WE'RE HIRING!

Zero Pollution Policy Manager

Location: Belgium based

Duration: A full-time, permanent duration contract under Belgian law

Start date: mid January 2027 - as soon as possible

ABOUT US

Zero Waste Europe (ZWE) 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; for the redesign of our relationship with resources; and for a global shift towards environmental justice, accelerating a just transition towards zero waste for the benefit of people and the planet.

The ZWE network now includes 41 members and alliances across 30 European countries and works with topics across the whole chain. From the strategic use of resources and product design to reusability to end-of-pipe waste management solutions, from the phase-out of plastics to 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 the planet, too, while we're at it).

We are a successful and fast-growing independent NGO where personal development, fairness and inclusiveness are high on the agenda. We are the proud founders of the Mission Zero Academy (MiZA), through which we offer Zero Waste certifications to cities, municipalities, and small businesses. We are also a founding member of various movements and coalitions that are hosted under our entity, such as Break Free From Plastic Europe (BFFP Europe), and we are the European chapter of the Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives (GAIA).

OUR VALUES

- We are **purpose-driven**, always putting forward a solution-oriented approach.
- We are **game-changing** – we 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.
- We believe that acting with **integrity** is crucial to achieve impact and change, both inside and outside our network.
- And 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.

ABOUT YOU

You are impact and values driven, able to see the big picture whilst taking care of the details. You have experience in EU policy-making processes and are a good networker. You are a team player who can also play solo. You thrive when facing complex situations, you are passionate about the zero waste vision and well aware of the multiple challenges the world is facing today.

ABOUT THE ROLE

The Zero Pollution Policy Manager advances EU policies to prevent pollution and support the transition towards a **circular economy**. The role takes a holistic approach to addressing waste generation and its climate and environmental impacts, focusing on residual waste, biowaste, food waste, and bioplastics. It promotes waste prevention and reduction, sustainable material management and recovery, and policies that address the underlying causes of waste generation. This includes advocating for:

- **Residual waste** reduction targets and cap-and-trade systems.
- Alternatives to **incineration** such as Material Recovery and Biological Treatment, and avoiding simply shifting waste from **landfilling** to incineration without addressing the underlying causes of waste generation.
- Sustainable **biowaste** and **food waste** management policies.
- Safeguards around **bioplastics** that contribute to circularity and pollution prevention.

Across these interconnected topics, the role seeks to prevent the shifting of environmental impacts between waste management options and to advance coherent EU policies that deliver genuine pollution reduction and systemic change, in collaboration with other teams at Zero Waste Europe.

CORE RESPONSIBILITIES

Policy development and advocacy

- **Develop and implement EU policy and advocacy strategies** to address the above mentioned topics, connecting climate and circular economy objectives.
- **Monitor and influence EU policy developments and legislation**, developing evidence-based recommendations on residual waste reduction, material recovery, sustainable residual waste management, biowaste, foodwaste and alternative feedstocks.

- **Promote integrated policy approaches and instruments** that reduce the generation of mixed waste, maximise material recovery and avoid shifting waste from landfilling to incineration, including residual waste targets, cap-and-trade systems and Material Recovery and Biological Treatment (MRBT).
- **Collaborate** across ZWE teams to ensure a coherent approach to waste, climate and circular economy policies.

Stakeholder engagement and coalition building

- **Engage** with EU institutions, policymakers and other stakeholders to advance policy recommendations and build support for more circular, climate-friendly waste management systems.
- Identify synergies between EU and local policy work, **coordinate with ZWE members, partners and coalitions** to develop joint positions, share expertise and strengthen collective advocacy.
- **Support ZWE members** by organising and/or leading on capacity building activities. Ensuring coordination with members when undertaking advocacy activities, for maximum impact.

Communications and external representation

- **Represent** ZWE at public events, policy negotiations and in the media, adapting key messages to different audiences and promoting the organisation's broader priorities.

Strategy, project management and fundraising

- Actively **contribute to the policy team's strategy**, identifying and developing new areas of focus and work opportunities.
- **Lead on specific campaigns and projects**, ensuring effective cross-team collaboration and proper follow-up.
- **Identify and secure funding opportunities for your area of work**, develop strong donor relationships and proposals, manage project budgets and reporting, and contribute to the policy team's fundraising strategy.
- **Contribute to fundraising and donor reporting** to support the development and implementation of ZWE's wider policy and advocacy work.

This is a non-exclusive list, and more tasks may be required as the organisation evolves and the selected candidate grows in their role.

REQUIRED SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES

- At least **5 years** of experience in a **senior EU policy making role**;
- Proven experience in fundraising, donor relations and grants management;
- Experience in leading advocacy efforts and creating networks of influence;

- Experienced in interacting with EU and national policymakers' and industry professionals;
- Proficient in the English language;
- Excellent communication skills;
- Excellent research, analysis and written production skills: Ability to research, analyse and produce written and oral materials such as policy reports, briefs, papers etc. in a clear and accessible language to dedicated audiences.

PREFERRED SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES

- A university degree (or proven experience) in social or political science, environmental governance or advanced technical qualifications relevant to resource management and/or circular economy;
- Knowledge of environmental issues, in the field of resource & waste management, climate or environmental justice. Knowledge on incineration, landfilling, biowaste and bioplastics is a plus;
- Other languages, apart from English, are a plus;
- Solid IT competences with collaborative tools (Google Drive, Slack, Zoho);
- Experience working in coalition settings;
- Experience in project management;
- Experience in working with people from different cultures and nationalities in a way that facilitates conflict prevention and values community wisdom.

PERSONAL QUALITIES

- Initiative, self-motivation and team player;
- Problem-solving attitude and results-oriented;
- Commitment to accuracy, efficiency and a high standard of work;
- A strong commitment to Zero Waste Europe's ethos and network structures;
- Willingness to work with a flexible schedule, as required.

Equal Employment opportunity

We are committed to the principle of Equal Employment Opportunity for all employees, regardless of sex, gender, marital status, nationality, religion, age, sexual orientation and any other characteristics unrelated to the performance of the job.

We also realise that not all individuals have the same opportunities to engage in paid work or studies and are open to receiving applications from those who may not fulfil all the required skills but have the interest, passion, (cap)abilities and drive to fulfil the role. In this respect, we encourage people from a diverse intersection of backgrounds to apply.

Location, Compensation and Work Environment

This is a full-time position based out of our Brussels office, under a hybrid working setup with a split 50/50 working from home vs from the office. A valid working permit for Belgium is required. The contract will be for an indefinite duration contract under Belgian law**.** We offer a competitive remuneration package in line with Brussels NGO standards (*€4393-4807 range gross for a 100% FTE - equalling to our salary scale levels C2 to C4) depending on experience and internal salary grid placement. plus benefits, including*:

- Lunch vouchers (€10/day);
- 13th month (year-end bonus);
- Double holiday pay (Belgian standard);
- Legal Holidays as per Belgian standards, plus 6 extra-legal holidays for a full year;
- Office closure between Christmas and New Year;
- Hospitalisation, ambulatory and dental insurance (DKV);
- Travel insurance;
- Home working and other allowances (€200 net/month);
- Reimbursement of public transport costs for local commuting (max €56.00 net/month) upon show of receipts; full reimbursement of train transportation commuting costs within Belgium; bike allowance for commuting by bicycle;
- Bike leasing scheme: option to lease a bike through ZWE at tax-advantageous rates;
- Flexible working hours/times and hybrid work format between home and our Brussels office;

Candidates must have the right to work in Belgium - please note that ZWE is not able to provide working permit sponsorships. Candidates must live in Belgium or be willing to relocate by the start date.

We take pride in our ability to support one another's work in an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect, and look forward to introducing the successful candidate to our welcoming and highly motivated team and network members.

Deadline to apply: 6/12/2026, at 11:59 PM CET.

Ideal starting date: As soon as possible

To apply:

Please send your CV and motivation letter in English with two references (all merged into a single PDF document) through the appropriate form on the ZWE website ("Work With Us" page). Only the applications sent via this form will be taken into account. We can only guarantee that short-listed candidates will be contacted.

Our interview process will include:

- An initial 30-40-minute online screening interview, to take place during the week of the 14th of December.
- A second 1h45 interview with our Head of Policy and Head of Operations will take place during the week of the 4th of January, focusing on technical skills, motivation, and team culture. A 90-minute assignment* might be requested in advance.
- An additional step in the selection process may include a short online meeting with members of the team, providing an opportunity to meet potential colleagues and gain further insight into the role and team collaboration.

**Please note that any assignments asked to be carried out cover previous materials/needs of ZWE, and are purely asked to assess how candidates think about core tasks for this role. ZWE does NOT ask any candidates to provide ideas/work on upcoming projects/activities as part of this assignment.*

We see interviews as a two-way conversation and an opportunity for us to get to know each other. We encourage you to be open and honest, ask any questions you may have, and we will do the same.

We look forward to receiving your application!