



# Zero Waste Europe Annual Report 2022

[zerowasteurope.eu](https://zerowasteurope.eu)



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# About

## Zero Waste Europe

### Our Vision

**A zero waste, just, and inclusive Europe built on respect for ecological limits and community rights.**

A Europe where our production and consumption models are compatible with the resilience and wellbeing of communities, and support people's right to a safe and healthy environment - all resulting in a more equitable income distribution.

A Europe where regenerative, people-focused, and community-led solutions restore and conserve our resources.

A Europe that leads by example and acts as a catalyst for a global transition towards zero waste.



### Our Mission

**ZWE redesigns our relationship with resources by empowering communities and changemakers across Europe.**

ZWE is the European network of communities, local leaders, experts, and change agents working towards the prevention and elimination of waste in our society.

We advocate for sustainable systems; the redesign of our relationship with resources; and a global shift towards environmental justice, accelerating a just transition towards zero waste for the benefit of people and the planet.

### What moves and inspires us

**ZWE's strength lies in our membership, working together in solidarity, collaboration, and commitment.**

**We promote local solutions to global challenges.** Through our network, we build local-global connections which are essential to movement building and enhance our collective impact.

**Our solutions are decentralised, replicable, and adaptable** to diverse geographic and cultural needs and situations. We bring these solutions with us when we campaign at the global level.

**We believe in the power of social movements** to create positive change. Our transnational organising model respects place-based leadership, fosters solidarity, identifies points of common cause, and helps us build a culture of shared practice for positive change.

**We believe in equity, democracy, and justice.** The inclusive zero waste approaches that we promote are rooted in the belief that the democratisation of power and resources is essential for the preservation of our planet, and for the creation of just and sustainable local economies.



### ZWE history

**ZWE was created in 2014 as the European regional branch of the Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives (GAIA), and throughout the last years has established itself as a key environmental, circular economy, just transition, and movement building network in Europe.**

Building on the initial zero waste vision and code-created by the Italian city of Capannori, the ZWE network includes 34 members in 27 European countries (as of December 2022) and works with topics across the whole chain. From product design to reusability and end-of-pipe waste management solutions; from the phase-out of plastics to waste trade and municipal zero waste strategies, our scope has significantly expanded but our mission and vision remain the same – a zero waste, fairer, inclusive, circular Europe for all (and planet, too, while we're at it).



# A Message

from the Directors



**Esra Tat**  
Executive Director

**Joan Marc Simon**  
Director-Founder

*Dear all,*

In 2022, ZWE made significant strides in implementing zero waste solutions, marked by the expansion of our Zero Waste Cities and Businesses work across Europe, and notable policy advancements which ensured an upward movement in the zero waste hierarchy towards waste prevention and reuse.

This progress has been made possible thanks to the expertise and commitment of our expanding network in Europe, and our close collaboration with our GAIA colleagues in other regions of the world!

2022 was also the year where we saw, once again, how our fossil-fuel-dependent economies and linear models are running out of steam. The invasion of Ukraine and the following energy crisis brought back the old myth of waste incineration as a silver bullet solution to our energy needs, which we had to yet again debunk. In parallel, our report on net-zero strategies showed that even the most ambitious strategies in key sectors are unlikely to prevent the risk of overshooting our global carbon budget.

**In other words, there is no time to waste with sustainability-as-usual policies and strategies.**

As an organisation and network, this context led us to take a step back and reflect on our work and explore ways forward. In November 2022, we released our manifesto "New Energy for Europe" calling on the need for building a new European project based on **wellbeing for all, sufficiency, and resilience**.

The manifesto has been a way to reinforce our core and foundational principles, aiming at reducing resource use with community-driven initiatives, ensuring social justice, and creating a thriving life for all, within planetary boundaries.

In 2022, thanks to the combination of our policy efforts, movement building, and work at the local level, ZWE as a network had a significant impact and made progress towards our vision of a zero waste Europe. The zero waste thinking and solutions have never been more central in the political and public debate, which is a recognition of our collective efforts, together with our members, funders, and partners in Europe and globally.

Thank you for making 2022 a success and for our continued partnership towards a zero waste, just, and inclusive Europe built on planetary boundaries and community rights!

*Esra Tat and Joan Marc Simon*

# Our Manifesto

The European project as we know it is running out of steam and is not capable of delivering on its objectives of peace, prosperity, and equality.

To stay within the commitment of 1.5°C degrees warming, the broken paradigm based on economic growth should be replaced with a new one.

Launched in November 2021, our “New Energy for Europe” manifesto calls on the need for building a new European project based on wellbeing for all, sufficiency, and resilience.

This is our vision for Europe - and, by extension, for a better future for the entire planet and its inhabitants. Join us in turning it into a reality.

Read  
the full  
Manifesto  
here



# Our Strategic Framework

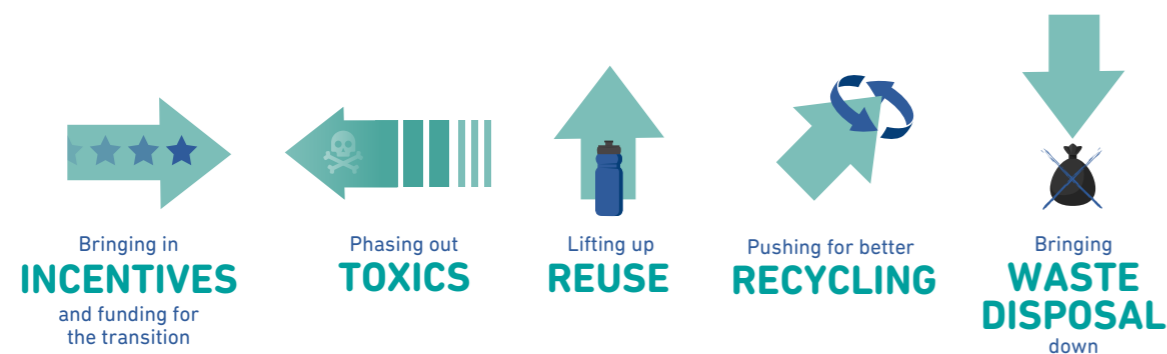
Europe is in the midst of a transition and zero waste is part of it.

The effects of the climate crisis are becoming more evident every year, with floods, fires, and pandemics becoming the new normal. From the point of view of resources management, the need for a circular economy is finally becoming real for most Europeans due to the disruption in global supply chains and energy prices. European producers and consumers are having to wait and/or pay more to continue producing and consuming like they used to, and this is an unequivocal sign of a change of tendency. The more expensive and less reliable a globalised economy is, the cheaper and more convenient a circular economy becomes.

In short: durability, reusability, and repairability are less disadvantaged today than they have been in the recent past.

Ten years ago, the concept of zero waste was laughed at. Today, zero waste is mainstream, from being considered a practical approach to implementing a circular economy to a trending lifestyle globally. The efforts from civil society groups in Europe and around the world pushed the debate to a higher place in the waste hierarchy. If, at any time over the last twenty years, reuse and prevention had a chance, it is now - and ZWE is committed to bringing that change forward.

From a content perspective  
for the next three years  
we will focus on



## Strategic Framework in a nutshell

The integration of our work areas in three main pillars is key to explain our impact.



### Enabling conditions through work on EU policies

We have a strong record of being influential in EU policy-making. We are a regular contributor and a 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 our expertise (both on the ground and in Brussels) in the implementation of zero waste strategies at the local and regional levels. We provide expertise, technical guidance, and facilitation to those willing to walk the zero waste path.



### Movement building and coordination

Our expertise in coordination, movement building and process facilitation is well-recognised. We coordinate a network of 34 European member organisations (as of December 2022).

As part of our movement building efforts, ZWE initiates coalitions and movements. Currently, we host the coordination of the Break Free From Plastic movement in Europe, including the Rethink Plastic alliance; and in 2022 we hosted the Food Contact Materials coalition, which now continues advocacy actions as a collaborative campaign for a toxic-free future. As a founding and active member of these groups, we advance our agenda of moving away from disposability and from the presence of hazardous substances in packaging.

We facilitate negotiations with big companies and empower small companies to get organised.

Read the full [Strategic Framework for 2022-24](#) on the ZWE website.

# Key ZWE highlights

from 2022

## Membership and movement building

34 members  
in 27 countries  
(as of December 2022)



## Implementation of solutions



Nomination  
of ZWE and  
the Mission  
Zero Academy  
(MiZA) to the  
Earthshot Prize.



Rapid expansion  
of the **Zero Waste  
Cities** certification,  
with large cities  
like **Munich** or  
**Barcelona** joining  
the certification.



Launch of the  
**Zero Waste  
Business  
Certification**.

## Advocacy and policy



The **Packaging & Packaging Waste Regulation** (PPWR) proposal includes **prevention and reuse targets** as well as compulsory Deposit Return Schemes (DRS).



The European Parliament voted in December 2022 in favour of **strengthening the export restrictions for plastic waste** put forward by the European Commission in the proposal for the revision of the **Waste Shipment Regulation**.



On **18 December**, co-legislators reached an agreement on the **revision of the EU Emissions Trading System** (ETS). As of 2024, waste incinerators will have to **measure, report and verify emissions** from municipal waste incineration.



On **14 September**, the European Parliament adopted its position on the **Renewable Energy Directive** mandating the introduction of **mixed waste sorting practices**, in case mixed wastes are used for 'renewable energy'.

## Shaping the Conversation

Content creation  
with research, policy  
briefings and reports

53  
publications

47 on the ZWE website,  
6 on the ZWC website

50  
blog posts  
between both websites

Increased media  
outreach work



18  
Press releases

1721  
media mentions  
in 2022



9  
op-eds

12  
feature interviews

Audiovisual materials



11  
Webinars  
(775 attendees  
throughout the year)

3  
Zero Waste  
Europe videos

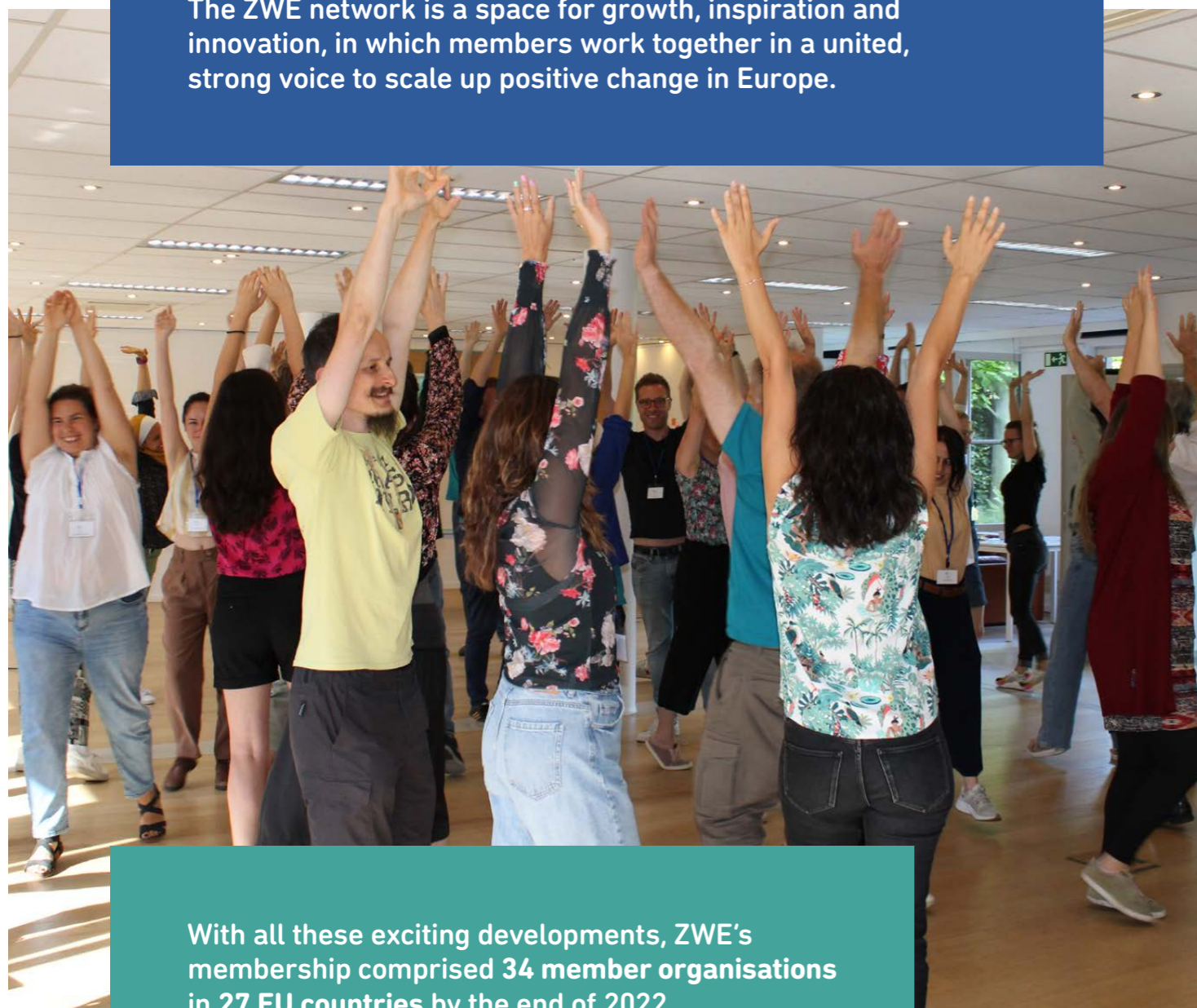


# Our Impactful Movement

ZWE connects and supports a vibrant network of local and national NGOs from all around Europe sharing common values and objectives and working together for a zero waste future.

The member organisations promote zero waste in line with the zero waste hierarchy, manage the network of zero waste municipalities, and engage with decision-makers and companies.

The ZWE network is a space for growth, inspiration and innovation, in which members work together in a united, strong voice to scale up positive change in Europe.



With all these exciting developments, ZWE's membership comprised 34 member organisations in 27 EU countries by the end of 2022.

## In 2022, we...

### Held our ZWE Network-Wide Gathering in Brussels, Belgium:

After several years of not being able to meet physically due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we finally got together with our members in Brussels in June for our annual gathering. Over 45 individuals - both representatives of our member organisations and ZWE staff - gathered for three days of discussions, reflections, strategising, and team building activities. There's also a video to immortalise this amazing gathering.



### Saw the promotion of our two previous Associate Members - Recycling Network Benelux (RNB) and Friends of the Earth - SPZ, Slovakia - to Full Members



### Continued to see the growth and strengthening of the five national zero waste alliances Established with support from ZWE in Bulgaria, Cyprus, Germany, Spain and Ukraine.

Each alliance is coordinating a platform of members in their country, working together on advocacy, implementing solutions, sharing knowledge and/or strengthening the zero waste movement nationally, embedding themselves as the focal points of zero waste expertise in their respective countries.

### Welcomed three new organisations as Associate Maembers:



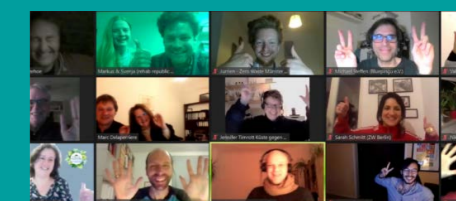
#### → Let's Do It Foundation

An Estonian organisation which empowers and enables organisations and people to thrive. They aim to unite the global community, raise awareness, and implement true change to achieve their final goal: a clean and healthy planet.



#### → Circular Economy Portugal

An environmental NGO that strives to create a circular economy and society without waste. It does so by sharing knowledge and developing projects related to waste prevention, reuse, and repair.



#### → Zero Waste Alliance Germany

An umbrella organisation of several local non-profit associations or bigger environmental groups that share the zero waste vision and promote waste reduction through campaigns and activities across Germany.

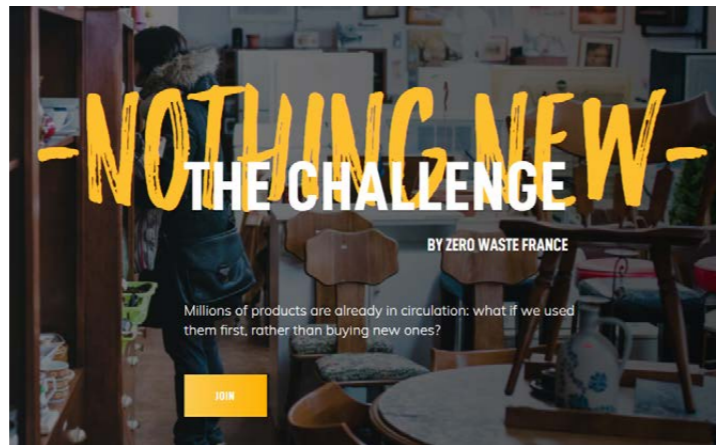
# Success Stories

from the network

Recycling Network Benelux (RNB)  
**NETHERLANDS**

## Mission Reuse

The Mission Reuse project, by our member Recycling Network Benelux, together with two partner organisations, aims to test reuse solutions, learn about consumer preferences, and work together with the business community to implement practical and innovative zero waste practices. The organisations work with policy-makers that can help to promote these practices and create infrastructures that support them, while leading on research about reuse systems that can work in different scenarios and are affordable for both customers and business entrepreneurs. Mission Reuse has put forward recommendations to the Dutch government on legislation that encourages reusable options and phases out single-use ones.



Zero Waste France  
**FRANCE**

## Nothing New Challenge

The Nothing New Challenge by Zero Waste France encourages people to rethink new purchases and offers suggestions for alternatives - such as reusing, opting for second-hand, repairing, or borrowing - while informing citizens about the impact of current production and consumption trends. Participants have access to a personal space to share new purchases they have avoided, and to exchange and draw inspiration from other participants.

The challenge is simple: buy as few new items as possible throughout the year to reduce the waste of resources. Over 70,000 people have joined the initiative so far. Will you be the next one?



## First Zero Waste Certified Cities

The municipalities of Bled and Gorje, Slovenia, were the first Zero Waste Certified Cities under the Mission Zero Academy Certification.

With the support of Ekologi Brez Meja, the two municipalities managed to increase separate collection rates to up to 75% and reduce the amount of residual waste per tourist by 16%. Over 40 measures were implemented to improve resource management and awareness.

United Kingdom Without Incineration Network (UKWIN)  
**UNITED KINGDOM**

## Incinerator moratorium in Scotland

The United Kingdom Without Incineration Network (UKWIN) has been campaigning against incinerators since 2007, supporting local communities, providing expertise and support and advocating heavily with policy-makers.

In 2022, alongside other environmental groups, the network welcomed the news that the Scottish Government will ensure that no further planning permissions are granted to new incinerators.

Zero Waste Alliance  
**UKRAINE**

## Zero Waste in Emergency Response

Despite the ongoing conflict with Russia, the Ukrainian city of Lviv has thrived in its zero waste efforts and became an example of resilience and commitment. Some of the zero waste actions taken by the city include separate door-to-door waste collection, including organic waste; diverting 80% of organic waste from landfills through composting; and multiple waste prevention programs that include single-use plastic and sanitary products.

Lviv's case can help to establish a zero waste protocol for emergency response in communities around the world.



Za Zemiata  
**BULGARIA**

## Waste prevention on mountains

Za Zemiata has been organising clean-ups on Bulgaria's mountains since 1999. Their campaign "IzChisti planini" (Clean mountains) focuses on the prevention of waste in mountains in the first place. The organisation collaborates with national park directorates to implement incentives that reduce waste and resource consumption through workshops and projects targeting mountain guides, resort hosts, schools, and tourism associations.



VOICE  
**IRELAND**

## Waste education in schools

The Picker Pals Programme, led by VOICE, inspires and equips children to become the next generation of environmentalists. This educational programme uses storytelling to motivate children and their families to clean up their local areas, while becoming aware of the consequences of waste and single-use packaging. Half of the primary schools in Ireland have now signed up for this programme.

Friends of the Earth Croatia / Zelena Akcija  
**CROATIA**

## Bike Repair Workshop

The Bicycle Repair Workshop (BicPop), set up by FoE Croatia, is based on a "do-it-yourself" concept where citizens can pop in and service their own bicycles, using the available tools and receiving support from volunteers. These volunteers also repair donated bicycles, which are then forwarded to those who need but cannot afford one.

This project won the Pride of Croatia Award in 2021.

# Success Stories

## from our work with GAIA

Zero waste is, at heart, a community-led effort with global implications. The work done in Africa, Latin America, and Asia Pacific can inspire the Global North just as much as Northern regions can inspire the South. Equally, the way the Global North deals – or rather fails to deal – with its waste disproportionately affects other parts of the world.

This is at the heart of our work with our mother organisation, GAIA, and its regional branches. By collaborating in joint actions with our colleagues in Latin America, Africa, Asia Pacific, and US and Canada, we are not only finding and implementing solutions for common environmental problems, but also doing so from a deep just transition and social justice perspective.

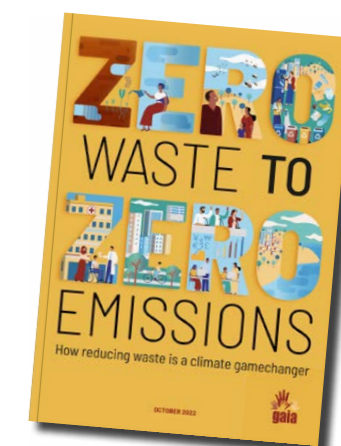


Among our main activities as part of GAIA in 2022, we highlight:



### GAIA's "Zero Waste for Zero Emissions" report

Launched in October 2022, this publication showcases the latest evidence (from both raw data and case studies from around the world) on how reducing waste is a climate gamechanger. One of the case studies included in the report comes from our members in Ukraine, Zero Waste Alliance Ukraine, and focuses on the city of Lviv, which is continuing its zero waste efforts even amongst



### Delegation at the COP27 Sharm (El-Sheik, Egypt)

One of our Ukrainian members, Iryna Myronova (Director of Zero Waste Lviv and founding member of our member organisation, the Zero Waste Alliance Ukraine), was part of the GAIA delegation to COP27 and was a panellist for many of its events. Specifically, Iryna presented examples from Lviv, which despite the war continues its way to zero waste and zero emissions. She also contributed to the discussions on the intersection of world food security caused by war, methane emissions and waste management, and local climate policies.



### Delegation at INC-1 meeting for a Global Plastics Treaty (Punta del Este, Uruguay)

In November, our Director-Founder, Joan Marc Simon, joined the GAIA and BFFP delegation to the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP)'s first Intergovernmental National Committee (INC-2) to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution. We will keep being present at INC meetings in 2023.



# Success Stories

## from our hosted coalitions and movement

In 2016, Zero Waste Europe co-founded Break Free From Plastic (BFFP) together with 7 other organisations: GAIA (Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives), China Zero Waste Alliance, Greenpeace, Mother Earth Foundation, Oceana, EcoWaste Coalition, and Story of Stuff. We then set up the BFFP Europe chapter, together with the policy arm of the movement, the Rethink Plastic Alliance, currently bringing together 10 leading European networks.

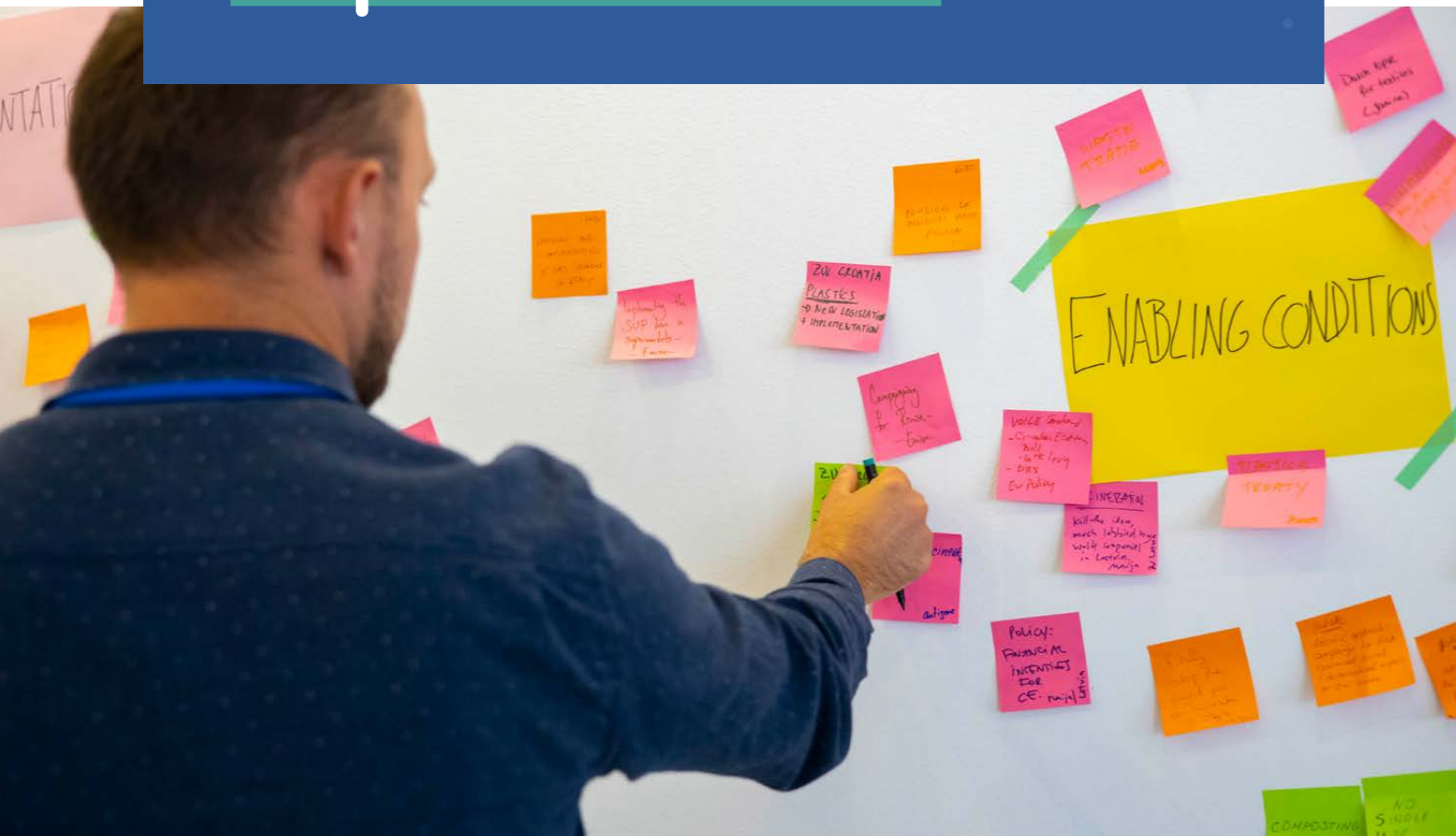
Over the years, BFFP Europe grew and expanded both in membership and staff. Until January 2022, the team was fully embedded in the ZWE core team, getting support from the general ZWE infrastructure and strategic guidance. We always had the desire and wish for BFFP Europe to be a decentralised and member-led movement, and in late 2021 it was finally time for the coordination team to detach from ZWE and have a fully member-led governance.

From January 2022, BFFP Europe established its structured governance, with an Advisory Committee in charge of anchoring its key strategic strands, and a Steering Group to provide guidance to the coordination team in their strategic thinking and implementation of the movement strategy. This is a great milestone for the movement and a true success story in terms of movement building.

The BFFP Europe and the ZWE teams are working very closely, as the BFFP Europe team is still legally and physically hosted under ZWE's roof, and ZWE is an active founding member of both BFFP Europe and the Rethink Plastic Alliance.

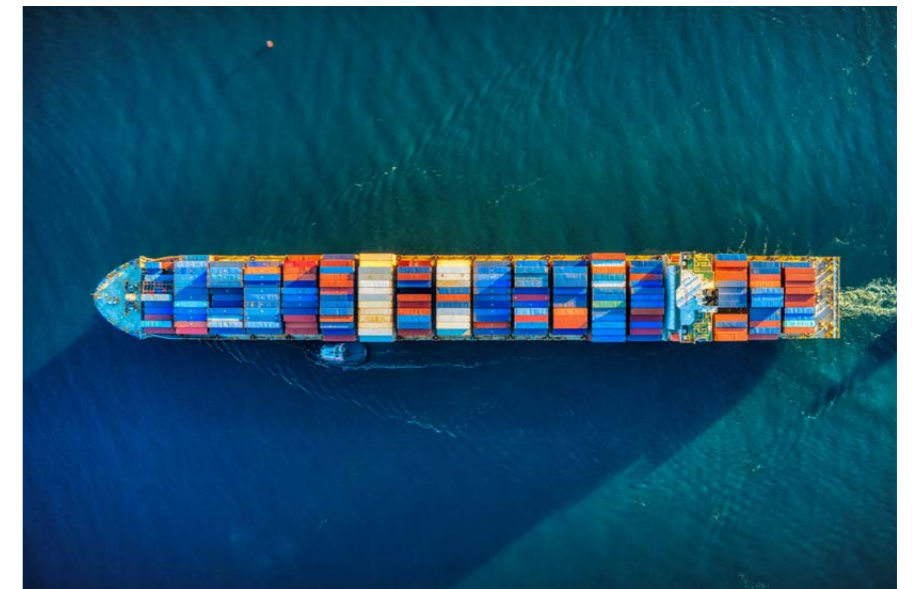


# Our Impactful Work



## Waste trade

The initial [proposal](#) by the [European Commission](#) published in November 2021 included a ban by default on plastic waste exports to non-OECD countries. The [European Parliament's ENVI committee](#) has voted in December 2022 in favour of strengthening the export restrictions and extending them to OECD countries. Specifically, a phased-in ban on EU plastic waste exports to non-EU/non-EFTA countries was adopted, meaning that a ban to OECD countries would enter into force within 4 years of adoption. These amendments were achieved after ZWE, as part of the Rethink Plastic alliance, reached out to key MEPs with [our position](#) to strengthen the initial proposal by the European Commission.



## Incineration

The missing link in the EU ETS



Including incineration in the EU ETS will stimulate sorting and recycling activities of both households and companies, decreasing the number of incinerators across Europe.

## Anti-incineration

Complementing the efforts from our members at the national and local levels, in 2022 there were great steps forward to phasing out waste incineration. Thanks to our advocacy efforts towards the EU institutions, the support to waste incineration was greatly limited in EU legislation.

First, the European Parliament proposed the inclusion of municipal incinerators in the EU Emissions Trading System (ETS) as of 2026 - meaning that incineration fossil CO<sub>2</sub> emissions will be subjected to EU ETS prices. This happened both as part of the [ENVI Committee's report](#) (January-May) and through the [European Parliament's adopted position in a plenary session](#) (June). Pricing incineration's CO<sub>2</sub> emissions will likely encourage waste prevention and recycling, leading to both climate and employment benefits; incentivising plastic circularity; and pushing for greater waste prevention.

In addition to this, the support to waste incineration was further limited within the [European Parliament](#) through its September position on the revision of the [EU Renewable Energy Directive](#) (RED III), by strengthening the sustainability criteria regarding the use of mixed wastes for 'renewable energy' production. It now requires, in case mixed waste is used for 'renewable energy', the operators to sort the waste to remove fossil materials (for recycling). Moreover, waste incineration of biogenic waste (such as bio-waste or paper) can only be supported if separate collection obligations are fully met.

This requirement on mixed waste sorting can lead to the extraction of at least 40% more plastics for recycling, saving both fossil fuels and about 40 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>eq. per year.

To further add to these victories:

- The [final report](#) by EU's [Sustainable Finance Platform](#) (focusing on the taxonomies around sustainable use and protection of water and marine resources; transition to a circular economy; pollution prevention and control; and protection and restoration of biodiversity and ecosystem) excluded waste incineration and its by-products from its scope.
- Both the European Parliament and the EU Council of Ministers reached an agreement that tasks the European Commission to develop a study and accompanying legislative proposal by 2026, aiming to include municipal incinerators from 2028 in the scope of the EU ETS. Such actions would put a carbon price on fossil emissions from incinerators, which in turn would encourage a better collection and sorting of municipal waste.



## Enabling conditions

### Waste prevention

With our dedicated [position paper](#), we put forward our asks for the revision of the Waste Framework Directive and how to revise EU legislation to align with the political ambition and commitment of the European Green Deal. Moreover, in collaboration with 4 other NGOs, ZWE published a [joint paper](#) showing the lack of effectiveness of existing waste prevention policies, and calling for quantitative waste prevention targets at the European level, as well as effective national measures. This position paper also highlighted the role of manufacturers in reducing resource use and the size of the circular economy loop.

Furthermore, with the support of 10 Members of the European Parliament and 47 other NGOs, ZWE sent an [open letter](#) to EU Commissioner for Environment, Oceans and Fisheries, Virginijus Sinkevičius, calling for urgent action in order to tackle the waste crisis.

In the letter, the signatories stated their concerns regarding the Waste Framework Directive revision's very limited scope; and urged the European Commission to adopt legally binding, European-level quantitative targets for municipal solid waste prevention. To amplify our message, we also ran a [campaign](#) titled 'Nip waste in the bud' on waste prevention which received good engagement. We will continue to influence the proposal for a revision of the Waste Framework Directive, which is expected in June 2023.

Likewise, our waste prevention efforts also included strong advocacy towards the inclusion of mixed waste sorting. This contributed to [influence the opinion report by the European Parliament's ENVI Committee](#), whose text strengthened the criteria regarding the use of mixed waste for renewable energy production. It also requires the removal of fossil materials during mixed waste sorting activities, which helps to ensure that only renewable non-fossil energy sources may be considered, and supported, as "renewable".



## Chemical Recycling & Recovery

Chemical recycling is being increasingly pushed by the industry as a silver bullet solution to plastic pollution. ZWE and other associations in its wider movement have been instrumental to raise awareness of the potential pitfalls of this technology, with a view to ensuring that, if it is implemented, it's regulated by the highest possible standards.

With that in mind, we have been focusing our efforts on ensuring that chemical recycling remains below mechanical recycling in the waste hierarchy; and that approaches to this technology - such as mass balance - are done in a way that is equal for all players (e.g. avoiding flexible allocations that lead to creative accountability and misleading claims towards consumers).

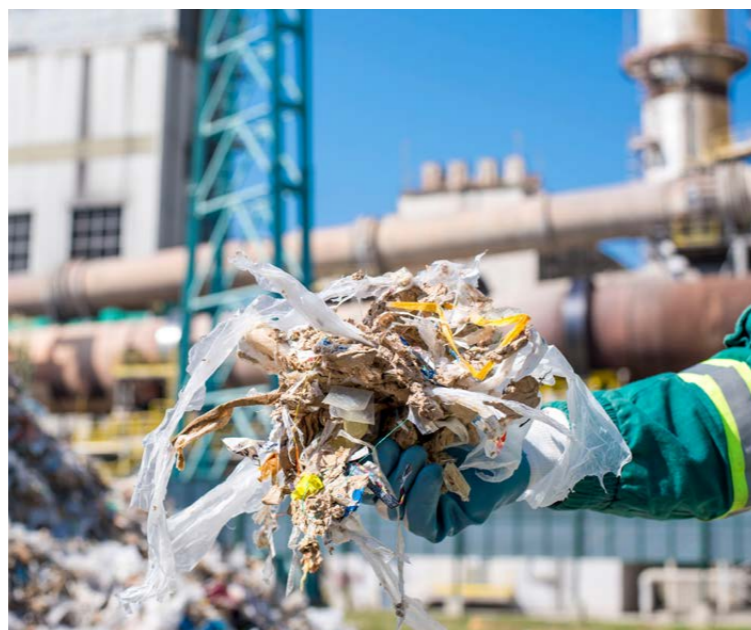
Among our main activities this in 2022, we highlight:

- **The ZWE-Öko-Institut study on chemical recycling, comparing different scenarios to meet recycled content targets defined in the Packaging & Packaging Waste Directive (from a climate perspective)** - which assessed the climate impact of using pyrolysis for plastic packaging in comparison with mechanical recycling and reuse scenarios. The study showed that pyrolysis produces 9 times more emissions and loses 53% more carbon content than mechanical recycling.
- **Our advocacy efforts towards including methodology to assess recycled content based on batch level in the final EU Sustainable Platform report** - which would ensure strong chemical and physical traceability along the production chain; as well as a level playing field between all recycling technologies. If this wording ends up being adopted by the European Commission, it will lead to defining "recycled content" as solely the instances where there is actual recycled content (instead of general claims that may or may not apply to the item in question).
- **Our advocacy work leading the regulation adopted by DG SANTE on recycled plastics for food contact materials based on a batch-level mass balance** - as with the EU Sustainable Platform, this leads to having the same standards and regulation for all players when using a mass balance approach in chemical recycling technologies.

## Plastic-to-Fuels

Plastic-to-Fuels has been introduced in the EU legislation during the Renewable Energy Directive revision in 2018, under the concept of "recycled carbon fuel" as a way to decarbonise transportation. However, this technique based on fossil waste adds just another step before plastic waste is burnt, and therefore does not contribute to reducing the carbon footprint of transportation.

In 2022, our advocacy efforts on this topic led to the **adoption of stronger wording on recycled carbon fuels by the European Parliament's ENVI Committee, and by the European Parliament as a plenary session** - namely, the removal of the concept of "avoided emissions and the carbon content of waste". This helps to further limit the use of recycled carbon fuels (RCFs) as part of the EU Renewable Energy Directive, and makes it harder for RCFs to be classified as low-carbon fuels. Likewise, RCFs cannot be considered as a viable tool for the decarbonisation of transportation.



## Packaging, Prevention and Reuse

ZWE has doubled down on its previous activities around reuse - especially when it comes to its application for packaging and waste prevention - by bringing it to the forefront of our working topics and advocating to place it higher in the European policy agenda. Especially with the impending revision of the EU Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation (PPWR), it is crucial to ensure that the right conditions and incentives to make reuse the norm across Europe are in place - from binding reuse targets and incentives to the creation of transnational, interoperable reuse systems.

Amongst our reuse efforts in 2022, we highlight:

- Publications developed during the first year of the ReuSe Vanguard Project (RSVP - see more on this project in the Implementation chapter), such as:
  - The "Packaging at Core" [policy briefing](#) and accompanying [infographic](#) - demonstrating how solving the packaging issue can also help to tackle problems such as global warming, toxicity, food contact materials, and waste trade.
  - [Our paper on "Packaging Reuse Vs Packaging Prevention"](#) - clarifying what should be defined as "packaging reuse" and what should be defined as "packaging waste prevention"; and the policy measures that encompass one and the other.
  - Our joint policy briefing with Deutsche Umwelthilfe (DUH) on ["The need to set essential criteria for setting up managed pool systems"](#) - providing guidance on this topic and proposing policy proposals to consider when creating EU legislation on reuse.
- [The "How Circular is PET?" report](#) - showing the true state of circularity of polyethylene terephthalate in bottles in Europe.
- [The "How Circular is glass?" report](#) - examining the mass flows of single-use glass packaging in four countries: Germany, France, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America.
- [The European Commission's proposed text for the Packaging and Package Waste Regulation](#) (November) - which includes elements that ZWE has been pushing as part of our reuse advocacy efforts, such as reuse targets for key sectors (beverage, takeaway food and drinks for the HoReCa sector, wine, e-commerce and transport packaging); essential requirements for Deposit Return Systems (DRS); pooling systems for reusable packaging; and a clear definition of "reuse systems".

## Food Contact Materials

In 2022, ZWE remained an active actor and an agent of change when it comes to toxic-free food contact materials, with intentions to keep expanding its action scope and solidify the links between health and the environment when it comes to packaging.

Our continuous advocacy efforts towards circular and safer food packaging items have contributed to the adoption by the European Commission's DG SANTE of a [regulation on recycled plastics for food contact materials](#) in September. The requirements set for recyclers using novel technologies are much more stringent than what was foreseen in the draft put forward for consultation at the beginning of the year.

Amongst our key publications on this topic in 2022, we also highlight:

- [A joint letter with 27 other civil society organisations to the EU Commissioner for Health, Stella Kyriakides](#), stating concerns about some of the proposals in the draft new Regulation concerning the placing on the market of plastic materials and articles with recycled/secondary plastic content intended for use in contact with food.
- Our [briefing for businesses on "Marring safety with sustainability in food packaging"](#) - written within the context of the RSVP project and its #GetBack campaign, this publication shows the issues linked to hazardous chemicals in food contact materials and stresses the need to use non-toxic packaging materials that protect human health.
- Our ["Ensuring safe recycled content in food packaging": ambition vs reality](#) policy briefing - urging for an ambitious regulatory framework to urgently phase out the most hazardous chemicals, thus ensuring food packaging and other food contact articles are truly safe for use, reuse, and recycling.



# Implementation of zero waste solutions

## Zero Waste Cities

ZWE kept on expanding its Zero Waste Cities network (482 as of December 2022) and the activities associated with it all throughout 2022. The collaboration with our members has been essential to not only expand our network, but also to increase the efforts in existing cities - be it activities on the ground with local communities; providing expert guidance and materials; or in their links with the Mission Zero Academy (MiZA) through the Zero Waste Cities Certification.

The key achievements of 2022 in this scope of action include:

- **The first zero waste city in Cyprus and alliance workshop** - our member Friends of the Earth Cyprus organised the first in-person workshop for alliance members to strategise on their future plans, with ZWE's Zero Waste Cities programme playing a central role in this. This was complemented by a conference with city officials and resulted in Ipsonas committing to become the country's first Zero Waste Candidate City.

- **The publication of the Zero Waste Handbook and educational curricula (Ambassador and Trainer)** - as part of the BEZWA project (which also includes our members from Estonia and Slovenia), we developed the most robust and comprehensive overview of what zero waste is and how to educate others. This publication is a vast improvement on how individuals are currently trained and supported to become more confident, better equipped zero waste ambassadors.
- **Our paper on "How to best collect bio-waste"** - showing how door-to-door collection models for organics provide the best results; and listing key indicators and recommendations for municipalities seeking to implement high-performing organics collection systems in their communities.
- **The third edition of the State of Zero Waste Municipalities Report** - highlighting effective local strategies already bearing fruit not only in Europe, but also in other global regions.



## New Financing Models (NFM)

2022 was a catalytic year in presenting our New Financial Models (NFM) work and its perimeter. Going forward, this work will serve to shape tools and implementation models. We are expanding our activities and exploration phase: namely, we're finalising a feasibility assessment on Social Impact Bonds with KOIS, which focuses on four different waste management solutions in four EU countries. We are also developing the next steps to bring key stakeholders together.

2022 was also the year when we launched our dedicated NFM newsletter, The Ripple Effect. With these quarterly updates, we hope to connect NGOs with impact investors looking to be part of the solution; and to foster a paradigm shift on how impact investments could be mobilised for sustainable change and more resilient solutions.

We are closely working with our members to identify local projects that need funding in order to accelerate this transition. We are also building an impact framework management (IMM) with a lens on waste, which will be the first one.



## Mission Zero Academy (MiZA)

2022 was a year of consolidation and strengthening of added value for Zero Waste Europe's capacity-building spin-off, the Mission Zero Academy (MiZA).

After its successful launch and awareness-raising efforts the previous year, in April we saw Bled and Gorje (Slovenia) become the first two municipalities to ever receive the Zero Waste Cities Certification under MiZA. They were quickly followed by Capannori in June - the city where the zero waste movement started in Europe and the oldest member of ZWE's Zero Waste Cities network. These first three certifications opened the door to all future certified cities, and contributed to a better understanding of MiZA's mission and activities - not just for other cities and municipalities, but also for ZWE's own member organisations, which are a key part of MiZA by providing their expertise and acting as Certification Auditors and Mentors.

Likewise, MiZA debuted its Zero Waste Business Certification in 2022, targeting small businesses in the hospitality sector that want to improve their zero waste efforts and get them certified in a solid and credible way. It wasn't long after that we had the first-ever Zero Waste Certified Business - the Ribno Alpine Resort in Slovenia, which became certified in November.

Overall, throughout 2022, MiZA counted:

- 19 confirmed candidate cities and municipalities from 9 different countries for the Zero Waste Cities Certification;
- 11 Zero Waste Certified Cities (representing 3 countries);
- 4 candidate businesses from 2 different countries for the Zero Waste Business Certification;
- 1 Zero Waste Certified Business.

From all the efforts taken already in early 2023, we are sure this number will only grow exponentially.

Among these 11 candidate cities and municipalities for the Zero Waste Cities Certification, it is important to highlight the commitments from Barcelona (Spain) and Munich (Germany). A huge milestone for MiZA and for ZWE's work on zero waste cities, having these two major European cities as Zero Waste Candidate Cities is living proof of the appeal of the zero waste city model and the possibility to adapt it to different realities.



## RSVP

We continued the activities of the ReuSe Vanguard Project (RSVP) and its efforts to create the conditions for the implementation of transnational, interoperable reuse systems in Europe. Counting with members from the ZWE network and like-minded organisations as project partners, the RSVP project led to a few important milestones in 2022, among which:

- The mapping of the EU's packaging landscape for both warm takeaway drinks and delivery and takeaway food;
- The launch of the #GetBack campaign, making the bridge between RSVP's implementation work on reuse and the policy-making and recommendations for the EU PPWR proposal.
- Our contributions to the creation of conditions for reuse businesses from across Europe to get together and speak up with a concerted voice on their needs, expectations, and vision for the future at the European level.

The success of the RSVP project and its #GetBack campaign was such that the project has now been renewed for a second round of funding (from 2022 to 2025), which allows us to carry out our implementation work through a pan-European collaboration with 6 pilot cities in 5 countries.

# Communicating with a purpose

## Zero Waste Live! Webinars

A very popular activity within our audiences, membership, and wider movement, the [Zero Waste Live! series](#) had 8 webinars in 2022. As usual, these webinars brought together experts from all over Europe - and beyond - to discuss zero waste strategies, showcase best practices, and provide knowledge on available tools for cities and municipalities.

In addition to this series, ZWE also hosted 3 other standalone webinars with a greater focus on EU policy:

- [“The toxic toll of waste incineration: measuring health and environmental impacts”](#) (February) - to further raise awareness of the results of our “The True Toxic Toll” campaign, which performed biomonitoring research on the surroundings of waste incinerators.
- [“Sorting recyclables from residual waste”](#) (May) - a partner event to the EU Green Week which debated the need for a mandatory application of mixed waste sorting (MWS) systems to all residual (municipal, and potentially other similar types) waste in the review of the Waste Framework Directive.
- [“The climate impact of pyrolysis anof plastic packaging and alternatives - strategies to lower it”](#) (September) - serving as the launch event for the ZWE-Oeko Institute report on this topic, which compared the impact of pyrolysis with other potential alternatives for recycling food grade plastic packaging.
- Overall, our webinars proved to be a huge success in 2022, with very high levels of registration and participation (some going over 150 participants at a time), with a total of 775 attendees across the year.

## Events / Actions

In addition to our ZWE Network-Wide Gathering in June, ZWE organised or directly participated in the following 2022 events:



14 JUNE – BRUSSELS

### ZWE Cities Conference

As part of our BEZWA project, we organised a high-level conference together with Brussels Environment, the public authority in charge of environmental protection for the city-region. The event had 2 panels, bringing together decision-makers, city officials, businesses, and NGO representatives to discuss how to improve biowaste capture locally and how to embed reuse models more within a city's infrastructure.



5-7 SEPTEMBER – GEETBETS

### ZWE Staff Retreat

As it does every year, the ZWE staff gathered for 3 days of strategic meetings. We took stock of our work and achievements of the first 3 quarters of 2022; prepared the work to be done until the end of the year; identified points for improvement within our external and internal work; and reconnected as a team through learning activities and sharing moments.



22-24 NOVEMBER – MILAN AND CONTARINA

### ZWE Study Tour

Our first study tour in 3 years was a huge success, attended by 28 people who wished to learn more [about Milan's and Contarina's frontrunning actions on municipal waste management](#). The feedback received showed a score of 4.83 out of 5 for how participants would rate the tour.



15-17 JUNE – BRUSSELS

### ZWC Training

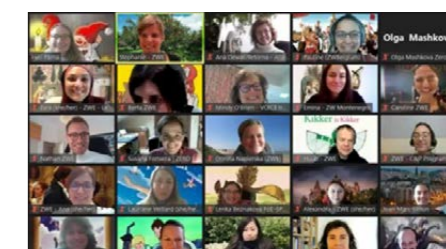
In sunny June, we gathered 26 participants from ZWE's membership for a 2.5-day training on different aspects related to our zero waste cities model. We had external and internal experts run sessions on a variety of topics from Pay-As-You-Throw to organics, mixed waste sorting, and community composting.



12 OCTOBER – BRUSSELS

### #WeChoose Reuse Action

We joined the other members of the Break Free From Plastic movement for a reuse action day in front of the European Parliament, in which we pushed for comprehensive reuse incentives to be embedded in EU legislation. This opportunity also served to make MEPs more familiar with our reuse publications stemming from the #GetBack campaign and RSVP project.



23 NOVEMBER – ONLINE

### ZWE Annual General Meeting

Complementing the discussions and activities of the ZWE Network-Wide Gathering, our Annual General Meeting was an opportunity for our members to share their biggest challenges and achievements of this year. Our network also discussed in greater detail our Network Strengthening Plan, which seeks to solidify and maximise our movement building efforts and capacity.

Impactful publications and communications pushes

Zero waste is nothing if not, at heart, a community-based effort.

In 2022, we continued with our commitment to making our materials accessible and easy to understand for all our audiences, ensuring that there are parts of it that can always resonate or be applied to our lives, regardless of where we are from, what we work on, or what drives us.

Our efforts include executive summaries for key or long publications; creating supporting materials, such as infographics or videos, to better explain overly technical issues; and ensuring that the language, style, and tone of all ZWE materials can be understood by a wide range of audiences.

Among the most impactful publications of 2022 (and besides the ones already mentioned in previous sections), we highlight:

- [The Story of Tübingen](#) - a case study showing how this German city took the pioneering steps of introducing a city-wide tax on single-use plastic items, which formed just one part of a wider strategy to foster reuse within the city.
- [Is net zero enough for the materials sector?](#) - written in collaboration with Eunomia Research & Consulting, this report allocated a risk factor associated with each intervention and quantified how this influences the likelihood of overshooting the remaining carbon budget. It also attempted to determine whether the overshoot can be reduced by accelerating the adoption model deployed for technological interventions.
- [The True Toxic Toll: biomonitoring of waste incineration emissions](#) - a biomonitoring research on incinerator emissions across Europe performed by ZWE with ToxicoWatch, Hnuti Duha, Ziedine Ekonomika, and Ecologists en Accion. A key part of our “[The True Toxic Toll](#)” campaign, not only has this report demonstrated the vast discrepancy between the way incinerator emissions are currently legally measured and the real value of those emissions, but it also shaped the conversation around waste incineration in the media throughout the whole year.
- The [#GetBack campaign video](#) - which, through the power of visual storytelling, showed how widespread, interoperable reuse systems are easy to operate (for businesses), convenient (for consumers), and cost-effective (for both).
- The European Week of Waste Reduction-thematic infographics on:

  - [The Finnish law on textile waste separate collection and implementation pilots](#) - showcasing this country’s leading work on textile waste ahead of the EU law that mandates separate collection for textiles by January 2025.
  - [The Austrian federal law on refill quotas](#) - taking a closer look at Austria’s inspiring work on refillable beverage packaging.

To add to this, we wrote 50 blog posts between the ZWE and ZWC websites, showcasing the knowledge, vision, and achievements of our staff, members, and voices in the wider zero waste movement.

We have also increased again the number of translations of our publications and videos: 54 instances comprising 14 languages! We are incredibly proud of this work and of the number of requests received, as it proves the quality of our materials and content, as well as their usefulness to local communities and realities.

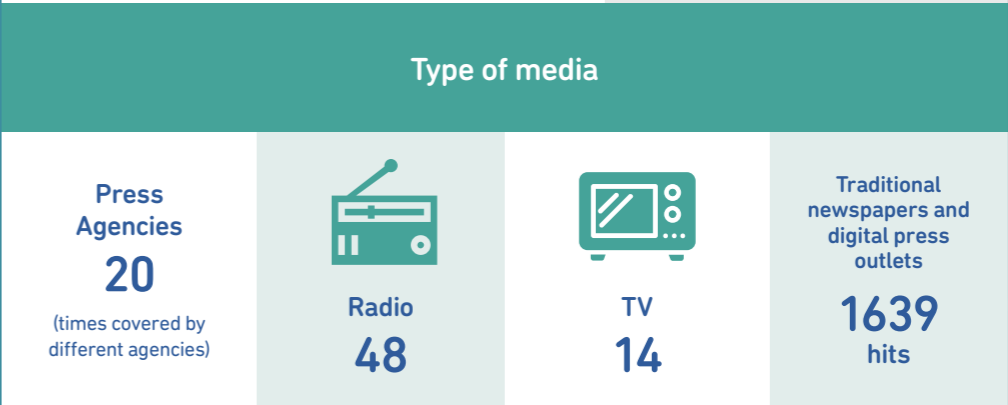
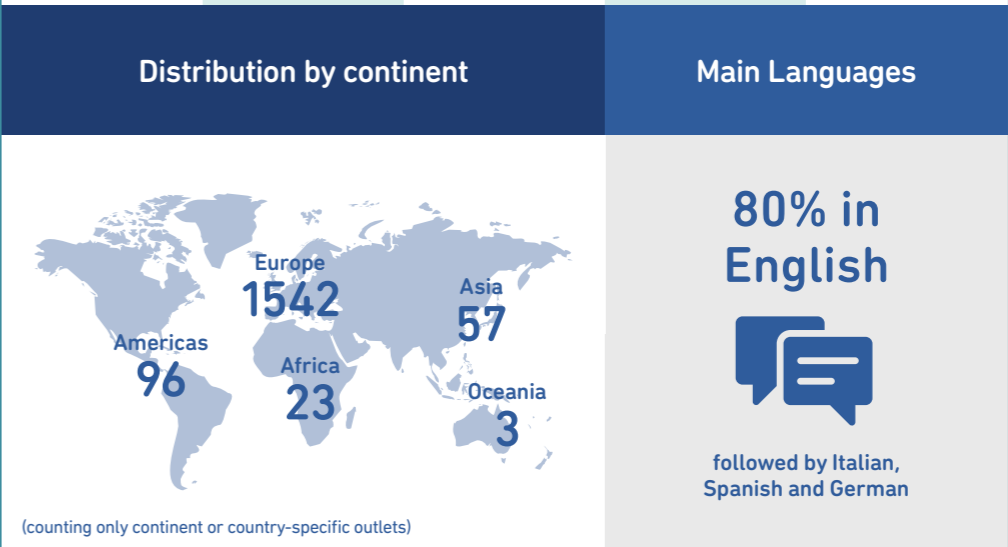


ZWE in the media sphere

In 2022 we have once again solidified ZWE’s media presence and outreach, increasing our position as a thought leader and agent of change in EU, national, and local level outlets, as well as in specialised titles.

Not only have our press mentions and journalist contacts increased significantly, but we had the opportunity to resume regular 1:1 meetings between our team and journalists from key outlets. This has allowed us to better inform journalists on their topics of interest, and build a closer relationship with them.

18 press releases  
1721 media mentions in 2022, including



## Amplifying our network

In 2022, we have continued to promote our members through the year-long ZWE Changemakers series, which puts one of our member organisations in the spotlight each month. Through the activities and materials of this series, we amplify awareness of the changes our members implement within their own network and the subsequent impact on the ground.

We have also hosted another round of the “May is for Members” campaign, sharing their biggest victories of the previous year with our wider audiences.



## Strengthening our organisational setup

Besides all these impressive achievements, 2022 was also a landmark year for ZWE when it comes to our way of working. True to our commitment to our cause, as well as to the fulfilment and wellbeing of our team and network, we made significant improvements to solidify our working conditions and our organisational setup.

For a start, we have reviewed and better defined our organisational values in a way that truly signals what working at - and collaborating with - Zero Waste Europe is about. They reflect our way of thinking and our belief that achieving a better future cannot be done without securing a thriving and safe work environment for our team and network.

## Our organisational values reflect our commitment and way of thinking and working:



We are *purpose-driven*, always putting forward a solution-oriented approach.



We *care* deeply about our communities, the environment, and systemic changes that benefit society as a whole - while also looking after ourselves and our own well-being as a team and as individuals.



We believe that acting with *integrity* is crucial to achieve impact and change, both inside and outside our network.



We adopt a *game-changing* approach to challenge the *status quo*, explore emerging topics and create a safe space to succeed (and to recover from setbacks).



We are *adaptable*, constantly striving towards learning and improving; open to change and taking agency.



### #MayisforMembers

Camp Zéro Déchet equips camp leaders with the skills and knowledge to reduce their waste during the camp, as well as making the whole experience more sustainable and environmentally-focused.

Zero Waste Belgium



### #MayisforMembers

The Accademia Rifiuti Zero Mediterraneo creates a space for exchange between academics, municipalities and zero waste experts, looking to protect the unique eco-systems of the Mediterranean coast.

Zero Waste Italy



### ZERO WASTE MEDITERRANEAN ACADEMY

Citizens Science



### #MayisforMembers

“A significant proportion of waste in Cyprus continues to be landfilled, fly-tipped or burned. The alliance has been working to change this dire situation with a high level of ambition, guided by our common vision for a healthy and just environment.”

Anastasia Korae, President Friends of the Earth Cyprus



### #MayisforMembers

“With this surprise victory in Alton, alongside the moratorium in Wales, the Scottish incineration review, and the refusal of an incinerator in Northern Ireland, the tide certainly seems to be turning in our favour!”

UKWIN



In June, our ZWE members elected 3 new ZWE Board Members - Juliette Franquet (Zero Waste France), Jaka Krancj (Ekologi brez meja), and Mindy O'Brien (VOICE Ireland) - thus going from 4 to 7 Board Members while strengthening and diversifying the Board's capacity.

Last but certainly not least, we have moved office. After 6 years in the Flagey area, ZWE has relocated closer to the centre of Brussels. Now based at WeWork - closer to the EU institutions and other like-minded organisations with in our wider movement -, our new office is much better equipped to accommodate our expanding team and to provide us with all the conditions needed to create impactful change.

As part of our commitment to help others in their zero waste journey and increase their sustainability, ZWE has been providing expert advice to WeWork on how to improve its waste prevention and management practices. This goes from having more accurate instructions on the existing bins, to the proposal of a compost site in the common outside space and ongoing negotiations to replace single-use plates (a legacy from the COVID-19 lockdown era) with reusable crockery.



# Behind the Scenes

In addition to the amazing efforts and support from our membership across the European continent, our victories and achievements could not have happened without the enthusiasm, dedication, and hard work from the Zero Waste Europe staff. Thank you for all your continuous commitment and motivation!

## Meet the team

### Zero Waste Europe Staff



NEW

**Aline Maigret**  
Head of Policy  
*Joined in 2023*



**Jack McQuibban**  
Head of Local  
Zero Waste  
Implementation  
*Joined in 2019*

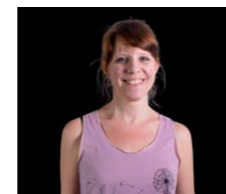


**Ana Oliveira**  
Head of  
Communications  
*Joined in 2020*

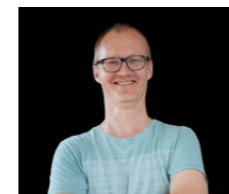


NEW

**Alice Marquet**  
Head of Operations  
*Joined in 2022*



**Stephanie Yates**  
Network Coordinator  
*Joined in 2022*



**Janek Vähk**  
Climate, Energy,  
and Air Pollution  
Programme  
Coordinator  
*Joined in 2015*



**Lauriane Veillard**  
Chemical Recycling  
and Plastic-to-Fuels  
Policy Officer  
*Joined in 2022*



**Theresa Mörsen**  
Waste Policy Officer  
*Joined in 2022*



**Nathan Dufour**  
Consumption  
& Production  
Programme  
Coordinator  
*Joined in 2020*



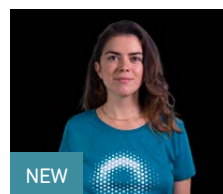
**Larissa Copello**  
Consumption  
& Production  
Campaigner  
*Joined in 2018*



**Dorota Napierska**  
Policy Officer  
on Toxic-Free  
Consumption &  
Production  
*Joined in 2021*



**Caroline Cullière**  
New Financing  
Models Coordinator  
*Joined in 2021*



NEW

**Manon Jourdan**  
Implementation  
Officer  
*Joined in 2023*



**Kaisa Karjalainen**  
Coordinator of  
the Mission Zero  
Academy  
*Joined in 2020*



**Nanna Cornelsen**  
Communications  
Assistant  
*Joined in 2022*



**Desi Borisova**  
Finance Officer  
*Joined in 2021*



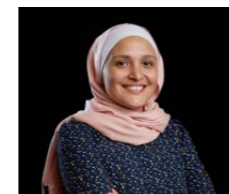
**Heli Pärna**  
Grants and  
Operations Officer  
*Joined in 2019*



**Alexandra Clipa**  
Administration and  
Events Officer  
*Joined in 2020*



**Joan Marc Simon**  
Director-Founder  
*Joined in 2007*

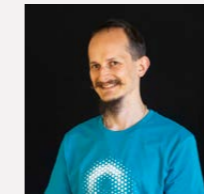


**Esra Tat**  
Executive Director  
*Joined in 2017*

### Zero Waste Europe Board



**Rossano Ercolini**  
President of  
the Board



**Jaka Kranjc**  
Treasurer



**Huub Scheele**  
Secretary



**Antigone Dalamaga**  
Board Member



**Juliette Franquet**  
Board Member



**Mindy O'Brien**  
Board Member

### ZWE Scientific Committee



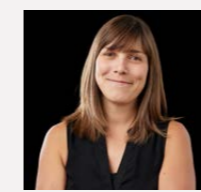
**Enzo Favoino**  
Chair of the Scientific  
Committee

### Our GAIA colleague

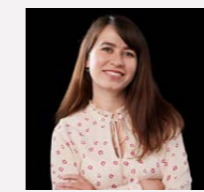


**Mariel Vilella**  
GAIA's Global Climate  
Programme Director  
*Joined in 2010*

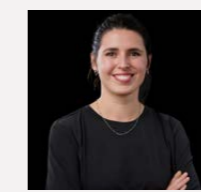
### Our hosted coalition and alliances



**Justine Maillot**  
Coordinator of  
Break Free From  
Plastic Europe and  
the Rethink Plastic  
alliance  
*Joined in 2019*



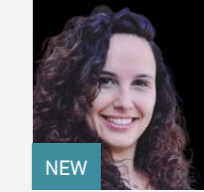
**Iveta Cadrova**  
Movement building  
Coordinator of Break  
Free From Plastic  
Europe  
*Joined in 2019*



**Bethany  
Spendlove Keeley**  
Europe  
Communications  
Officer for Break Free  
From Plastic  
*Joined in 2021*

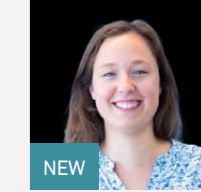


**Alexander Colling**  
Grants and  
Operations Officer  
of Break Free From  
Plastic Europe  
*Joined in 2022*



NEW

**Laura Diaz Sanchez**  
Solutions Coordinator  
for Break Free From  
Plastic Europe  
*Joined in 2022*



NEW

**Caroline Will**  
Communications  
Coordinator of the  
Rethink Plastic  
Alliance  
*Joined in 2023*

### Cherished colleagues who left us in 2022-23

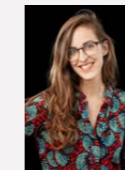
**Staff who left the ZWE, BFFP/RPa, and MiZA teams in 2022-23  
and to whom we owe a huge thank you**



**Chiara  
Padovani**



**Emily Best**



**Delphine  
Lévi Alvarès**



**Niamh  
Cullen**



**Berta  
Corredor  
Páez**



**Katleen  
Verhelle**



**Theresa  
Bonnici**



**Xiaowei Lui**

**Board members who left  
the ZWE Board in 2022-23  
and whom we thank for their  
unforgettable 5 years of  
service and dedication**

# Finance and Funding

## 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
- Adessium Foundation
- Astra Foundation
- European Climate Foundation
- GAIA
- Kristian Gerhard Jebsen Foundation
- MAVA
- OAK Foundation
- Plastic Solutions Fund
- Telos
- The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation Limited
- UMI
- Changing Markets Foundation
- Donations
- Membership Fees

## ZWE expenditures in 2022

INCOME	AMOUNT
Salaries	€1361,000
Direct costs	€361,000
Overheads	€244,000
<b>IN HOUSE</b>	<b>€1966,000</b>
<i>Subgranting</i>	€369,000
<i>Reserves</i>	€69,000
<b>ZWE core spending</b>	<b>€2403,000</b>
Hosted coalitions and movements	€1918,000
<b>TOTAL ZWE FINANCES</b>	<b>€4321,000</b>

## ZWE Income in 2022

COSTS	AMOUNT
Foundation grants	€1902,000
EC	€476,000
Other income	€13,000
Membership income	€10,000
Donations	€2,000
Hosted coalitions and movements	€1918,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>€4321,000</b>

# Thank Yous

An de Smet / Aragon BVBA  
Blush Design Agency  
Bryan Mathers  
Camille Delbos  
Dalberg Management  
Dominic Hogg at Equanimator  
Eunomia Research & Consulting  
Francesca Tabasso  
Friends Productions  
Grainne Murphy  
Mike Walker  
Netika  
Inèdit  
KOIS  
Nadia van Kesteren  
Noble Studio  
Noiza  
Öko-Institut  
Okay When  
Resort Ribno  
RREUSE  
Simon Sharp at Sharp Design  
Studaro / Yousra El Galai  
Tim Clynen  
ToxicoWatch  
Unleashed  
Waterbear

.....

Our fantastic Members.

Our precious zero waste volunteers who helped us with translations, graphic design work, and blog writing.

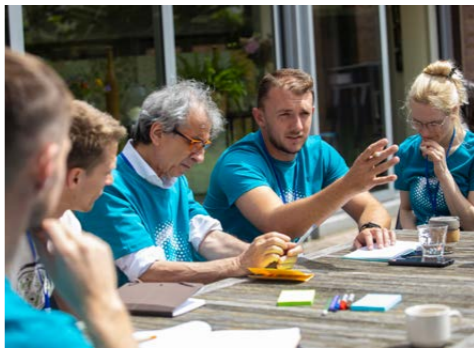
The pioneering cities who have committed to becoming zero waste, and those who have helped us test and pilot several new tools/services over the past year.

Our supportive 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  
**Design:** Blush Design Agency  
**Date:** May 2023

**General information:** [hello@zerowasteeurope.eu](mailto:hello@zerowasteeurope.eu)  
**Media:** [news@zerowasteeurope.eu](mailto:news@zerowasteeurope.eu)  
**Cities-related topics:** [cities@zerowasteeurope.eu](mailto:cities@zerowasteeurope.eu)

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