



Zero Waste Europe Annual Report

2024





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About Zero Waste Europe

Our mission

Zero Waste Europe (ZWE) redesigns our relationship with resources by empowering communities and changemakers across Europe.

Zero Waste Europe is the European network of communities, local leaders, experts, and change agents working towards a better use of resources and the 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.



ZWE history

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

Building on the zero waste vision driven by our members since 2006, and championed by early adopters like the city of Capannori, the Zero Waste Europe network includes 37 members and alliances across 29 countries (as of December 2024) and works with topics across the whole chain. From the strategic use of resources and 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).

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, takes responsibility for its impact outside its borders, and acts as a catalyst for a global transition towards zero waste.



What moves and inspires us

Zero Waste Europe'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 essential to movement building and enhancing 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 preserving our planet and creating just and sustainable local economies.





Message from the Director

Dear friends,

From the outset, 2024 was perceived as a potentially destabilising year, given the pushback and political weaponisation of environmental rules – at a time when we precisely needed to double down on our efforts.

An election year which brought increased uncertainty about the future priority of environmental and social issues in the policy arena, alongside continuous challenges faced by changemakers on the ground. All this unfolded against the backdrop of a planet speeding closer to the brink of irreversible climate disruption and widening social inequalities.

Yet the situation for Zero Waste Europe in 2024 tells a story of inspiring contrasts. When examining the broader context, many environmental and social indicators are facing setbacks, while when we look at the work we've been instigating and delivering, we've made considerable strides across a diverse range of European communities and within key policy arenas.

In 2024, our voice has grown stronger as a network advocating for the Europe we want and our network has grown stronger than ever, in terms of expertise, skills and impact thanks to our coordinated efforts. We boosted the prevention and reuse agenda like never before, with an imperfect Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation (PPWR) but packed with our demands; supported more cities to jump on the prevention bandwagon; and contributed to more packaging reuse models coming off the ground. We made the case for better waste management and enforcement, for example on Deposit Return Schemes (DRS) or bio-waste collection, showing once again that **coordinated action with local decision-makers and communities can yield a huge positive impact.** We successfully halted the chemical recycling push and built a powerful health argument to move away from incineration.

In 2024, more than ever, we deepened our local work, building the capacity of city officials with practical toolkits and knowledge, and expanded the certification schemes operated by our spin-off, the Mission Zero Academy (MiZA). Through Zero Waste Europe's city projects and the Zero Waste Cities Certification with MiZA, **we now proudly work with 85 European municipalities across 18 countries, covering a population of 17.5 million people** – an impressive 9.5% increase in population reach within just 12 months! We extended our impact beyond European borders through exciting joint projects with colleagues from our global alliance, GAIA, and international partners. And this is just a glimpse of what we accomplished throughout 2024!

We invite you to dive into our achievements and progress as a network in 2024. We hope you find this overview both informative and inspiring.

Looking back at 2024, we are reminded that while the headwinds against progressive environmental action might be strong, our vision and collective power are stronger! We are grateful and proud to be at the heart of a vibrant zero waste network, supported by dedicated funders and partners who share our vision of a just and healthy future, putting communities at the center of this transition.

Here's to another year of building our collective power and turning our vision into reality!

With gratitude,
Esra Tat

Our vision for Europe

At Zero Waste Europe, we dream of a future where environmental protection and human wellbeing work in perfect harmony.

But dreaming is just the start: we work towards a Europe where waste is designed out of the system from the beginning; communities thrive through local job creation; and nature and people's health are protected regardless of where we live.

This vision extends beyond just preventing and managing waste: it's about fundamentally rethinking how we use resources, from their origin to their final destination, while ensuring no one is left behind in this transition.

Our vision for Europe is built on wellbeing, resilience, and sufficiency. By setting ambitious policies and creating the right incentives, Europe can lead by example on environmental challenges and social inequalities. This means empowering forward-thinking communities and businesses already demonstrating the benefits of zero waste strategies, while ensuring these successes reach all citizens.

Crucially, we see a Europe where economic prosperity and innovation go hand in hand with environmental protection, creating lasting solutions that benefit current and future generations.



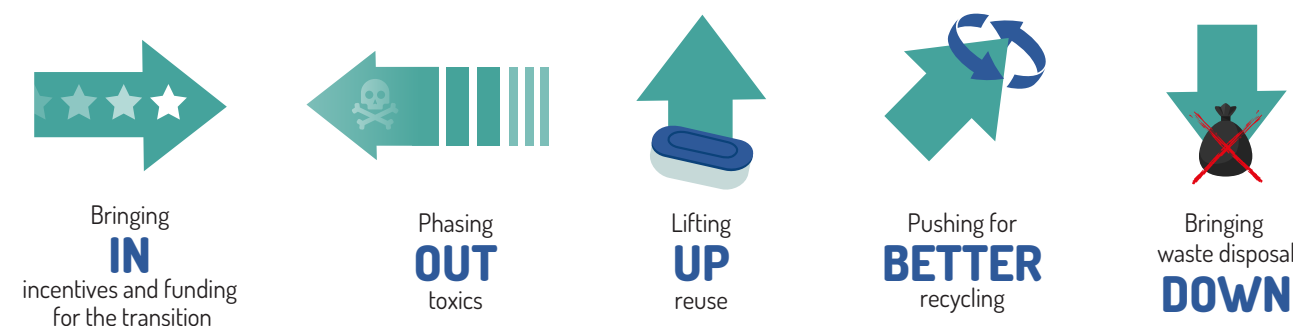
Our Strategic Framework 2022-2024

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 strategic use of resources, 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 have to wait and/or pay more to continue producing and consuming like they used to – an unmistakable sign of a tendency change. The more expensive and less reliable a globalised economy is, the cheaper and more convenient a circular economy becomes. In short, durability, reusability, and reparability are less disadvantaged today than in the recent past.



From a content perspective,
for the last three years
we have been focusing on



As we gear up to launch our priorities for the next five years, here's where and how we made the most impact between 2022-2024:

Shaping and implementing a vision for reuse and prevention:

- ✓ Major Packaging & Packaging Waste Regulation influence and reuse advocacy efforts.
- ✓ PFAS and expansion of our health working angle (including our biomonitoring research).
- ✓ Work on food contact materials and toxic-free packaging.
- ✓ Supporting progressive businesses in their zero waste efforts, including supporting the setup of NewERA and the creation of the Zero Waste Business Certification under our spin-off Mission Zero Academy.
- ✓ Expansion of our reuse implementation work through our Elevating Reuse in Cities (ERIC) project and the ReuSe Vanguard Project (RSVP) work with large European cities.
- ✓ Strategic victories in our incineration-free Europe efforts include the EU Commission's obligation to propose how waste incineration will be included in the Emissions Trading System (ETS), ensuring CO₂ emissions from incineration are penalised. Additionally, waste incineration has been excluded from the EU Sustainable Finance Taxonomy delegated act, meaning it is not recognised as an activity that significantly contributes to the circular economy.

Expanding cities work while protecting the “zero waste” concept from dilution with the Zero Waste Certifications:

- ✓ Expansion of city partnerships and direct engagement with officials.
- ✓ Establishment of our capacity-building spin-off Mission Zero Academy, and growth of the Zero Waste Cities Certification.
- ✓ Shifting our priority focus from waste management to waste prevention.
- ✓ Strong implementation work with larger cities across Europe.
- ✓ Our local work now covers more than 16 million European citizens.

A strengthened organisation and network:

- ✓ Expansion of our movement building work (e.g. through our work with Alliances).
- ✓ Stronger connection with Zero Waste Europe members.
- ✓ Greater cross-regional work/global work.
- ✓ Significant organisational developments (managerial structure, Human Resources, professionalisation of our work while maintaining a strong focus on wellbeing).

READ THE FULL STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR 2022-24

Key ZWE highlights of 2024

37



members and alliances
across 29 countries

370

organisations and local groups
and 5890 individuals represented
through the ZWE membership

 87 

cities across 18 countries
with Zero Waste Europe's
projects and the Mission
Zero Academy's (MiZA)
certification, covering

17.7
MILLION PEOPLE



100

publications




42



translations of publications
in 16 languages

1,859



media mentions

3 Zero Waste
Trainer courses

comprising 42 participants
co-hosted by MiZA and the
Zero Waste Europe member
organisations Zero Waste Estonia
and Zero Waste Alliance Ukraine

300 tonnes

of bio-waste diverted from
landfills to compost across
municipalities within the Fork
To Farm project



36

European cities, including 5 capitals, within Zero
Waste Europe's ecosystem around waste prevention
and reuse strategies with national governments,
businesses, multinationals and service providers



At least 611

city officials and partners
benefitted from our training and
learning opportunities (between
MiZA and Zero Waste Europe)

4 Zero Waste
Ambassador
courses

(Estonia, Germany, Poland),
comprising 86 participants,
co-hosted by MiZA and the
Zero Waste Europe member
organisations Zero Waste
Estonia, Zero Waste Kiel, and the
Polish Zero Waste Association

OUR IMPACTFUL WORK

One step forward towards a zero waste future



STRATEGIC USE OF MATERIALS

The strategic use of materials is the key to fighting climate change, protecting our limited resources, and ensuring a safe operating space for humanity within planetary boundaries.




Resource and material use is a big blind spot in the EU's climate policy but also in the overall environmental policy framework. The current levels of consumption and production puts too much pressure on the environment and does not bring us closer to the necessary 1.5°C degrees climate target.

Zero Waste Europe believes that, instead of just managing waste after it has been generated, we must focus on using fewer materials in the first place, redesigning products, but also changing the pattern of consumption. This approach will help address the triple planetary crisis (climate, biodiversity, and pollution), make Europe more resilient against external shocks, and support a fairer society where we use our limited resources wisely and sustainably.

Our 2024 impact

- ✓ Advanced the strategic use of resources/materials (SUM) concept to the point where the European Member States asked the Commission to consider a (RFD) "Resource Framework Directive" in the Environment Council Conclusions in June 2024. The European Commission is now obliged to consider the Council of Ministers' conclusions, and the foreseen Circular Economy Act, announced in European Commission President von der Leyen's political guidelines, will be a good opportunity to make this a reality.
- ✓ Turning "narrative shaping" work into our second nature thanks to our work on strategic use of materials and resources.
- ✓ Become a thought leader on the strategic use of materials in the Brussels scene, bringing together private and public sector stakeholders in a workshop to frame the discussions on this topic.

Key 2024 publications

-  [Managing materials for 1.5°C \(report\)](#)
-  [Sustainable resource management in the EU \(joint white paper\)](#)
-  ["Yes to an EU legislation on Sustainable Resource Management" \(open letter\)](#)



HEALTH

Imagine a world where the packaging that holds our food is always safe and our waste systems don't release harmful chemicals into the environment. A world where communities are in charge of the health and safety of their surrounding environments and of the food they grow and eat.

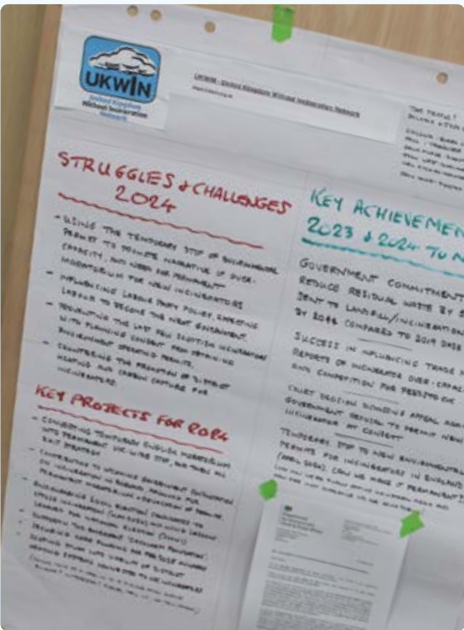
For Zero Waste Europe, creating a healthier planet means creating healthier and fairer lives for everyone.

By rethinking how we manage our consumption and waste, we can reduce pollution; protect our environment; and ensure cleaner air, water, and food for our communities. Zero Waste Europe is working towards that future – one where smart, waste-free solutions and systems help people and the planet thrive together.



"The studies, data, and biomonitoring reports conducted by Zero Waste Europe have been invaluable in supporting our advocacy work on the ground, demonstrating that people's concerns about their health and the environment are well-founded. Being part of the network is a tremendous strength to share knowledge and coordinate. There is always someone in the group or among the experts who has the answer, has faced a similar problem, or has been through the same process."

MAIJA KRISTINA
Zero Waste Latvia



Our 2024 impact

- ✓ EU Member States agreed to ban Bisphenol A and some other harmful bisphenols in food contact materials.
- ✓ The newest findings of our biomonitoring research on the harmful effects of waste incineration have empowered communities in Slovakia, the Netherlands, and the Basque Country in their demands for a cleaner, safe environment.



Key 2024 publications

- 📄 "Bye Bye" to PVC in food packaging – once and for all [\[briefing\]](#)
- 📄 We had a Green Deal, now Europe needs a Health deal [\[manifesto and formula\]](#)
- 👥 The True Toxic toll – biomonitoring research on incineration emissions [\[project page\]](#)
- 📄 Emissions reality check: the crucial role of biomonitoring in understanding the real impact of waste incinerators [\[blog post\]](#)



THE EUROPE WE WANT IS A ZERO WASTE ONE

By embracing zero waste principles, we can create a future where communities are stronger, resources are used wisely, and everyone enjoys a better quality of life.

Ahead of the 2024 European Parliament elections, Zero Waste Europe came together as a network to encourage MEP candidates and upcoming EU Commissioner-designates to commit to policies that prioritise a strategic use of resources, resilience, and wellbeing.

By having these principles at the core of everything we do, we can build a Europe that preserves valuable resources, generates local jobs, increases community resilience, and stands up for environmental and resource justice.

Our 2024 impact

- ✓ Our Manifesto for a Zero Waste Europe and our “The Europe we want” video showcased our asks for the future of Europe in a quick and simple way to policy-makers and the general public alike.
- ✓ The “Europe we want” video, translated into 15 languages, strengthened our voice as a network united by common goals and values while grounded in local realities.

Key 2024 publications

“The Europe we want” (video)

Pledge for a Zero Waste Europe (pledge)



Thriving communities



Local leadership



Strategic use of resources



Global change



An inclusive Europe



I have signed the
PLEDGE FOR A
ZERO WASTE EUROPE

Sara Matthieu
Member of the European Parliament

www.zwe2024pledge.eu

TEXTILES

Our focus on textiles comes from a place of hope and ambition to transform the fashion industry into one that cherishes our planet and its people.

By promoting sustainable practices in textile production and consumption, as well as better textile reuse and management initiatives locally, Zero Waste Europe works towards a future where our clothes are made responsibly; last longer; and are reused, repaired, or recycled, reducing waste and environmental impact.

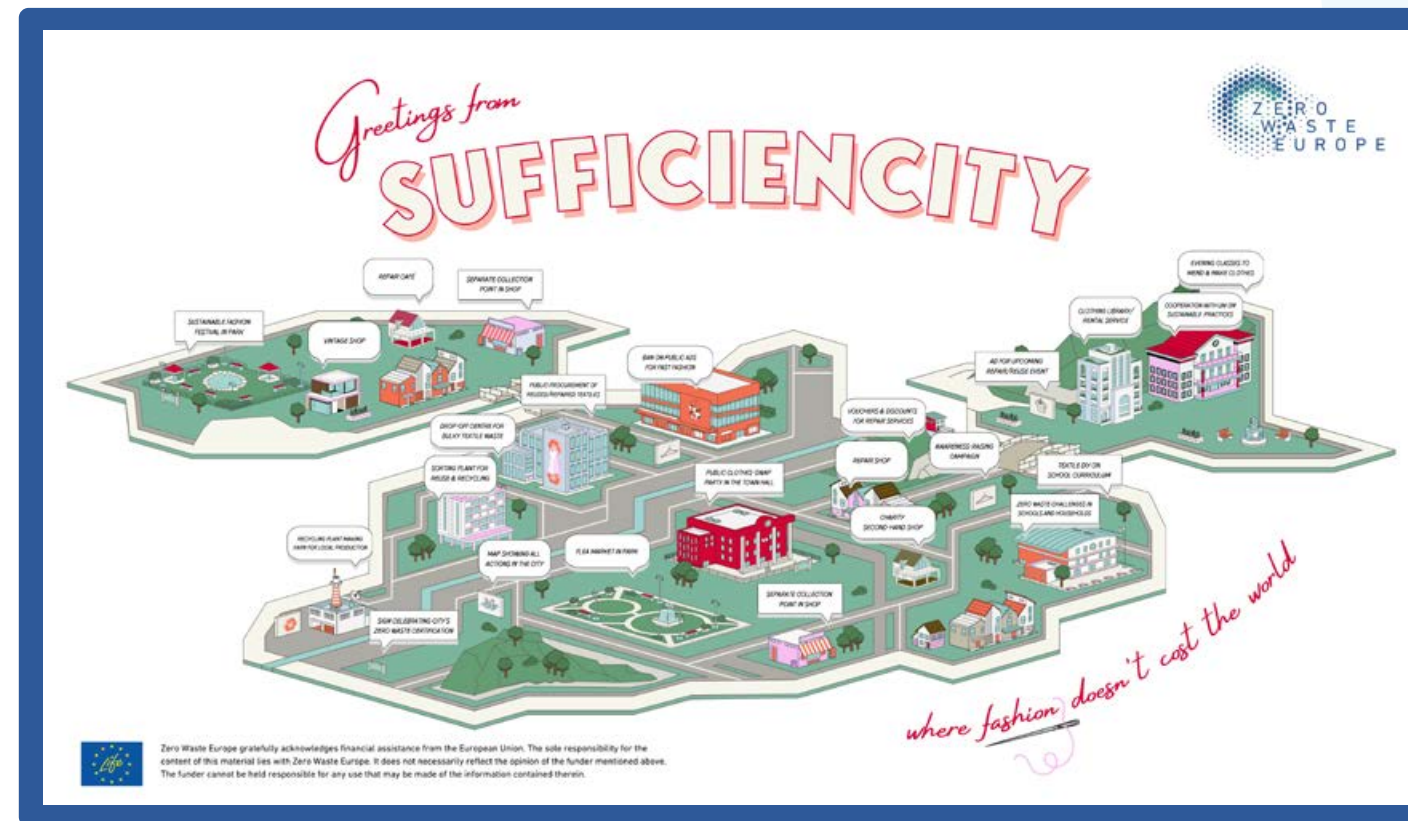
With activities at the EU, national, and local levels, this approach encourages a smarter use of resources; fosters innovation grounded in zero waste principles; and increases resilience within communities, leading to a more circular and fairer world.

Our 2024 impact

- ✓ We started our first-ever funded dedicated project for textiles, **STICT**, aiming to build local best practices for textile waste prevention and make future Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) schemes more inclusive and effective in driving circularity.
- ✓ We called out false solutions promoted by different actors in the textile industry; tackled the notion that **circular textiles** are possible within an ever-growing sector; position ourselves as a stakeholder in the textiles debate; and linked textiles to our work in other fields such as chemical recycling, recycled content, health, chemicals, and local zero waste solutions.
- ✓ Raised awareness together with partners on the crisis of the textile reuse sector.
- ✓ The **European Parliament** voted to hold textile producers accountable to cover the costs for the waste their products generate. MEPs supported the introduction of EPR for textiles across the EU, including several key provisions for which Zero Waste Europe campaigned. Likewise, the EU Council of Ministers favoured the treatment of textile waste in its position on the Waste Framework Directive, and greenlighted the introduction of EPR for textiles across the EU, including strong wording on extrinsic durability.

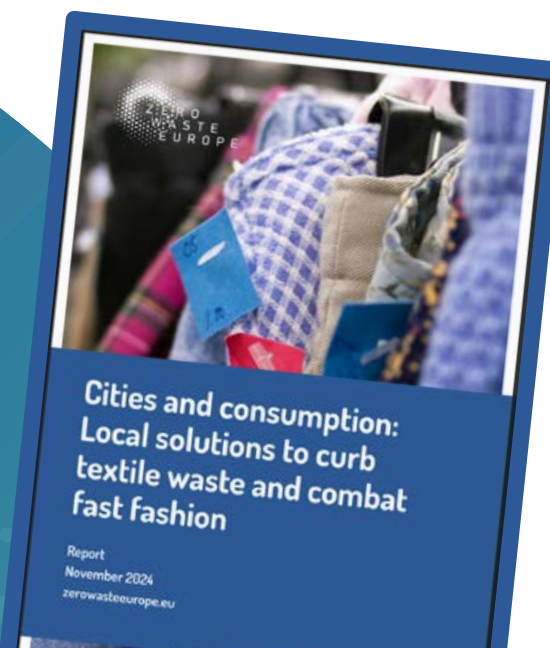
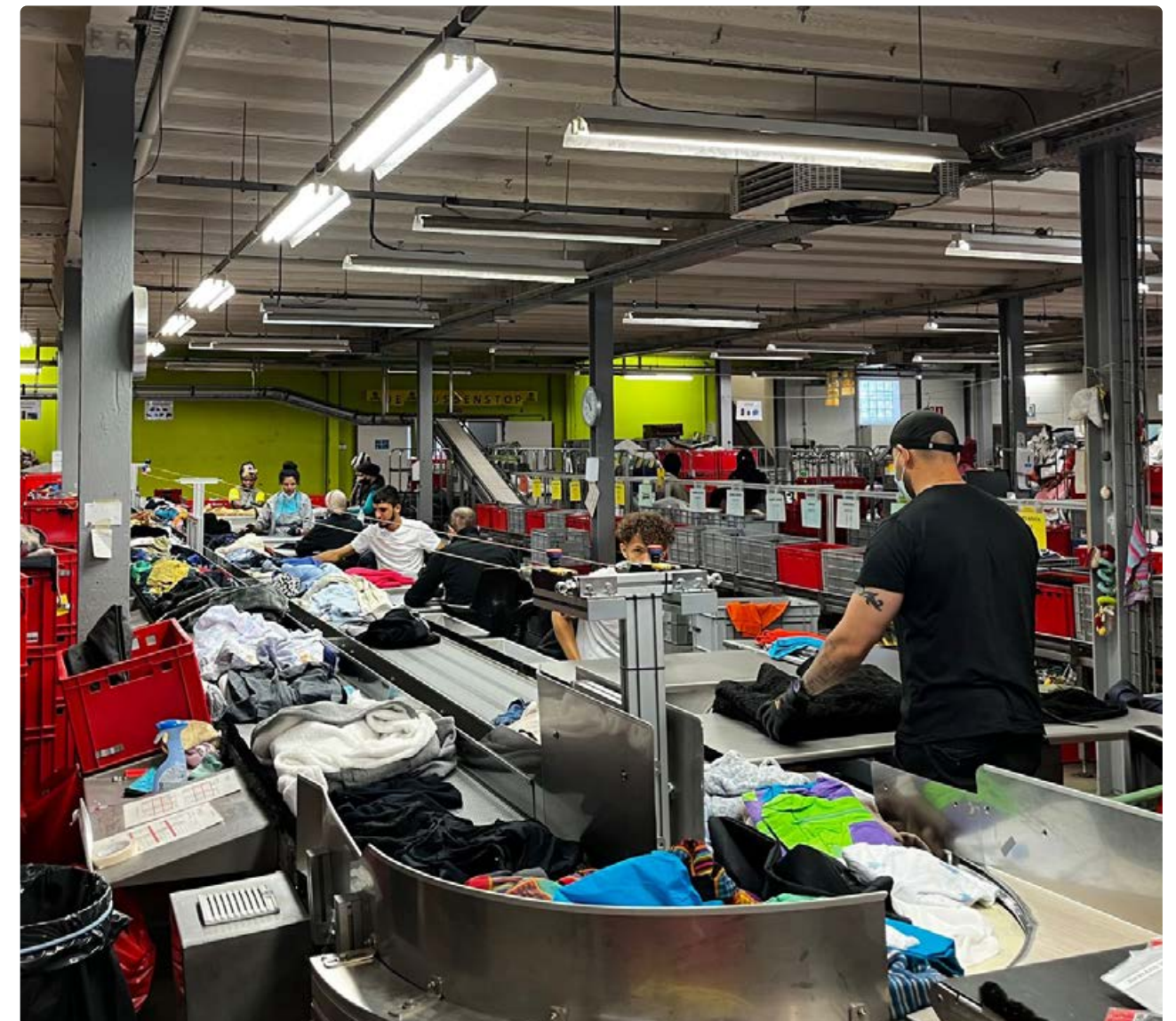
Key 2024 publications

- 📖 A Zero waste vision for textiles chapter 2: circular and toxic-free material flows ([report](#))
- 📖 Cities and consumption: local solutions to curb textile waste and combat fast fashion ([report](#))
- 📊 Welcome to Sufficiency ([infographic](#))
- 📊 Textile collection ([infographic](#))
- ✉️ Textile Emergency Action Plan needed quickly ([open joint letter](#))



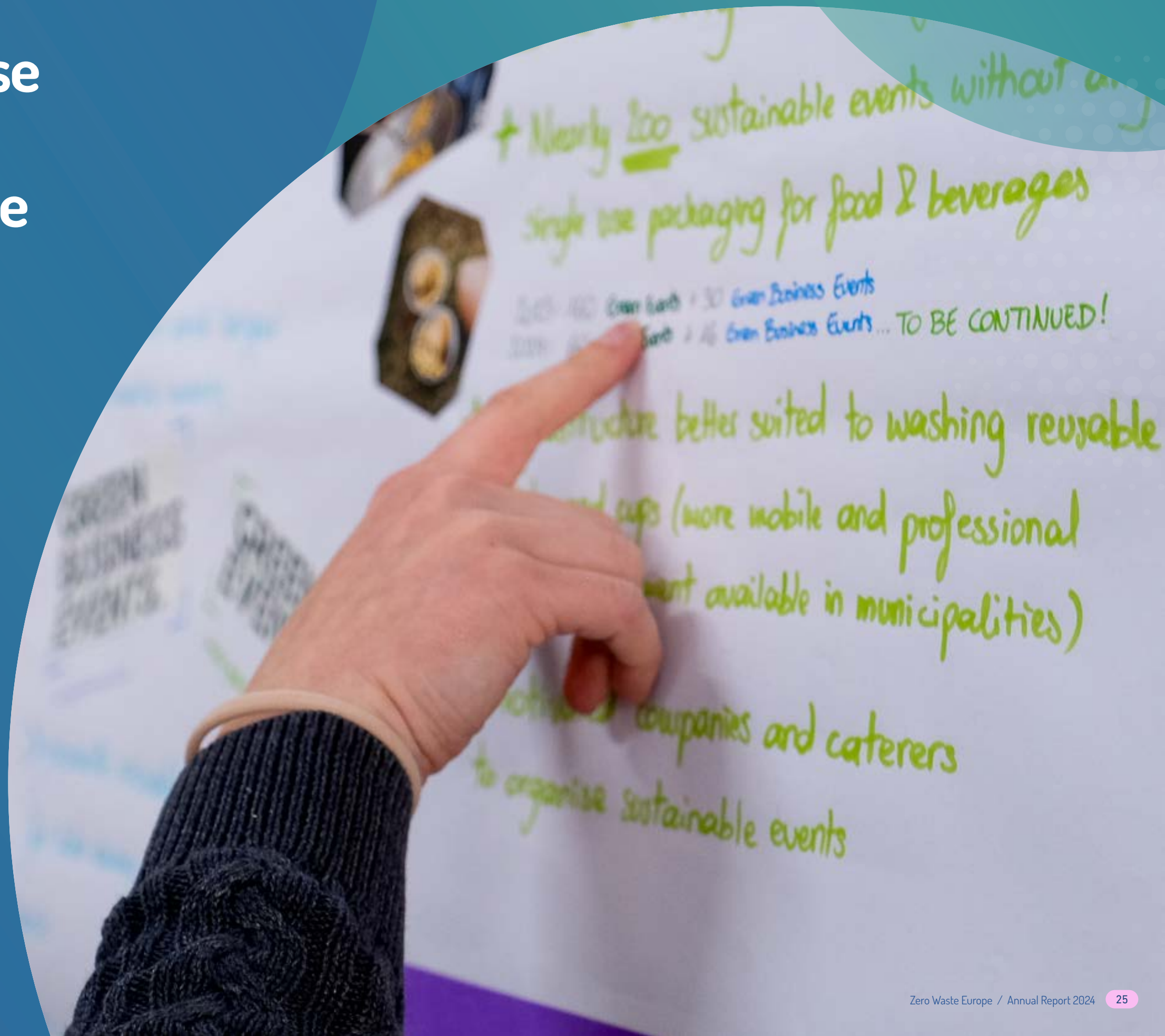
"The Fabric of Change website launched by VOICE in September 2024 is the first Irish platform dedicated to sustainable fashion. Its aim is to bring awareness on the impacts of the industry while bringing new narratives forward, anchored in sufficiency, wellbeing and circularity, aligning with Zero Waste Europe's values."

SOLENE SCHIRRER
VOICE Ireland



OUR IMPACTFUL WORK

Boosting single-use packaging waste prevention and the reuse agenda



BUILDING AN ECOSYSTEM FOR PREVENTION AND REUSE

Building an ecosystem for single-use packaging waste prevention and packaging reuse means creating conditions for both circular choices and packaging-free alternatives to be the easiest and most accessible options for everyone.

By focusing on these practices, we can reduce pollution, conserve natural resources, and promote solutions that support the health of both people and the planet.

Single-use packaging waste prevention – such as Bring Your Own and Refill approaches – and packaging reuse are the ultimate zero waste tools: not only do they help tackle environmental challenges, but they also encourage innovative business models, create local jobs, and reduce our dependence on resource-heavy production processes.

Through our policy work and our dedicated prevention and reuse projects, Elevating Reuse in Cities (ERIC) and the ReuSe Vanguard Project (RSVP), we support policies that encourage durable product design; empower businesses that offer reuse and services; and support cities and communities to implement solutions that reduce waste generation.

Key 2024 publications

- Empowering municipalities for sustainable waste practices with the ERIC project [\(video\)](#)
- European Reuse Barometer [\(report\)](#)
- Facilitating the adoption of takeaway reuse systems [\(study\)](#)
- Embracing reuse: European cities lead the way [\(blog post\)](#)
- European Week of Waste Reduction [\(campaign page\)](#)

Our 2024 impact

- ✓ Plastic Change (Denmark) became a core RSVP project partner, ensuring a direct connection with the Rotake Reusable project; and adding another country to our expanding network of European cities implementing interoperable, accessible reuse systems for take-away food and beverage containers.
- ✓ We organised our first-ever in-person gathering of both city officials and members working on single-use material prevention across Europe. In the context of the ERIC project, 52 participants joined us in Berlin over 3 days, including representatives from cities such as Geneva, Brussels, Paris, and Lyon.
- ✓ Plastic Prevention Plans in the framework of the ERIC project were adopted by the municipalities of Viladecans, Torrelles de Llobregat (Spain), Lyon, Nantes, and Bordeaux (France).
- ✓ We co-developed the first-ever edition of the European Reuse Barometer.
- ✓ 36 European cities, including 5 capitals (Berlin, Paris, Nicosia, Zagreb, Brussels), are now within Zero Waste Europe's ecosystem around waste prevention and reuse strategies, which also includes national governments, businesses, multinationals and service providers.
- ✓ After many years as an active participant, Zero Waste Europe joined the Steering Committee of the European Week of Waste Reduction (EWWR), expanding our contribution to this yearly Europe-wide awareness-raising moment.



Through our collaboration with Zero Waste Europe, we've been able to push for meaningful discussions on prevention and reuse with Cyprus municipalities at a time when shifting the narrative towards true waste reduction at the source is more urgent than ever. This partnership has helped ensure that waste prevention is not just a concept but is actively integrated into local policies and actions.

SARA MARIZA VRYONIDI
Friends of the Earth Cyprus



THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE PACKAGING & PACKAGING WASTE REGULATION (PPWR)

The work on the Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation (PPWR) has played a key role in advancing the waste prevention and reuse agenda.

The Regulation puts forward, for the first time, targets for reducing overall packaging waste generation; reuse targets for specific packaging sectors; and market restrictions (bans) on a few problematic and/or unnecessary single-use packaging items.

While challenges remain, and while national implementation will be essential to define the success of the Regulation, the PPWR has provided a regulatory framework for the transition toward a circular economy.

See the "Moving up policies on the waste hierarchy" section for more information about Zero Waste Europe's work and impact on the PPWR.

OUR IMPACTFUL WORK

Making the case for better waste management and its enforcement






BIO-WASTE

Bio-waste is a valuable resource to feed and regenerate our soils. By promoting bio-waste separate collection and treatment into high quality compost and digestate, Zero Waste Europe aims to improve soil health and fertility. Through this approach, we reduce the amount of waste sent to landfills and incinerators; divert harmful methane from the atmosphere; return essential nutrients to the earth; create local jobs; and foster more sustainable and regenerative systems.

Our work on bio-waste, including the efforts in the [Methane Matters Coalition](#) and the [LIFE BIOBEST](#) project, contributes to fighting climate change and promoting soil health by mainstreaming best bio-waste management practices in Europe.

Key 2024 publications

-  The story of Partizanske [\(case study\)](#)
-  Tackling methane emissions: now and in the future [\(paper\)](#)
-  LIFE BIOBEST four-part guidelines [\(reports\)](#)
-  New bio-waste guidelines set to boost recycling in Europe [\(press release\)](#)
-  Bio-waste generation in the EU: current capture levels and future potential - second edition [\(report\)](#)
-  Reducing waste management's contribution to climate change: from post-landfilling methane capture to pre-landfill methane prevention [\(report\)](#)
-  Fork To Farm [\(project page\)](#)
-  What is the bio-waste personality of your city? (#ForkToFarm campaign [quiz](#))

Our 2024 impact

- ✓ The LIFE BIOBEST consortium has released a four-part series of guidelines for local authorities to promote high-performing bio-waste separate collection systems, the production of high-quality compost and digestate, and the adoption of effective economic incentives and communication strategies. Adopting these guidelines will help municipalities to transform bio-waste into valuable resources for the soils, supporting local food production while reducing landfill and incineration usage.
- ✓ 300 tonnes - 300,000 kilograms - of bio-waste diverted from landfills to compost across municipalities within the [Fork To Farm](#) project.
- ✓ Done in collaboration with [Zero Waste France](#) and the LIFE BIOBEST project, our workshop on bio-waste for city officials in France was our most attended workshop ever and the first in this country.
- ✓ Our [#ForkToFarm](#) joint campaign with members, as part of the Fork to Farm project, raised awareness of the composting targets across Europe. In Montenegro, the campaign materials were used to promote local initiatives on home and community composting. Nearly 90% of participants composted, preventing over 211 tons of organic waste annually from landfills. 70% of households reduced mixed waste, with all respondents planning to continue composting. 56.1% of households empty mixed waste bins less often, decreasing the need for garbage collection.
- ✓ Zero Waste Europe participated in the COP29 conference through the Methane Matters Coalition project. With the waste sector at the heart of this year's summit, over 30 countries committed to setting targets for methane from the waste sector in their National Determined Contributions.



MAKING THE CASE FOR BETTER ENFORCEMENT OF WASTE POLICIES IN SPAIN

In 2024, Zero Waste Europe and its members expanded their efforts to oversee the implementation of European waste policies at the national and local levels.

By closely monitoring these efforts, we help identify improvement areas, ensuring that waste reduction strategies are effective and beneficial for communities and the environment.

A notable example of this proactive approach is Zero Waste Europe's collaboration with Retorna in Spain, where the denouncement of fake recycling data reporting by a packaging waste management company has given an extra boost to the introduction of a Deposit Return System (DRS) for drinks containers. This partnership is an example of the watchdog role taken by our network, and shows how active civil society involvement can lead to a more sustainable and resource-efficient society.

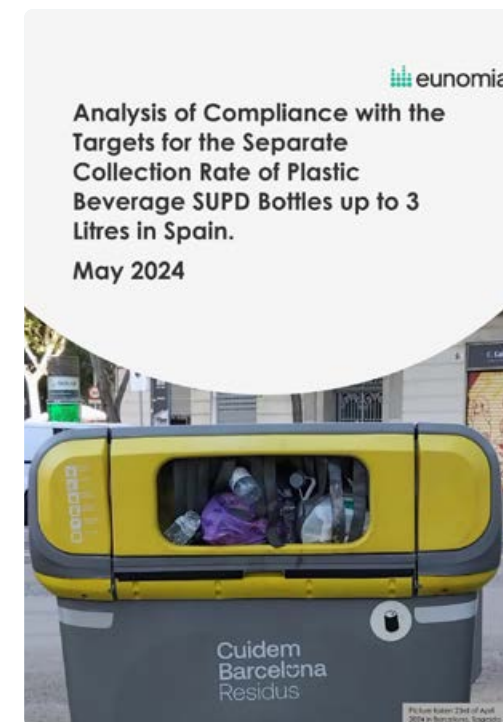
Our 2024 impact

- ✓ Zero Waste Europe and Alianza Residuo Cero denounced the discrepancy between the accurate rates of plastic bottle recycling rates in Spain (36%) and the rates put forward by Ecoembes (71%).
- ✓ With Spain's mandated target of 70% for recycling rates, this discrepancy led the Spanish Government to mandate a DRS system for plastic drinks containers by 2026.

Following the announcement of Ecoembes' inaccurate data, members of Zero Waste Europe and Break Free From Plastic urged European Institutions to hold producers accountable for reporting false data, which is holding back the deployment of EU green legislation.

Key 2024 publications

- 📖 Analysis of the separate collection rate of plastic beverage bottles up to three litres in Spain ([report](#))
- 🗣️ "Stop big polluters and member states from reporting false data": EU civil society demands the European Commission to stop 30 years of false reporting of collection, reuse, and recycling results ([press release](#))



CHEMICAL RECYCLING: LOCAL IMPACT

Solutions to plastic waste must be effective and safe for our planet and its inhabitants.

While chemical recycling is often presented as a silver bullet solution to plastic pollution, its full health and environmental impacts are unclear. Zero Waste Europe's work focuses on demystifying the green claims surrounding chemical recycling, advocating for more research to fully understand its consequences, and ensuring that any chemical recycling used is done according to the highest environmental standards.

We advocate for investing in long-term, sustainable solutions - such as reuse and improved mechanical recycling - over unproven technologies. By critically assessing chemical recycling, we encourage a shift towards truly circular systems that minimise waste and protect environmental and human health.

Our 2024 impact

- ✓ Thanks to the work and publications developed by Zero Waste Europe, our member organisation in Slovakia (Friends of the Earth - SPZ Slovakia) was able to provide evidence to governing authorities of chemical recycling's health and environmental risks, thus halting two chemical recycling projects in the country. See more information on the "[Success stories from our network](#)" section.
- ✓ For Zero Waste Europe's chemical recycling publications and more impactful work on this topic, see the chemical recycling section under "[Moving up policies on the waste hierarchy](#)."



The Zero Waste Europe team's thematic expertise and resources are extremely valuable. The emergence of the first industrial-scale chemical recycling projects in France prompted us to work closely with Zero Waste Europe (and Lauriane Veillard in particular) to address these challenges in the most relevant and impactful way.

BENEDICTE KAHLAT
Zero Waste France

DEEPENING AND EXPANDING OUR WORK ON THE GROUND, IN EUROPE AND BEYOND

Meaningful change towards zero waste begins within communities.

By collaborating closely with municipalities and groups at the local level, Zero Waste Europe supports the development and implementation of effective zero waste strategies that meet local needs. This grassroots approach addresses waste reduction and fosters community engagement and empowerment.

Through initiatives like the Zero Waste Cities programme and our implementation projects; the Zero Waste Cities and Businesses Certifications through our spin-off [Mission Zero Academy](#) (MiZA); and our collaborative work with other global regions through our wider network ([Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives](#) [GAIA], [Break Free From Plastic](#) [BFFP]), we provide tools, knowledge, and expert mentoring to guide municipalities on their zero waste journey.

Our work and efforts are proof that, when communities come together with a shared vision, they can create a fairer, more resilient, and equitable world for all.

Key 2024 publications

-  State of Zero Waste Municipalities - 4th edition ([report](#))
-  Learning from the global zero waste movement at the 2024 International Zero Waste Cities Conference ([blog post](#))
-  International Repair Day 2024: members' initiatives across Europe ([blog post](#))
-  Zoersel becomes Belgium's first Zero Waste Candidate City ([blog post](#))
-  Krk becomes first island in Croatia and second worldwide to become a zero waste island ([press release](#))
-  [Lutsk](#) and [Khmelnystskiy](#) become the first Ukrainian cities to join the Zero Waste Cities Certification by MiZA ([press releases](#))

Our 2024 impact

- ✓ 42 Zero Waste Certified and Candidate Cities, covering 5.3 million people.
- ✓ 87 cities across 18 countries with Zero Waste Europe's projects and MiZA's certification, covering 17.7 million people.
- ✓ At least 611 city officials and partners benefitted from our training and learning opportunities (between MiZA and Zero Waste Europe).
- ✓ 10 Certified Zero Waste Trainers in 2024 (30 since the MiZA's creation).
- ✓ In July, Zero Waste Europe and its members participated in the [2024 International Zero Waste Cities Conference in Tanzania](#). Organised by GAIA and [Nipe Fagio](#), the event brought together over 200 participants from diverse sectors and different continents. It showcased how shared experiences and scalable innovation strengthen our movement's resilience, uniting global regions in their pursuit of real zero waste solutions and justice for all.
- ✓ MiZA's Zero Waste Business Certification was recognised by [Travalyst](#), a global initiative focusing on the travel industry's sustainability impact. This recognition now enables businesses certified by MiZA (such as hotels) to display their Zero Waste Business Certificate on travel booking websites (such as [Booking.com](#)).
- ✓ Our local work was featured in several reputed media outlets and newspapers, like [The Guardian](#), [Earth.Org](#), [POLITICO](#), [Reuters](#), [El Periódico](#), [The Progress Playbook](#), [ENDS Europe](#), [Yahoo](#), [Het Nieuwsblad](#), [Newstalk Radio](#), [Cyprus Mail](#), [Gazet van Antwerpen](#), [Vecernji list](#), [Hrvatska RadioTelevizija](#) (HRT), and [24ur.com](#)



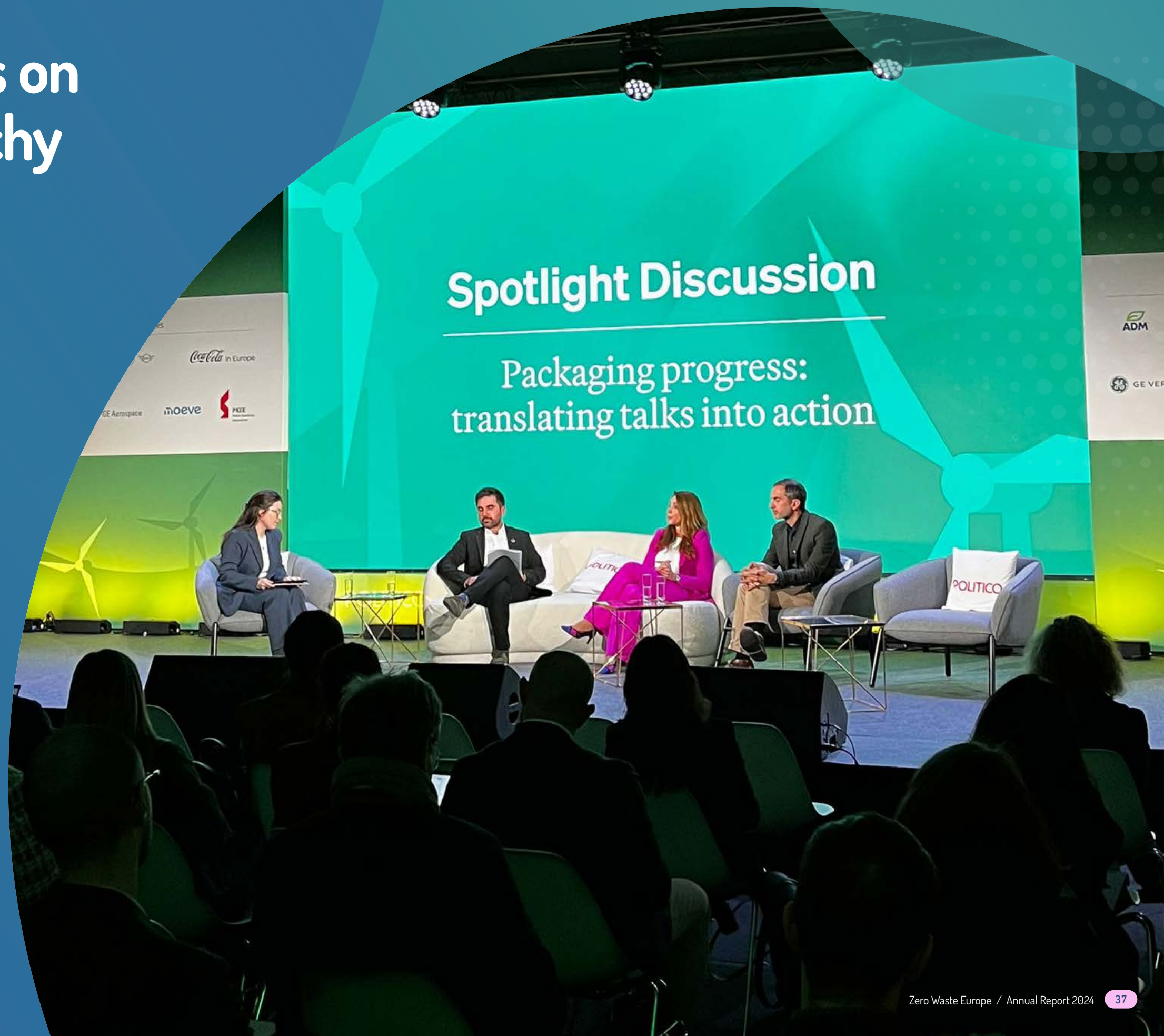
What I take away from our time at the International Zero Waste Conference in Tanzania is our shared commitment to zero waste regardless of the context and circumstance, and how scalable and flexible zero waste systems are. We approach the problem in different ways locally, which is fascinating and shows how much we can learn from each other. Global spaces like this are vital because they allow us to share best practices; and build a stronger, just, unified, and global movement towards zero waste.

VANJA CECMIL
Zero Waste Montenegro



OUR IMPACTFUL WORK

Moving up policies on the Waste Hierarchy



PACKAGING & PACKAGING WASTE REGULATION (PPWR) AND SINGLE-USE PLASTICS DIRECTIVE (SUPD)




The development of Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation (PPWR) was a vital opportunity for the European Union to reduce waste at its source. By directing our policy efforts towards a stronger PPWR, we aimed to encourage packaging reduction, promote reusable options, and advocate for toxic-free packaging, leading to less waste and a healthier environment.

By pushing for alignment of waste policies and the Waste Hierarchy – namely, by focusing on its top levels of prevention and reuse – we drive forward approaches that use resources strategically and minimise pollution.

In parallel, we have worked with our network across Europe to assess the implementation of the Single-Use Plastic Directive (SUPD) at national level. We've done this by identifying shortcomings that could be potentially addressed in a future revision, and best practices that could be replicated and amplified.



Key 2024 publications

-  What's inside food contact paper packaging? Plastic (factsheet)
-  Evaluation of the Single-Use Plastics Directive: effective and compliance across Europe (report within the context of the Rethink Plastic alliance)
-  PVC: problem very clear (report within the context of the Rethink Plastic alliance)

Our 2024 impact

- ✓ With the adoption of the PPWR in early 2024, the EU established new measures to make packaging more sustainable and reduce packaging waste in the EU.
- ✓ Thanks to Zero Waste Europe's policy and advocacy efforts, the final PPWR text bans the use of PFAS and other "forever chemicals" in food packaging, and creates waste prevention and reuse targets for packaging for the first time.
- ✓ The PPWR text states that packaging meeting Design for Recycling standards must be recycled and not incinerated or landfilled, a measure that can provide an extra 10 million tonnes of materials for recycling.
- ✓ The adopted PPWR text differentiates between recycling technologies from an environmental point of view, continuing the push for a hierarchical approach to recycling.
- ✓ Zero Waste Europe worked towards supporting the implementation of the Single-use Plastics Directive (SUPD) at the national level by debunking the material substitution of plastic by paper-based packaging applications, which also contain plastics.

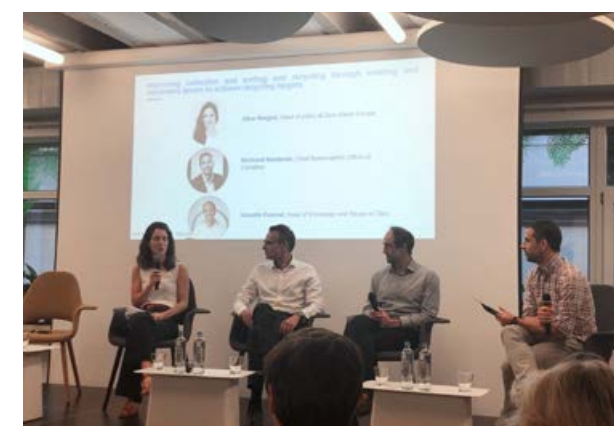


CHEMICAL RECYCLING

Solutions to plastic waste must be effective and safe for our planet and its inhabitants.

While chemical recycling is often presented as a silver bullet solution to plastic pollution, its full health and environmental impacts are unclear. Zero Waste Europe's work focuses on demystifying the green claims surrounding chemical recycling, advocating for more research to fully understand its consequences, and ensuring that any chemical recycling used is done according to the highest environmental standards.

We advocate for investing in long-term, sustainable solutions – such as reuse and improved mechanical recycling – over unproven technologies. By critically assessing chemical recycling, we encourage a shift towards truly circular systems that minimise waste and protect environmental and human health.





Our 2024 impact

- ✓ Thanks to Zero Waste Europe's advocacy efforts, the European Parliament's ENVI Committee adopted a resolution calling for proper safeguards for chemical recycling, asking the European Commission to withdraw the adoption of a mass balance model and to adopt a 'transparent and fair' approach to recycled content methodology.
- ✓ Through our industry landscape overview, we showed that even the industry itself acknowledges that technologies like pyrolysis will need half a decade to become a viable solution to the plastic crisis.



Key 2024 publications

-  Save us, Chemical Recycling Man! Oh wait... you can't! (cartoon)
-  Fifty years: chemical recycling's fading promise (industry landscape overview)

WASTE FRAMEWORK DIRECTIVE (WFD)


The revision of the EU Waste Framework Directive (WFD) is a unique opportunity to create a more sustainable and resource-efficient future, bring together topics from food waste to textiles and mixed waste sorting.

By advocating for stronger waste prevention measures and clearer definitions within this Directive, Zero Waste Europe aims to reduce waste generation and promote the strategic use and reuse of materials, leading to a healthier environment and a more circular economy.

Strengthening the WFD would also encourage innovation and sustainable practices across Europe, in line with our vision of thriving communities, wellbeing for all, and a world where the environment is protected for generations to come.



Key 2024 publications

-  The ultimate 5-step, one-pot, cost-effective, no-fuss recipe to save food in the EU ([infographic](#))
-  Recyclables from the mixed waste – unlocking potential for maximisation of recycling through separation of mixed waste fractions ([factsheet](#) with Reloop)
-  Materials or gases? How to capture carbon ([study](#))
-  Realistic waste reduction targets in the Waste Framework Directive (WFD) ([joint open letter](#) in the context of the Prevent Waste Coalition)
-  Joint letter calling on the European Parliament to strengthen food waste reduction targets in the Waste Framework Directive revision ([joint open letter](#))

Our 2024 impact

As a result of our advocacy efforts on the WFD:

-  The Council of the EU's [position](#) on the WFD favoured the treatment of textile waste, marking another milestone in the file's legislative process to hold textile producers accountable to the 'polluter pays' principle and included some good language on extrinsic durability of textiles.
-  The European Parliament's vote on the WFD supported the introduction of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for textiles across the EU, including future targets. It also strengthened the proposed food waste reduction targets, and adopted a crucial [measure](#) urging Member States to implement a waste sorting system for municipal mixed waste to prevent recyclable waste from being incinerated or disposed of in landfills.
-  The European Parliament proposed that the WFD revision text foresees more frequent mixed waste surveys. It also proposed a new provision for products to be eco-modulated based on the number of items placed on the market, as well as the inclusion of plans to introduce EPR for bulky items such as mattresses and carpets from 2028.
-  In its adopted [position](#), the European Parliament also called on Member States to encourage mixed waste sorting (MWS). However, the final agreement adopted in early 2025 resulted in the inclusion of MWS in the review clause, rather than a binding obligation. Compared to the original amendment, which only "encouraged" Member States to use mixed waste sorting, this review clause is an opportunity to make it mandatory.
-  Scaling up mixed waste sorting could reduce annual emissions by 10.2 to 23.2 MtCO₂e. This could lead to a 21% decrease in total EU waste sector emissions from 2020 levels. Additionally, it would support meeting recycling targets for plastic and paper packaging by 2030 and contribute 2.9–8.2 percentage points toward municipal waste recycling goals.




RENEWABLE ENERGY DIRECTIVE (RED)

Europe's transition to renewable energy must go hand in hand with sustainable waste management practices.


Zero Waste Europe advocates for policies under the Renewable Energy Directive (RED) that prioritise energy from separately collected bio-waste (i.e. biogas) over incinerating mixed waste. This approach reduces pollution and conserves resources. To do this, policies must exclude energy from mixed waste from counting toward renewable energy targets.

Our 2024 impact

-  Thanks to ZWE's advocacy efforts, the European Commission's [guidance](#) to Member States on defining "waste heat" under RED targets excludes incineration heat, thus ensuring the demand for waste incineration does not increase through this legislation.



Key 2024 publications

-  Open letter on the implementation of the RED in the European Union: exclusion waste incineration from the waste heat targets ([joint open letter](#))

OUR IMPACTFUL WORK

Strengthening our network and work with other movements



CONSOLIDATING OUR STRENGTH AND STRATEGY AS A NETWORK & ORGANISATION

Collective action is inseparable from lasting environmental and social transformation. In 2024, we strengthened our movement-building efforts to foster thriving, resilient, and fairer zero waste communities across the continent.

Movement-building is vital to Zero Waste Europe's work as it promotes collaboration among diverse groups, amplifying efforts to reduce waste and promote zero waste practices. By uniting communities, organisations, and individuals under a shared vision, we are a powerful collective force capable of driving significant environmental and social change.

In addition to finding connection points with other movements and causes, Zero Waste Europe ensures that the zero waste vision is embraced and enacted at all levels, from local communities to national policies, by supporting and coordinating a network of members and alliances across Europe.

Our 2024 impact

- ✓ We welcomed Friends of the Earth Malta to the Zero Waste Europe network as an Associate Member.
- ✓ Two of our members changed their names: Zero Waste Estonia (previously called Let's Do It Foundation) and Fair Resource Foundation (formerly known as Recycling Network Benelux).
- ✓ In April, under the grey skies of Ghent (Belgium), we basked in the sunlight of the community with our annual network gathering. Zero Waste Europe members and the team came together for three days to connect, learn, exchange, and strategise. We also had the chance to discover and learn about some zero waste projects and strategies in Ghent, from community food waste prevention initiatives to professionalised washing facilities for reusable cups.
- ✓ We continued to work closely with five Zero Waste Alliances in Europe to strengthen their national movement through our Blueprint for Movement Building project. Our highlight of the year was bringing everyone together in Cyprus for three days in November, where we shared learning, explored strategies, discovered ZW practices in Limassol and more.
- ✓ In July, Zero Waste Europe and its members participated in the 2024 International Zero Waste Cities Conference in Tanzania (see the "Deepening and expanding our work on the ground, in Europe and beyond" section above for more information).



Being together gives us power and confidence. It is a great motivation to never give up and do our best to change the world we live in and engage more people with a zero waste way of life. Working as a community of like-minded people inspires and helps us feel supported and stronger.

ELEONORA YOSIFOVA
Zero Waste Alliance Bulgaria



Success stories from the network



AUSTRIA Zero Waste Austria empowers youth educators

In 2024, Zero Waste Austria expanded its impact through training and awareness-raising as part of its "Training for School Workshop Leaders" programme. The organisation trained 10 new leaders to conduct sustainability workshops in schools. This programme has been providing free training for individuals passionate about sustainability education since 2023, and is supported through voluntary project funding.

Zero Waste Austria also offered interactive Zero Waste workshops for students aged 10-16, covering waste sorting, food waste reduction, and hands-on DIY projects. These engaging sessions provide practical skills and insights into the circular economy, empowering students to reduce waste in their daily lives. Additionally, the organisation ran three tailored school workshops for different grade levels and a Zero Waste Neighbourhood Tour for students aged 10+.

Beyond all this, the work carried out under the "Waste Prevention in the Classroom" project has played a key role in expanding access to sustainability education. The project has laid the foundation for developing new educational resources in future initiatives by compiling and reviewing existing teaching materials from Austria and other German-speaking regions.

[LEARN MORE](#)



BELGIUM Zero Waste Belgium and Fair Resource Foundation help cities lead the circular transition

Belgian cities made significant strides toward zero waste in 2024. In Flanders, Zoersel became the first Zero Waste Candidate City in Belgium and has now entered a mentoring phase with the Fair Resource Foundation, working toward ambitious waste reduction goals.

Brussels, already committed to the Zero Waste Cities programme, has joined the Elevating Reuse in Cities (ERIC) project, a coalition of European cities developing innovative plastic prevention strategies. In collaboration with Zero Waste Belgium, the city is rolling out reusable cups and plates at all public events and promoting washable nappies in its crèches, supported by an informative factsheet. Meanwhile, the commune of Jette has taken a bold step by banning all single-use items within its municipality.

With the support of the Fair Resource Foundation, Leuven and Ghent have successfully launched the Kombak project to tackle disposable packaging waste from takeaway and delivery meals. Through the ReuSe Vanguard Project (RSVP), these cities unite public, private, and non-profit partners to drive a thriving local circular economy.

[LEARN MORE \(FAIR RESOURCE FOUNDATION\)](#)

[LEARN MORE \(ZERO WASTE BELGIUM\)](#)



LUXEMBOURG Oekozer Pafendall drives national event culture towards reusables

Oekozer Pafendall and its coordinating partner, SuperDrecksKëscht, have been driving a waste-free event culture in Luxembourg by supporting municipalities that reject single-use packaging in favour of reusable solutions. In 2024, 364 Green Events – from local festivals to multi-day celebrations, and involving over 100,000 attendees – successfully eliminated single-use plates.

Today, over 40 municipalities provide local event organisers with essential infrastructure, including dishwashing facilities, reusable dishware, and waste reduction equipment. Waste-free events have become the norm in Luxembourg thanks to a strong network of municipal, public, and private stakeholders, strict legislation banning single-use plastic packaging for food and drinks since 2023 (and all single-use food and drink packaging as of 2025-26), and public subsidies.

In addition, and backed by the Ministry of Economy, Oekozer Pafendall has supported nearly 60 Green Business Events; and collaborated with the Luxembourg Convention Bureau and Luxexpo The Box to promote sustainable business event solutions.

Every Green Event – whether cultural, sports, or musical in nature – now operates exclusively with reusable food and drink packaging, with only minor exceptions such as napkins and food paper. In total, 415 public events, including large festivals running for several days and featuring dozens of food stands, were guided toward sustainability in 2024 alone.

[LEARN MORE](#)



POLAND Polish Zero Waste Association's DRS victory

In 2024, Poland finalised its Deposit and Return System (DRS) Law, a significant milestone following over four years of relentless advocacy by the Polish Zero Waste Association. Despite challenges, the system will be launched in October 2025 and cover PET bottles, cans, and reusable glass bottles.

The advocacy efforts were extensive: they involved consultations with the Ministry of Climate and Environment, sharing best practices from other EU countries, stakeholder engagement, public stunts, and coalition-building supporting DRS. The online platform kaucyjny.pl was a key tool for this campaign, providing valuable resources such as photos of existing DRS systems via its website and social media. Today, this platform is a top reference for municipalities, citizens, policymakers, and producers.

Although the system's initial scope is limited, its implementation is a crucial step toward a circular economy in Poland. The Polish Zero Waste Association remains committed to strengthening and expanding the system in the years to come.

[LEARN MORE](#)

Success stories from the network



SLOVAKIA Friends of the Earth Slovakia halts chemical recycling threats

Friends of the Earth (Foe) – SPZ, Slovakia has been actively addressing the issue of chemical recycling. Several chemical recycling projects have started to be assessed in the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process. FoE Slovakia used the right of the professional public to submit their opinions and comments on these projects. Thanks to these comments, which were based on scientific evidence and European policies and were accepted by the state authorities, two chemical recycling projects were suspended. This marks a significant milestone for the zero waste movement in general and for the Zero Waste Europe network in particular, as it is the first instance where a Zero Waste Europe member organisation has successfully demonstrated to public authorities the environmental and community health risks created by these facilities. While these projects have been temporarily suspended, this still represents a crucial step toward the stronger enforcement of environmental laws to protect society as a whole.

[LEARN MORE](#)



SPAIN Rezero's reuse revolution in Catalonia

Rezero has played a key role in driving reuse initiatives in the Catalan municipalities of Viladecans and Torrelles de Llobregat through the Elevating Reuse in Cities (ERIC) project, a European initiative to reduce single-use plastics and implement reuse systems at the local level.

In Viladecans, Rezero supported the "Fes un pas, porta l'envàs" campaign, which engaged 82 businesses and 115 families and prevented 8,504 disposable items in just three months. In Torrelles de Llobregat, they helped expand the municipal reusable nappy service, reducing waste while supporting families. A reusable food container system has also been introduced in schools to replace single-use plastics.

These initiatives set a clear roadmap for Catalan municipalities, positioning them as leaders in zero waste solutions.

[LEARN MORE](#)



UKRAINE Zero Waste Alliance Ukraine's bio-waste innovation

The Zero Waste Alliance Ukraine (ZWAU) continues to showcase resilience and commitment in the face of adversity. Among its standout initiatives, ZWAU's member organisation Ecological News implemented a pioneering project to establish a bio-waste collection and composting system, earning a Ukraine Responsibility Award 2024 nomination. The release of its Roadmap for Bio-Waste Management in Ukraine was another significant achievement: this practical guide now supports over 1,000 small communities and the private sector in larger cities. The cities of Pidkamin, Gorokhiv, and Zabolotsiv installed public composters to promote sustainable waste practices, while a robust communication plan actively engaged local residents. The project's research on organic waste generation also provided critical data on household waste volumes, shaping future waste reduction strategies and garnering 48 applications from communities across 18 regions.

Furthermore, Zero Waste Alliance Ukraine joined the #ForkToFarm campaign, a European initiative on food waste management to support local soil health.

[LEARN MORE](#)



UNITED KINGDOM UKWIN's media breakthrough against incineration

2024 was a bumper and a bumpy year for the United Kingdom Without Incineration Network (UKWIN), with some low points (like the expiry of England's temporary incinerator moratorium due to the general election) and some all-time highs (like the BBC declaring incineration to be the dirtiest form of energy generation). The credibility that came with the BBC coverage and the associated mainstream media attention has changed the situation in the UK forever, with ever-increasing numbers of Members of Parliament coming out in opposition to incineration and in support of a zero waste circular economy.

[LEARN MORE](#)

Launch of the Global DRS Platform

Nine out of every ten units of packaging worldwide are not collected.

Together with our member Retorna, Zero Waste Europe have been working on the sides of the Global Plastic Treaty (GPT) negotiations to push for high impact solutions which can deliver the highest collection rates for plastic waste that today ends up in the environment.

In 2024 we organised a conference in the Mexican Embassy in Ottawa (Canada) during the GPT negotiations. More than 200 attendees from all around the world learnt about the potential of Deposit and Return Systems (DRS) to radically increase collection rates whilst improving reuse, recycling, and a fair transition.

Building on the interest raised by this event, we have been designing and incubating the Global DRS Platform, a space dedicated to building a world free from product and packaging waste. Officially launched in March 2025, the Platform nurtures collaboration, expert knowledge and connections among policy-makers, industries and civil society organisations worldwide. It aims to ensure that Deposit Return Systems (DRS) become the global standard for packaging and product management, promoting reuse, recycling, and waste prevention.

[VISIT THE GLOBAL DRS PLATFORM](#)

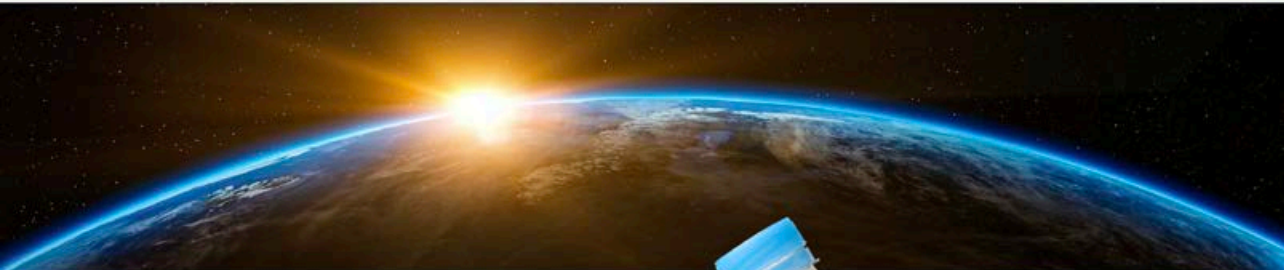


The platform

How can this platform help me

Contact






Together for a world without packaging lost in nature

Connecting experts, legislators, stakeholders, and resources to enable the successful implementation of Deposit and Return Systems that ensure the collection of beverage packaging to be reused or recycled with a just transition.







ZWE's coalitions and movements




Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives (GAIA)




Break Free From Plastic




Rethink Plastic alliance




European Alliance for a Just Transition




Single-Use Material Decelerator group




Environment Coalition on Standards (ECOs)




European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform




FitNESS 2.0 (advisory board member)




Methane Matters Coalition




ECD-free Europe Coalition



Independent Science-Based Taxonomy Expert Group



International Pollutants Elimination Network (IPEN)



Flame Retardant Free Furniture

Prevent Waste Coalition for textiles

Prevent Waste Coalition for food waste

Resource Use Reduction Coalition

EU Bioenergy Coalition

Civil Society Taskforce for Resource Use Reduction

Amplifying our voice and shaping the conversation

Events and actions



5 March 2024 • ONLINE

ZW Live! webinar – On the go: accelerating progress towards reusable takeaway packaging

This webinar showcased some of the most inspiring stories from pioneer cities across Europe and their journeys to introduce some of the continent's most ambitious packaging reuse systems. It also discussed the key philosophy and methodology of these initiatives, municipalities, positioning them as leaders in zero waste solutions.



13 March 2024 • LYON

Workshop on bio-waste management for French officials

Part of the LIFE BIOBEST project, this was our biggest-ever attended workshop for city officials, and first in France, done in collaboration with Zero Waste France. Participants got insights and effective tools to implement efficient municipal bio-waste management systems, opening the potential for biogas generation and creating nutrient-rich compost for healthier soils.



18-20 March 2024 • BERLIN

Crafting city-wide plastic prevention and reuse strategies

Zero Waste Europe and Mission Zero Waste Academy, with the support of Zero Waste Berlin, provided participants of this 3-day training with the knowledge and tools to effectively implement a plastic prevention plan aimed at reducing plastic waste production and promoting reuse systems within their municipality. 52 participants joined the training, including representatives from cities such as Geneva, Brussels, Paris, and Lyon.



17-19 April 2024 • GHENT

Zero Waste Europe Network-Wide Gathering

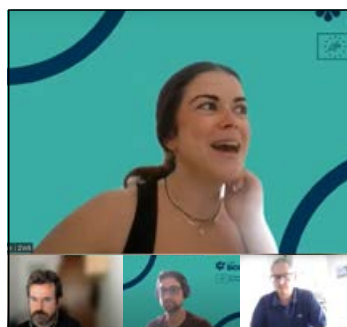
Over 60 of Zero Waste Europe's members and staff flocked to Ghent to represent their country and organisation as leading voices on zero waste matters. The three NWG days were filled with strategising for the future, learning expeditions on food waste and reuse, and success stories from our members across Europe.



12 May 2025 • PARIS

Reuse and Refill Trade Fair 2024

Zero Waste Europe and the ReuSe Vanguard Project (RSVP) were partners of the Reuse and Refill Trade Fair 2024 in Paris, with a dedicated session focusing on the ReuSe Vanguard Project. As RSVP's ideator and coordinator, Zero Waste Europe facilitated a panel discussion on the collective work to harmonise the implementation of reuse systems in the takeaway sector in Europe, with a focus on local projects (Rotterdam, Aarhus, Paris, Leuven, and Ghent).



27 May 2024 • ONLINE

#LIFEBIOBEST webinar: Regulatory and technical perspectives – driving progress in bio-waste treatment

Hosted in the context of the LIFE BIOBEST project, this webinar went over practical insights for advancing bio-waste treatment practices.



20 June 2024 • BRUSSELS

Material world: The EU's path to a 1.5°C future

Co-organised by Zero Waste Europe and Eunomia Research & Consulting, this event discussed the findings of the "Managing materials for 1.5°C" report; and the need for Europe to not only accelerate the transition to a circular economy but also look at how to manage material consumption strategically.



9-11 September 2024 • LANDEN

Zero Waste Europe Staff Retreat

The Zero Waste Europe staff gathered for 3 days of strategic meetings. We deep dived into the preparation of our Strategic Framework for the next 5 years; identified points for improvement within our external and internal work; and reconnected as a team through learning (and delicious) activities and sharing moments.



24 September 2024 • BRUSSELS

BFFP Brussels Action Week and Retorna false data action

Break Free From Plastic (BFFP) had its yearly Brussels Action Week, bringing together member organisations from all over Europe for a week of capacity-building moments, meetings with decision-makers, and awareness-raising against plastic pollution.

As part of the Week, and led by Retorna, European NGO representatives – including BFFP and the Zero Waste Europe members – protested before the European Commission building in Brussels with an origami-style Pinocchio, urging the Commission to demand transparency from big brands and supermarkets are transparent on their recycling, reuse, and separate collection efforts.



16-18 October 2024 • BRUSSELS

Methane Matters Week

This event sprint marked the first time we gathered as a coalition working on methane with organisations focusing on energy and agriculture, as well as waste. The events in Brussels got high attendance and have laid a strong foundation for our ongoing work on this topic to come.

22-24 October 2024 • SÃO JOÃO DA MADEIRA AND SILVES

#LIFEBIOBEST workshops: Mastering bio-waste collection and treatment – Lessons from Portugal's pioneers

Zero Waste Europe's Portuguese member ZERO, together with the LIFE BIOBEST consortium partners, hosted workshops showcasing best practices in bio-waste management at national and regional levels, following the LIFE BIOBEST guidelines based on the experiences of Europe's best performers in bio-waste management.



26 November 2024 • PRUSZCZ GDAŃSKI

#LIFEBIOBEST conference: Towards a zero waste future – best practices in bio-waste collection and treatment

Zero Waste Europe's Polish member Polish Zero Waste Association, with the support of the LIFE BIOBEST consortium partners, hosted a conference on the current state of bio-waste management in Poland. The event promoted improved municipal performance by showcasing best practices from across Europe at both national and regional levels.

3 December 2024 • ONLINE

'Rotake Reusable': how can Aarhus help cities transition to reuse systems?

This joint webinar by the Mission Zero Academy, the Reuse Vanguard Project (RSVP), and Zero Waste Europe unpacked the specific role and steps taken by the city of Aarhus (Denmark) to address the takeaway waste problem. 'Rotake Reusable's project manager, Simon Rossau, also discussed this project's design and management.

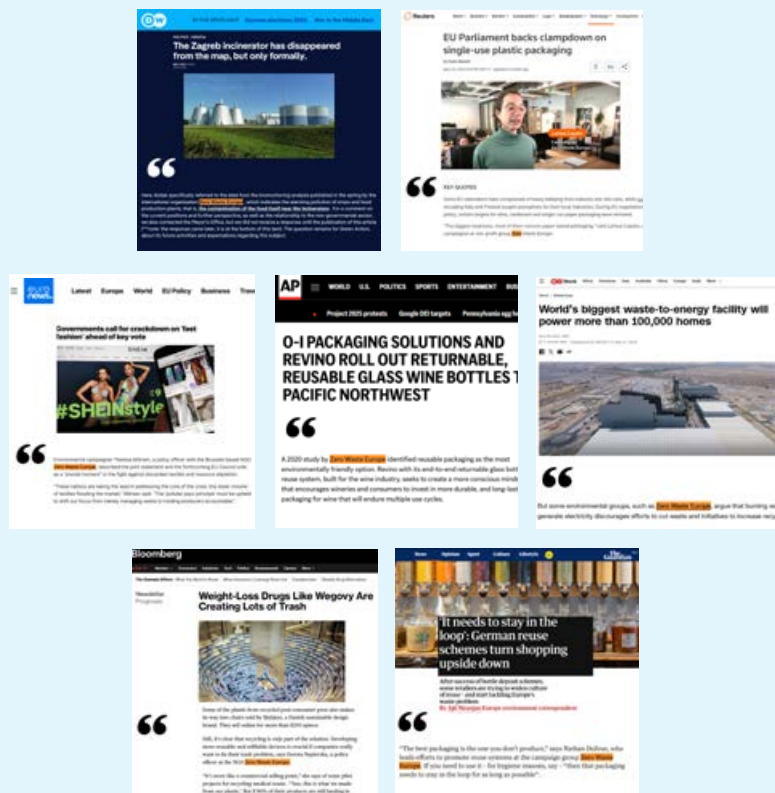


ZWE in the media sphere

2024 media work in numbers

Press mentions in 2024

January	94
February	238
March	100
April	456
May	188
June	165
July	157
August	27
September	118
October	85
November	151
December	80
TOTAL	1859



Type of media

Traditional newspapers and digital press outlets

924



Radio
48




TV
135



Press agencies
25

Key outputs

 **33** Press Releases

 **6** Op-Eds

 **29** Feature interviews

Media Mentions by continent distribution




Media Mentions country distribution (% by country)

United States	35.85%	India	2.05%
Spain	9.15%	Croatia	1.88%
Italy	6.14%	Portugal	1.82%
United Kingdom	5.91%	Poland	1.65%
France	4.66%	Singapore	1.31%
Belgium	2.78%	Slovenia	1.14%
Germany	2.67%	Vietnam	1.02%
Netherlands	2.16%		


Top languages used by media outlet

English	56.86%	French	5.07%
Spanish	11.52%	Croatian	2.26%
Italian	6.01%	Portuguese	2.04%

Media mentions distributed by ZWE pillar

 **57** Enabling Conditions

 **215** Implementation

 **385** Movement Building

Bringing our team closer to our community

In 2024, we expanded our 'Meet the Team' blog series, showing the dedicated team members driving Zero Waste Europe's mission.

Each post offers a personal glimpse into our staff's roles, work, and motivations, highlighting the diverse expertise behind our everyday initiatives. By helping our communities get to know our team better, and by sharing their stories, our team members embody their zero waste ambassador role, making our mission more relatable and inspiring.



#MeetTheTeam – Alexandra Clipa



#MeetTheTeam – Alice Marquet



#MeetTheTeam – Jack McQuibban

Strengthening our organisational setup

Zero Waste Europe experienced a stable year amidst stormy waters in 2024. It also marked the preparation time of our new Strategic Framework, revising our ways of tracking progress. We built on the time we took in 2023 to strengthen our internal functioning and saw our team members grow and focus on what matters.

We strengthened our team enablement efforts through information visibility and a strong focus on learning and development opportunities.

A key milestone in 2024 was Zero Waste Europe's formal conversion to a Belgian INPOS (AISBL/IVZW). Zero Waste Europe was founded as a Dutch foundation in 2013. In parallel, as Zero Waste Europe grew and its operations predominantly lay in Belgium, an "operating" foreign entity was established in Belgium to support its activities. In 2018, we converted the Dutch foundation into a Dutch association so that the legal structure mirrors the governance of the network. In 2023, we started the conversion towards a Belgian entity (International NPO) to better reflect our operations. This conversion required a full revision of our Statutes and Internal Rules.

We thank Pinsent Masons and White & Case for the support provided throughout the entire process, our Board for the close follow-up, and our Members for the input and follow-up in co-creating the Statutes.


Our 2024 impact

- ✓ Internal skillsharing sessions on feedback, project management, and CRM usage.
- ✓ Immersed the team on AI practices and other digital friends.
- ✓ Strengthened fundraising coordination.
- ✓ Full focus day for Zero Waste Europe Line Managers on what it takes to guide a team.
- ✓ Rebranding of our performance review process, making it more straightforward and shifting the focus towards a clearer assessment of performance based on roles and abilities, and planning for growth.
- ✓ Prevention at work activities: training of internal prevention advisor and person of trust; general 5-year prevention plan and yearly prevention plans; regular reporting and risk analyses that helped us identify our health, safety, and psychosocial wellbeing priorities for prevention.
- ✓ A strong foundation for compliance and commitment to employee wellbeing.


Behind the scenes

Meet the team







Esra Tat
Executive Director




Joan Marc Simon
Founder




Aline Maigret
Head of Policy




Jack McQuibban
Head of Local Zero Waste Implementation




Stephanie Yates
Head of Network & Movement Building




Ana Oliveira
Head of Communications




Alice Marquet
Head of Operations




Janek Vähk
Zero Pollution Policy Manager




Dorota Napierska
Toxic-Free Circular Economy Policy Officer




Larissa Copello
Packaging & Reuse Policy Officer




Lauriane Veillard
Chemical Recycling & Plastic-to-Fuels Policy Officer




Theresa Mörsen
Waste & Resources Policy Officer




Nathan Dufour
Reuse Systems Manager | Leader of the ReuSe Vanguard Project (RSVP)




Manon Jourdan
Implementation Officer




Andrea Veselá
Textiles Officer




Giulia Lodi
Communications & Network Officer




Nanna Cornelsen
Communications Officer




Seán Flynn
Media Outreach & Communications Officer




Alexandra Clipa
Operations and Events Officer




Desi Borisova
Finance Officer



Anna Garstka
Human Resources Officer



Kaisa Karjalainen
Director of the Mission Zero Academy



Solène Fargeix
Business Development Manager of the Mission Zero Academy

Zero Waste Europe Board



Mindy O'Brien
President of the Board



Jaka Kranjc
Treasurer



Janine Röling
Secretary



Antigone Dalamaga
Board Member



Juliette Franquet
Board Member



Maia Krastina
Board Member




Nathalie Cadot
Board Member

Zero Waste Europe Scientific Committee




Enzo Favoino
Chair of the Scientific Committee


Our hosted coalition and alliances




Justine Maillot
Coordinator of Break Free From Plastic Europe and the Rethink Plastic alliance




Iveta Cadrova
Movement-building Coordinator for Break Free From Plastic Europe




Alexander Colling
Grants & Operations Manager for Break Free From Plastic Europe



Laura Diaz Sanchez
Solutions Coordinator for Break Free From Plastic Europe



Bethany Spendlove Keeley
Europe Communications Officer for Break Free From Plastic



Caroline Will
Communications Coordinator of the Rethink Plastic alliance

Cherished colleagues who left us in 2024-25

Staff who left the ZWE, BFFP/RPa, and MiZA teams in 2023-24 and to whom we owe a huge thank you.



Ioana Popescu



Amanda Puerari



Finance and Funding



Our funders

EU Grant: EASME EU LIFE Operating Grant	MAVA, Fondation pour la nature
EU Grant: LIFE BIOBEST Project Grant	OAK Foundation
EU Grant: LIFE Zero Waste Cities in Ukraine	Plastic Solutions Fund
Adessium Foundation	Sigrid Rausing Trust
European Climate Foundation	The Pew Charitable Trust
GAIA	The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation Limited
GMH - DUH	UMI
KR Foundation	11h Hour/Schmidt Foundation
Kristian Gerhard Jebsen Foundation	Donations
Laudes Foundation	Membership Fees

Our finances*

Zero Waste Europe expenditures in 2024

	KEURO
Salaries	€1,771
Direct costs	€467
Overheads	€286
Total in-house	€2,524
Subgranting	€800
ZWE Core spending	€3,324
Hosted coalitions and movements	€1,809
Reserves	€83
Total Zero Waste Europe finances	€5,216

*pending official audit confirmation

Zero Waste Europe Income in 2024

	KEURO
Philanthropic funding	€4,393
European Commission	€658
Other income	€141
Membership Income	€19
Speakers fees	€3
Donations	€2
TOTAL	€5,216

Thank you to...

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Blush Design Agency	Noble Studio
BTW-lijn	Noiza
Camille Delbos	Öko-Institut
Chris Marchal Photography	Okay When
Dalberg Management	RREUSE
Dominic Hogg / Equanimator Ltd	Philip Tregunna
Eunomia Research & Consulting	Pinsent Masons
Food Packaging Forum	Simon Sharp / Sharp Design
Grainne Murphy	Sarah Claessens / Arcadius
Mike Walker	The Hum
Netika	Tim Clynen
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KOIS	Topos /Eleni Tolkoutsis
KPMG	White & Case
Madame et Monsieur Recyclage	

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

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.

Our fantastic Members.





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