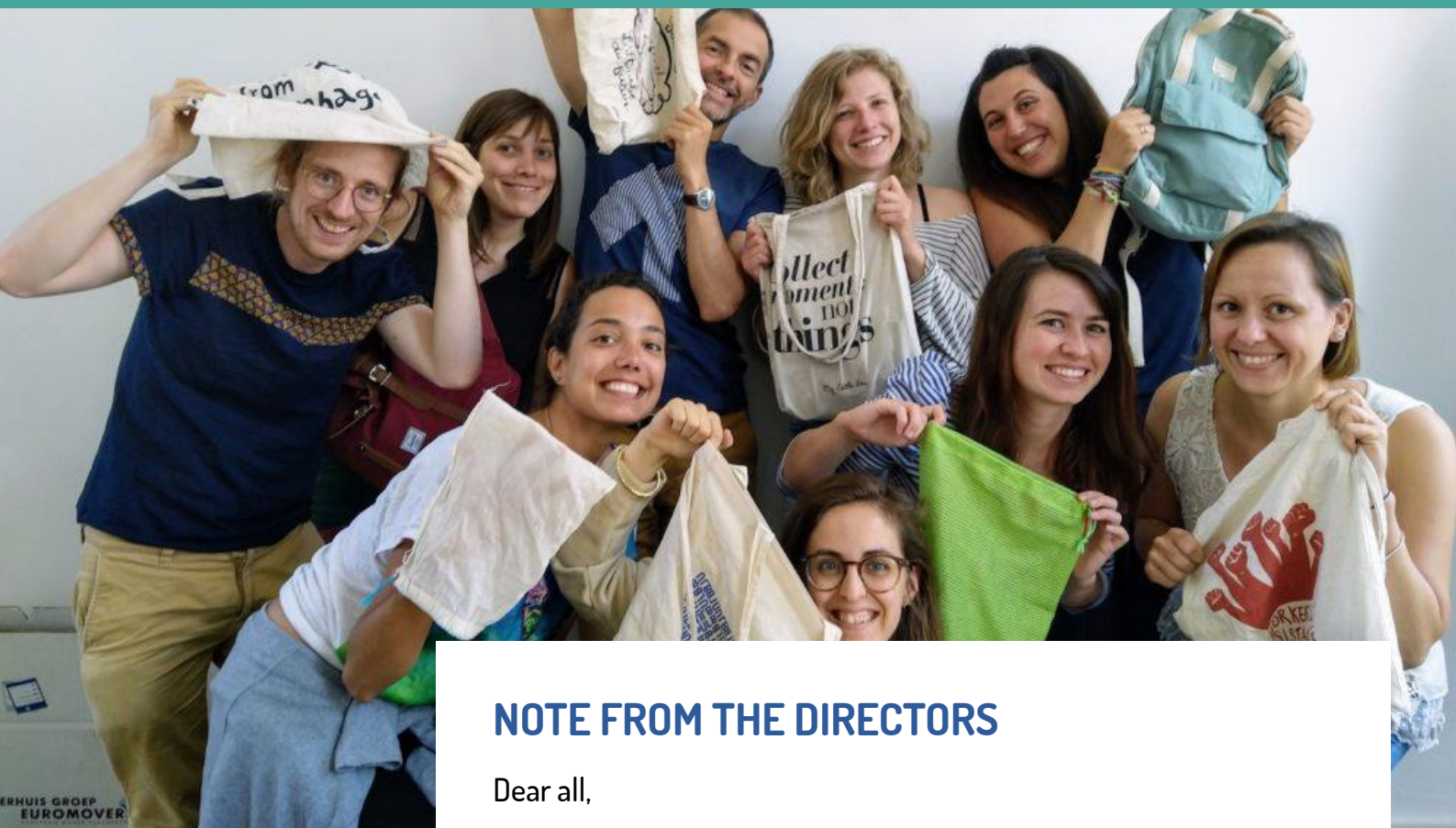
Advocacy work to EU policies

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,

2020 has been the year of COVID-19 but, despite the pandemic, the zero waste movement has continued to grow in size and in impact. We believe this is due to the fact that our work is fundamental to increase the resilience of our communities and address the root causes of the destruction of ecosystems - of which this virus is just one manifestation.

We have continued to do our work on influencing policy, mobilising actors, and implementing zero waste solutions. In addition to that, in 2020 we have made significant progress in bringing our work to the next level and expanding into new areas of intervention. Together with our network, we have managed to raise resources to work with hundreds of cities in 11 countries; we have set up our new Academy (the Mission Zero Academy, which was officially open to the public in March 2021); and we have implemented high-level actions - such as Plastics in the Spotlight to measure toxic chemicals in celebrities organisms; and the Bloody Manifesto, our first campaign on a topic considered 'taboo'.

In 2020, we also fine tuned and finalised our first certification system for cities, which represents an amazing opportunity to increase our impact across the board.

The transition from a linear to a circular economy remains the main focus of our work. Over the past year, we spearheaded the demands and actions from the European civil society to move away from disposability and towards a scenario in which prevention and reuse





gain the prominence they deserve. Campaigns such as #WeChooseReuse, as well as research items on the environmental and health benefits of reuse, best practices, and case studies, are only a few examples the strong range of arguments and actions we are using to move the narrative of the solutions that are better for the planet, the economy, and our health.

Last but not least, our policy work continued to provide substantial improvements for people across Europe and beyond. From excluding the funding for end of pipe technologies such as incineration in the EU taxonomy, to supporting countries outside the EU to develop consistent and progressive interpretations of what circular economy really means, we are proud to connect grassroots work to the Brussels lobby scene and vice versa. In this respect, we are thrilled to support the creation of new zero waste alliances in countries like Spain, Germany, Cyprus, or Ukraine; and contribute to the paradigm shift in the management of our natural and human resources.

The pandemic has taken its toll in our team and membership, but we remain passionate and committed to making positive change a reality. All in all, our inbuilt resilience and vision propelled us forward in these times of uncertainty, and remain our strongest assets. We are happy to present the details of this journey in the next pages - and we hope you enjoy the reading as much as we enjoyed making it happen!

Esra Tat, Caroline Culliere, Katleen Verhelle & Joan Marc Simon



Zero Waste Hierarchy



- 1. Refuse: Refuse what we don't need and change the way we produce and consume by redesigning business models, goods and packaging in order to reduce resource use and waste.
- 2. Reduce: Reduce the quantity, toxicity and ecological footprint of consumption. Use products or components that are not waste for the same purpose for which they were conceived.
- 3. Reuse: Check, clean or repair products or components of products that have become waste so that they can be re-used without any other processing.
- 4. Repair: High quality material recovery from separately collected waste streams.
- 5. Recycle: Technologies to recover materials from mixed waste into new valuable materials in an environmental sound way.
- 6. Rot: What cannot be recovered from mixed waste is biologically processed prior to landfilling.
- 7. Recover: Systems that deal with the residual waste, have high environmental impact and create little or no effects that do not harm the environment. Zero Waste means energy recovery.



IMPACT ACROSS THE WORLD

A GROWING MOVEMENT

Building a powerful and well-organised Zero Waste Europe network and Break Free From Plastic Europe movement is necessary to amplify the impact of our work and pave the way towards a zero waste Europe. In 2020, Zero Waste Europe had 31 members present in 27 countries and even expanded to the Netherlands with Recycling Netwerk Benelux as a new associate member.

The Break Free From Plastic European movement onboarded 5 new core member organisations and with 100 members present in 36 European countries it covers all European subregions. Several ZWE and BFFP members are networks or alliances themselves and hence the reach is far bigger! Despite the pandemic, ZWE and BFFP Europe grew stronger with engaged members who - by working together on impactful joint campaigns and task forces - brought us closer to a zero waste future.

OUR GLOBAL STRATEGY

In 2020, our Global Strategy Programme engaged with internationally relevant policy and scientific processes to ensure they take into account European zero waste victories on various fronts. We provided 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, increasing the visibility and connectivity within the global zero waste movements through specific projects and collaborations across different regions.

Our main highlights in 2020

- The input given to high-level policy processes in GAIA Latin American region, with Circular Economy online policy discussions at national level in Chile and several high-level anti-incineration events organised by ZW Alliance in Brazil;
- The launch of the [Radical Realism video on Zero Waste and Climate](#) with Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung (HBS), based on the previous 'Zero Waste Circular Economy – A Systemic Game-Changer to Climate Change' [volume](#) written by our own Mariel Vilella for HBS' Radical Realism for Climate Justice series;
- [Briefings on waste-to-energy incineration and Refuse Derived Fuel \(RDF\)](#) provided to the European Commission to support our CEAP programme advocacy activities;
- The launch of our [Sustainable Finance for a Zero Waste Circular Economy](#) report in cooperation with GAIA, which reached out to all expert members of the EU Taxonomy group working on sustainable finance;
- A comprehensive review of the IPCC AR6 Report with the GAIA Global Policy Unit.

Zero Waste Europe is a member of several European and overseas organisations, bringing our holistic approach to a zero waste future and applying it to topics as diverse and as relevant as incineration, plastic pollution, or food policy.

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.



GAIA

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.

BREAK FREE FROM PLASTIC EUROPE

#breakfreefromplastic is a global movement envisioning a future free from plastic pollution with over 12.000 organisations and individuals 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.



FOOD CONTACT MATERIALS COALITION

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

RETHINK PLASTIC ALLIANCE

An alliance of 11 leading European NGOs, representing thousands of active groups, supporters and citizens in every EU Member State asking for policy change to tackle plastic pollution.

EU FOOD POLICY COALITION

A coalition of over 50 organisations acting for an European transition toward sustainable food systems.

IMPACT AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

In 2020, ZWE members participated in many of joint campaigns and activities, such as:

- One [Community At a Time \(OCAT\)](#), a project co-designed by several of our members and which ended up funding the work of zero waste Cities in 11 member countries (1/3 of our network), as well as the development of the Mission Zero Academy (MiZA), which would then be launched in March 2021.
- [Plastics in Spotlight](#), a pan-EU project raising awareness on the hazardous plastic chemicals found in the human body which stemmed from the initial work from our member in Spain and involved also our members in Bulgaria, Latvia, Portugal, and Slovenia, in addition to ZWE team.
- [Packaging-Free Shops](#), a report on the state of play of packaging-free shops across Europe carried out in collaboration with Réseau Vrac and the Zero Waste Europe network and conducted by Eunomia Research and Consulting.
- [Environmenstrual Week](#), an European advocacy campaign which aims to shed a light on the environmental, health and social impacts of conventional menstrual products and advocate for safe (toxic-free), fair (accessible) and circular (reusable & plastic-free) menstrual products for everybody.
- [We Choose Reuse](#), a European mobilisation campaign to move away from single-use plastic and put robust reuse systems in place, working with zero waste cities and business, and demanding change from local, national and EU decision makers as well as business leaders.
- Our work on [Nappies and Wet Wipes](#), urging EU policy makers to adopt an ambitious strategy around these single-use items.
- The [Deposit Return Systems \(DRS\) Manifesto](#), a summary of all the benefits DRS can bring and a list of demands to EU institutions and members states to preserve the value of materials and reduce leakage into the environment.
- The [Bloody Manifesto](#), published as part of the Environmenstrual Week and asking the European Commission to set the necessary policy framework to support and empower menstruators to access safe, fair, and circular menstrual products.

Zero Waste Europe Network

Since 2013, Zero Waste Europe (ZWE) expanded its structure, reaching today 31 member organisations in 27 countries.



Network in broader sense...



170

Organisations & local groups



181

Local entities



7,748

Individuals

Moreover ZWE coordinates...



Zero Waste Cities Programme

A programme supporting cities and communities transition towards zero waste. Today, it counts roughly **370** municipalities in **9** countries.

... and supports



Zero Waste Alliances

ZWE members joining forces at national level to reach a more effective impact on transition to zero waste. At present, there are alliances in Ukraine, Spain, Germany, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Italy and France.

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 an [assessment](#) on progress published in July 2020. 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 (in addition to the bans in the EU Directive), 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.

INCINERATION SUCCESS STORIES

In Spain, more specifically in the Canary Islands, we were able to influence the local waste management plan (El Plan de Residuos de Canarias), which now excludes waste incineration. Additionally, we have supported our members work on incineration alternatives in Romania, Ireland, Croatia and Latvia - these countries are currently considering Material Recovery and Biological Treatment (MRBT) processes.



SUCCESS STORIES FROM THE NETWORK

UNITED KINGDOM - [UKWIN](#)

"2020 was a great year for communication, collaboration, and coordination. We celebrated numerous public victories for the UK's anti-incineration movement, with increasing mainstream recognition of the climate harm caused by waste incineration, and cross-party interest from Members of Parliament in UKWIN's policy suggestions for a moratorium on new waste incineration capacity and the introduction of an incineration tax."



MONTENEGRO - [ZERO WASTE MONTENEGRO](#)

"This year was certainly one of the milestones for our organisation. With traditional projects, such as waste reduction in our state institutions and waste reduction in the coastal marine area, we are most proud of the fact that we started our first Zero Waste City project! Although a demanding area of action, we are happier with each new activity because it makes us closer to the goal, even in these challenging times!"

CROATIA - [ZELENA AKCIJA / ZERO WASTE CROATIA](#)

"2020 was a very challenging year, but nothing stopped our work towards a more sustainable and healthier environment in Croatia. Among many successes, we'd like to highlight our new exciting project with the island of Krk that wants to become a zero waste island, as well as a project with Dugi otok and Hvar that want to have first plastic-free municipalities."





ITALY - ZERO WASTE ITALY

"Among the problematic scenarios brought by the pandemic year, for us the new waste challenge is to safeguard health without increasing the load of produced waste and discharges into the environment. Masks are a symbol of this period and will probably continue to be for a long time. We worked with the social cooperative Eta Beta to create a reusable mask that protects people's health through all the official certifications, protects the environment by reducing the amount of disposable masks to be incinerated, and protect jobs through a fully Italian-based production which included disadvantaged people. No matter how hard the circumstances may be, there is always an alternative."



IMPACT AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

ZERO WASTE CITIES

2020 was another milestone year for our Zero Waste Cities as Lviv ([Ukraine](#)) and Derry & Strabane ([UK](#)) joined our growing programme. Much of the year was also spent helping develop and test the brand-new Zero Waste Cities Certification, hosted by MiZA.

It also marked the launch of our first-ever [Zero State of Zero Waste Municipalities Report](#) - a complete overview of the journey of zero waste cities in Europe until now, with insightful best practices and inspiring stories from the movement.

2020 saw the start of a brand new and very exciting Zero Waste Cities project, '[One Community at a Time](#).' For 2 years, we'll be working together with 11 members to support municipalities, helping them commit to and implement local zero waste strategies. This includes funding the work of the Spanish Zero Waste Alliance and supporting direct advocacy with the City of Barcelona regarding their zero waste strategy.

In development since 2019, our free-for-all [Zero Waste Cities savings calculator](#) was finally published in May 2020. Devised in collaboration with EBM and Hnuti Duha, this tool is a great way for municipalities to see the cost and waste savings if they adopted more zero waste policies. If you haven't tried it yet, just click the link above and give it a go!). Several other resources have been developed and are available on the [Zero Waste Cities website](#).

For example, our [Zero Waste Cities Masterplan](#) was updated in July to better reflect the guiding principles towards a circular economy vision. Now available in 8 languages, the Masterplan remains a must-read document for local actors wanting to embark on a zero waste journey.



In November, [we began working on a new project](#) specifically focused on providing training resources and expertise to our network, helping accelerate the success & impact of our Zero Waste Cities work. We will be providing a training programme for Zero Waste ‘Ambassadors’ and ‘Trainers’ - 2 different groups that will enhance the ability of members to either deliver local ZW work with municipalities, or be able to train groups of others themselves to do this work.

Our Zero Waste Cities work is underpinned by ZWE’s network of local members, who are the ones supporting the design and implementation of effective zero waste policies on the ground. In 2020 we built the foundations for our Mission Zero Academy (MiZA). 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 and small and medium size enterprises towards adopting strong zero waste policies and strategies. The expansion of this work has helped strengthen the capacity of cities and our members to lead the change to a zero waste future.

Throughout 2020, we developed and tested the Zero Waste Cities Certification (which will be trademarked in 2021), which MiZA will host. This involved building the framework, criteria and working processes that will form the foundation of the Certification. Our proposals have been developed in partnership with ZWE members and have been tested with several European municipalities also, to ensure what we have created reflects the lived realities of municipalities, so that it can be a tool that best supports their work whilst accelerating our own objectives and goals.

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 prevention, reuse and recycling first. This was done by showcasing good practices such as the [case study about Prelog](#) in Croatia and its waste management company. It has established Croatia’s best performing separate collection and recycling system, with the report led by our member Zelena Akcija.

Our second [case study focused on Halle 2, the reuse hub in Munich](#) which coordinates all of the city’s reuse and repair activities. The case study was co-written together by ZWE and AWM, the waste management company for Munich.

ZERO WASTE BUSINESS MODELS

We've seen many successful stories of zero waste business models that are growing in Europe. In 2020, we released the first ever European study on the state of play and the potential growth for the packaging free shops market, which is on the rise. In addition, during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic we've shown the case of [Eta Beta's laundry system for reusable masks](#), which proved to be a success among nurseries in the Bologna region.

IMPACT ON POLICY

CLIMATE, ENERGY & AIR POLLUTION

2020 was a busy year for EU policy matters related to end-of-life treatment of waste.

Through coordination with other environmental organisations in the network, Zero Waste Europe pushed a progressive position to ensure incineration, chemical recycling and plastic-to-fuel technologies were excluded from being considered sustainable investments and calling for ambitious methods for assessing the impact of the technologies.

As a result, the EU decided to exclude waste incineration from important EU Funds worth a total of 700 billion EUR, and several legislative files related to chemicals, sustainable finance and circular economy adopted a cautionary approach to chemical recycling calling for a full understanding of its life-cycle environmental and climate impacts.



Some of our 2020 key milestones and policy victories in this area include:

- The exclusion of Waste-To-Energy (WTE) and funding for WTE activities, citing harm to the transition to a circular economy, from:
 - Technical Expert Group report on Sustainable Finance;
 - The [EIB Climate Bank Roadmap](#);
 - The European regional Development Fund and Cohesion Fund, a tool worth €242.9 billion (which conversely included investments in Material Recovery facilities in its scope);
 - The [Just Transition Fund](#), a tool worth €17.5 billion to support people, the economy, and the environment in 2021-2027;
- The publication of our [MRBT report](#), offering an alternative strategy to managing residuals;
- The adoption of the [Taxonomy Regulation](#), calling for a minimising of waste incineration, and labelling activities leading to significant increase in incineration as harmful to the circular economy;
- The European Parliament plenary vote to [exclude funding](#) for any residual waste operation from the scope of the Just Transition Fund;
- The publication of a [chemicals strategy for sustainability](#) by the European Commission, stressing the importance of taking a more cautious approach to chemical recycling by stating that these technologies “ could also have a role but only if they ensure an overall positive environmental and climate performance, from a full life cycle perspective”;
- The European Parliament [position](#) on the Recovery and Resilience Facility, referring the “Do no significant harm” criteria of the Taxonomy Regulation which resulted in the exclusion of WTE from its scope;
- Our [statement](#), signed by 31 MEPs, on the need for a new strategy for managing residual waste based on material recovery and biological treatment;
- A strengthened European-wide movement and awareness-raising moment on chemical recycling - including increased interest in “chemical recycling”-related projects, speaking engagements at events, and reports on this topic alike.

- The approved draft of the Circular Economy Action Plan, providing ambitious language on chemical recycling, ambitious demands on environmental and climate performance, and calling for a clarification on the distinction between ‘chemical recycling’ and ‘chemical recovery’.

WASTE PREVENTION

Condensing our demands on waste prevention into one single document, our [policy briefing](#) on *“The case for an integrated Waste Prevention Framework. Can the European Union support waste prevention without a proper legislation?”* took a closer look at the current EU waste management legislation and provided a general framework for upcoming discussions on waste prevention policies.

During the European Week of Waste Reduction, we also launched a set of fact sheets describing some of the best European practices regarding waste prevention, such as general waste prevention measures in Flanders and the Balearic Islands.

CONSUMPTION & PRODUCTION

2020 was a defining year for the Consumption & Production programme, being able to strengthen the overall ZWE narrative around well-design reuse and toxic-free systems while laying some good foundations to scale up our work in the years to come.

We certainly continued working hard on key topics related to food and packaging, but also managed to put a strong foot in the door on key new topics like Food Contact Materials (FCM) and menstrual products, which have helped overall better connect environmental, social justice and health related issues.

On menstrual items and women’s rights, for instance, it was the first time such a campaign ([Environmenstrual Week](#)) was launched at the European level. While being a rather niche and “taboo” topic, we registered great engagement from the ZWE and BFFP network, as well as from decision-makers. The [Bloody Manifesto](#) has now been signed by 13 MEPs.

Under the umbrella of the Green Deal, the European Commission published its new Circular Economy Action Plan that puts the emphasis on prevention and reuse. The Commission aims at making durable, reusable and recyclable products and packaging the new norm, and initiated the work for the revision of the Packaging and Packaging Waste Directive and the development of a Sustainable Product Policy.

The European Commission also put a greater emphasis in 2020 on the need to remove harmful chemicals from products and packaging to both protect human health and the environment, and achieve a toxic-free circular economy. It notably committed to revise the EU legislation on Food Contact Materials, as recommended by ZWE and other NGOs. In March 2020, ZWE, UPSTREAM and GAIA launched a Declaration of Concern on the human health impacts of chemicals in food packaging, which was signed by more than 200 organisations across the world and came as a response to a scientific consensus statement.

Several decision makers also participated in our project Plastics in the Spotlight showing single-use plastic packaging is not only damaging our environment, it is also a threat to our health.

Other milestones throughout the past year include:

- The Launch of the 2nd report on the [Existing measures & policy recommendations to minimise the impact of menstrual products, nappies & wet wipes](#);
- The UNWRAPPED [Declaration of Concern](#) on chemicals in food packaging with 200 signatory organisations across the world, placing FCM higher on the political agenda with clear commitments in F2F and CSS;
- The [joint programme feedback](#) on the Farm 2 Fork strategy;
- Our [webinar on FCM](#) - in the context of the cities programme, which was joined by over 300 participants;
- Our [reply](#) to the public consultation on the Farm to Fork strategy, in which we called for waste free food and packaging as well as toxic-free food systems;
- The publication of the [Packaging-free shops report](#);
- A [letter to the European Commission](#) with the Food Policy Coalition asking for the most ambitious possible adoption of food waste reduction targets;
- Our Reusable vs Single-Use Packaging: A Review of Environmental Impact [study](#).

- A [joint statement](#) urging the EU institutions and member states to dedicate the NextGenerationEU Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) to a transition towards a circular, carbon neutral, zero pollution economy, with waste prevention and reuse at its core.
- The official approval by PSF board of the ReuSe Vanguard Project (RSVP), aiming to enable the implementation of reuse solutions at scale across Europe.

WASTE TRADE

In 2020, we joined forces with the European Environmental Bureau to put forward our [key recommendations](#) regarding the revision of the Waste Shipment Regulation. Within the Rethink Plastic alliance we [replied to the public consultation](#) on the Waste Shipment Regulation asking for a ban of plastic waste export outside of the European Union.

Together with several NGOs, we issued a [response](#) to the transposition process of the Basel Convention's plastic waste amendments.

PLASTIC

ZWE, together with the Rethink Plastic alliance and BFFP movement, contributed to the discussions on the European Commission Guidelines on the Single-Use Plastics Directive to ensure ambitious guidelines and prevent loopholes that could undermine the positive impacts of the Directive and notably of the bans of certain single-use plastics.

We showed the support of the public for ambitious action on single-use plastics, thanks to a [petition](#) that gathered 150,000 signatures in a few days, and coordinated the advocacy efforts at national level. The guidelines are still to be adopted but are likely to be more ambitious than the initial draft.

In 2020, we also launched the [#WeChooseReuse](#) Campaign to replace single-use plastics with reusable systems all across Europe. This campaign will only get bigger and better in 2021!

Last but not least, we also launched a Brand Audit within the context of BFFP. Despite the global pandemic, the audit had an unprecedented number of participating countries, which resulted in an impressive amount of useful advocacy data. 15,000 volunteers did 575 brand audits in 55 countries!

SHAPING THE CONVERSATION

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 2020, we organised 8 [ZWE Live!](#) Webinars on a wide range of topics with some of Europe's leading experts in the field of waste/circular economy. We saw a record of registrations with 4244 registrations and 3475 unique participants for 8 webinars.

AMPLIFYING OUR NETWORK

In 2020, we continued our monthly interview with a campaigner from our network in our ['Meet our members' blog series](#) to amplify the work of national and local groups and raise awareness of their actions and achievements on an international scale; and organised the first ever 'May for Members' campaign. These activities 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 2020, we worked on some impactful publications that contributed to the wider work towards a zero waste future. Besides the ones already mentioned throughout the previous pages, the following publications also had a high impact among our networks and channels:

- Our [“Dare to imagine a better future... starting with plastic” booklet](#) (inspired by our Director Joan Marc Simon’s “It’s Plastic, Stupid!” book) took readers on a “back to the future” journey to 2040, where circularity is fully implemented and zero waste is a widespread reality.
- Our [Bio-waste generation in the EU: Current capture levels and future potential study](#) with the BIC consortium, took stock of current generation and capture rates of bio-waste for each of the EU28 Member States, plus Norway and the United Kingdom.
- The first ever European [Study on the state of play and the potential growth for the packaging free shops market](#), conducted by the Zero Waste Europe network in collaboration with Eunomia and Réseau Vrac, mapped out the increasing growth of this sector and its sales turnover in the past decade.
- Our [‘Building a bridge strategy for residual waste. Material Recovery and Biological Treatment to manage residual waste within a circular economy’ briefing](#) highlighted the importance of a residual waste strategy that meets the challenges brought by the climate crisis, and maps out the main benefits of MRBT to mitigate climate change.



With over 30 press mentions in Europe and beyond, our [‘Recycling of multilayer composite packaging: the beverage carton’ joint paper](#) with Eunomia exposed significant disparities between the actual share of recycled cartons and the figures reported by the industry in Spain, the UK, Germany, and Sweden.

Our [“Reusable vs Single Use Package - and review of environmental impact” paper](#), created in collaboration with ReLoop, showed that reusable packaging is up to 85% more climate-friendly than single-use; and provided recommendations to improve the environmental sustainability of reusable packaging - such as the implementation of deposit return schemes and a change in the transportation methods for packaging.

COMMUNICATIONS SUCCESSES

In 2020, we increased our followers in all our platforms and improved our shared content, giving more visibility to our achievements, Programmes, and Members. Our social media channels’ analytics helped us to monitor our online presence on a monthly basis and help plan engaging content.

In addition to our website and previous social media channels, ZWE also created an Instagram account in August 2020, which has registered a remarkable growth in followers in only 5 months.

As of December 2020, ZWE had 20.175 followers on Twitter; 18.288 on Facebook; 20.175 on LinkedIn, and 802 on its recently created Instagram account. Our platforms continue to provide appealing, expert, and engaging content to our audiences.

Over the year, the Zero Waste Europe website had 10,192 publication downloads and more than 39,000 pageviews, while the Zero Waste Cities website had over 2,000 pageviews - remarkable numbers which show our reach and the interest in our work.

Our presence in the Brussels-based, European, and global media was strengthened thanks to our press-centric materials. In 2020, we issued 21 press releases and 44 blogs commenting on policy developments, victories, challenges, and the work of our members. All of this resulted in 813 press mentions throughout the year.

IMPACT EVENTS

Although the Covid-19 pandemic turned everyone's plans for 2020 in-person events upside down, we are very proud to say that Zero Waste Europe network remained engaged through online events. You can find a small sample of our 2020 events on the timeline below.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

24 March

Zero Waste Europe's [first online annual general meeting](#) was a big success. ZWE members approved the new statutes, which give more power and responsibilities to the member organisations and officialised the full member status of four ZWE members: Society for Earth (Poland), Zero Waste Alliance Ukraine, Zero Waste Belgium, and Zero Waste Latvija.



COVID-19 AND ZERO WASTE

7 April

Our [webinar](#) on the impact of the COVID-19 virus on zero waste policies and strategies in Europe was our fullest web event ever. Over 1835 viewers witnessed our discussion on whether governments could prioritize the health and protection of citizens while keeping pushing forward their local zero waste agenda.



A METHODOLOGY FOR ZERO WASTE MUNICIPALITIES

7 July

During this [webinar](#), we discussed ideas and solutions that can help cities accelerate their progress towards zero waste and the circular economy. The event also addressed key issues such as strategy and methodology replication in local communities, existing tools, and the impact of the COVID-10 crisis on zero waste policies within municipalities.



WRITING THE NEW STORY OF PLASTIC

29 October, Brussels

This [joint BFFP, RPa and ZWE virtual conference](#) brought together members of the Break Free From Plastic movement, policymakers, members of the press, and citizens worldwide to discuss how to stop plastic pollution for good. Building off of the key themes of the film [The Story of Plastic](#), the panels explored EU and global policy options to find long term solutions to plastic pollution, from production to waste trade and end of life



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

25 November, Brussels

During the [second annual general meeting](#) of 2020 – again online – we outlined the main working priorities and identified points for collaboration and synergies. Zero Waste Europe members approved the ZWE budget for the upcoming year, and we welcomed a new associate member Recycling Network Benelux.



COMMUNICATIONS STAFF RETREAT

15 December, Brussels

The Communications Team spent a [virtual] day together thinking about how to strategically improve our communications procedures – both internal and external. We created new processes, improved existing ones, had a skills training session, and discussed ways to skill-up as a team to make our work more effective.

THE PEOPLE BEHIND IT ALL



JOAN-MARC SIMON

Executive Director, joined in 2007.



ESRA TAT

Associate Director, joined in 2017.



KATLEEN VERHELLE

Director of Operations, joined in 2021.



CAROLINE CULLIERE

Interim Associate Director, joined in 2021.



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.



IVETA CADROVA

Movement Coordination Officer, joined in 2019.



NATHAN DUFOUR

Consumption & Production Programme Coordinator, joined in 2020.



LARISSA COPELLO

Production & Consumption Campaigner, joined in 2018.



JACK MCQUIBBAN

Cities Programme Coordinator, joined in 2019.



PIERRE CONDAMINE

Waste Policy Officer, joined in 2018.



KAISA KARJALAINEN

Mission Zero Academy Coordinator, joined in 2020.



ANA OLIVEIRA

Communications Coordinator, joined in 2020.



NIAMH CULLEN

ZWE Communications Officer and Communications Coordinator for the Rethink Plastic Alliance, joined in 2021.



ROSSELLA RECUPERO

Communications Officer, joined in 2019.



BERTA CORREDOR

Press Officer, joined in 2021.



LYS MEHOU-LOKO

European Communications Officer for Break Free From Plastic Movement, joined in 2021.



CHIARA PADOVANI

Digital and Marketing Assistant, joined in 2021.



HELI PARNA

Grants & Operations Officer, joined in 2019.



ALEXANDRA CLIPA

Administrative Assistant, joined in 2020.



DESI BORISOVA

Finance Officer, joined in 2021.

STAFF WHO LEFT US IN 2020-2021 AND TO WHOM WE OWE A HUGE THANK YOU



AGNESE MARCON



JAN LARS LAGAS



EILIDH ROBB



ESTELLE EONETT



SHANAR TABRIZI



OUR BOARD & ADVISORS



Rossano Ercolini
President of the Board



Xiaowei Liu
Treasurer



Antigone Dalamaga
Board Member



Huub Scheele
Secretary



Elena Rastei
Board Member

A MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

One of the Board's main tasks this year consisted in making sure that the focus of the COVID-19 Recovery Funds and the Transition Funds be used only for clean production and to promote investments and a European Green Deal that focus on the upper levels of the waste hierarchy and to bring about a just and truly ecological revolution, while at the same time, avoiding a throwaway society focused on single use products starting from plastic ones. We'll continue to focus on these vital ongoing issues for 2021.

We also invested time finalizing organizational priorities, strategies, and optimizing efficiency. Along with the ZWE team, we supported the launch of the Mission Zero Academy, looked at how members can be better supported and at strengthening the network both within its membership and also its impact at the European level. We worked with GAIA and the other regional groups to promote our common goals at the global level.

A MESSAGE FROM ENZO FAVOINO, CHAIR OF THE SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The last years have been a real turning point for the implementation of EU circular economy strategies. The EU agenda is consolidating, and we've been most active to contribute to it while promoting alignment. Zero waste is showing to be "the perfect toolkit to make the vision of Circular Economy into operational reality", as we often say, which emphasised the contribution that may come from our many areas of action.

In doing so, we kept providing support to the network through our two complementary approaches: top-down (supporting the ZWE team in influencing the EU agenda through reports, proposals, position papers) and bottom-up (helping local networks "walk the talk" with local schemes and pilot programmes, which are spearheading our vision and practice across Europe).

Relevant areas of engagement include the plastic agenda; promotion of separate collection (in particular, organics); management of residuals; and the definition of granting and subsidy schemes to support our proposals. We provided plenty of operational evidence and scientific insights, maximising the credibility of our proposals with EU institutions, National Governments and local decision-makers.

Zero waste is not only possible, but solid and credible.

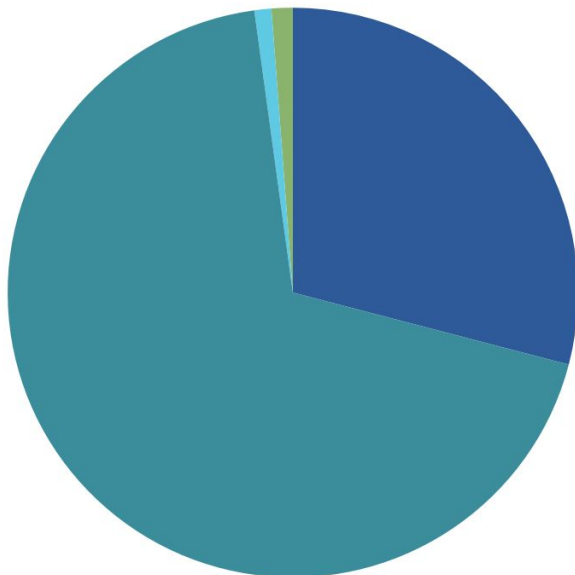


OUR LIFE SUPPORT

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
- Network for Social Change
- Adesium Foundation
- Kristian Gerhard Jebsen Foundation
- European Climate Foundation (NEW)
- Network for Social Change
- OAK Foundation
- MAVA
- GAIA
- UMI
- Telos (NEW)
- Donations
- Participation Fees

OUR 2020 IN-HOUSE INCOME



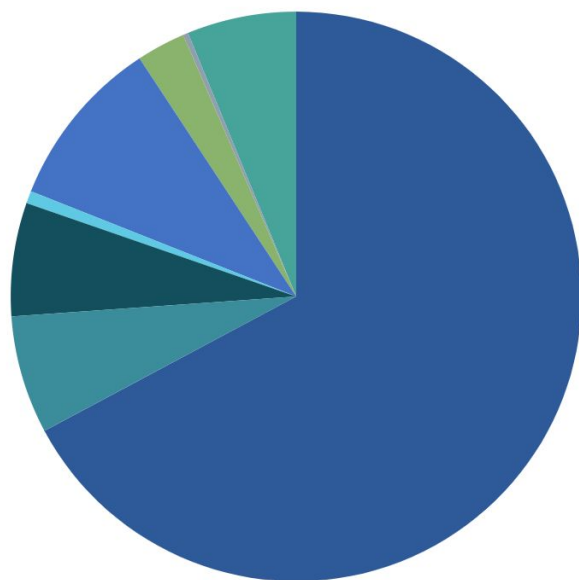
- EU grants €388,782
- Foundation grants €919,72
- Donations & Membership fees €12,855
- Other income €16,040

In 2020 we increased our income from the year before through a combination of increased fundraising and new grants, receiving a total of €1,337,419

VICTORY

We met our 2020 fundraising goals in July, and were able to channel more money to our members both directly and indirectly during 2020.

OUR 2020 SPENDING IN HOUSE



- Staff Costs €898,577
- External Assistance €89,544
- Activities €86,046
- Travel and Subsistence €9,461
- Overheads €130,118
- Rent, Depreciation €37,020
- Exceptional costs €3,869
- Reserves €82,783

In 2020 we spent a total of €1,337,419, plus €664,450 in sub-granting. This created an annual turnover of €2,001,869.00.

Another way to understand our spending is by dividing it between areas of strategic importance.



- Structure 18%
- Implementation 22%
- Advocacy work on EU policy 23%
- Movement-building 37%



A HUGE THANK YOU TO

An de Smet / Aragon BVBA

Blush

Bryan Mathers

Camille Delbos

Eunomia Research & Consulting

Francesca Tabasso

Friends Productions

Grainne Murphy

HD Creatives

Love Zero Waste Podcast Team

Mike Walker

Noble Studio

Noiza

Okay When

ToxicoWatch

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

Our fantastic Members

Our Donors

Our critical Funders

All our allies and like-minded organisations which contributed to our work and publications throughout the year



Editors: ZWE Communication Team
Designer: Eilidh Robb, Communications Officer at Zero Waste Europe
Date: May 2020

zerowasteurope.eu | zerowastecities.eu | rethinkplasticalliance.eu | breakfreefromplastic.org



Zero Waste Europe gratefully acknowledges financial assistance from the European Union. The sole responsibility for the content of this publication lies with ZWE. It does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the funder mentioned above. The funder cannot be held responsible for any use that may be made of the information contained therein.