

BEST PRACTICES TO REDUCE AND PHASE OUT SINGLE-USE PLASTICS IN EUROPE

 SEAS AT RISK

#breakfreefromplastic





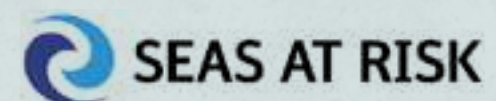
CATALOGUE OF BEST PRACTICES

For an ambitious implementation of the **Single Use Plastic Directive**

The ocean is the ‘blue lung’ of our planet, producing half of the oxygen we breathe. It absorbs more greenhouse gas emissions than forests. The ocean’s warm and cold currents help regulate the Earth’s climate, ensuring that our planet remains habitable.

The ocean gives us rain, food and jobs. It is essential to our own survival and the survival of all life on Earth.

Thank you to the NGOs from across Europe who provided us with invaluable input in the collection of effective best practices to reduce and phase out single-use plastics, and who are committed to a true circular economy and a plastic pollution free world.



#breakfreefromplastic

Seas At Risk is the largest umbrella organisation of marine conservation NGOs in Europe, promoting ambitious policies at European and international level. Seas At Risk’s goal is to make seas and ocean abundant in marine life, diverse, climate resilient, and not threatened by human pressures. Seas At Risk is a member of Break Free From Plastic.

seas-at-risk.org

Break Free From Plastic is a global movement envisioning a future free from plastic pollution. Since its launch in September 2016, over 2,500 organisations from across the world have joined the movement to demand massive reductions in single-use plastics and to push for lasting solutions to the plastic pollution crisis. These organisations share the common values of environmental protection and social justice, which guide their work at community level and represent a global, unified vision.

breakfreefromplastic.org

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INTRODUCTION

Over the past decades, plastic pollution has become a major threat to the environment, including marine life. This is a growing concern for citizens and public authorities throughout the world. An appalling 8 billion tons of plastic waste enters the ocean every year, killing an estimated one million marine birds and 100,000 marine mammals world-wide due to plastic ingestion. Plastic pollution in the ocean contaminates water and threatens marine ecosystems for centuries, before it eventually – if at all – degrades.

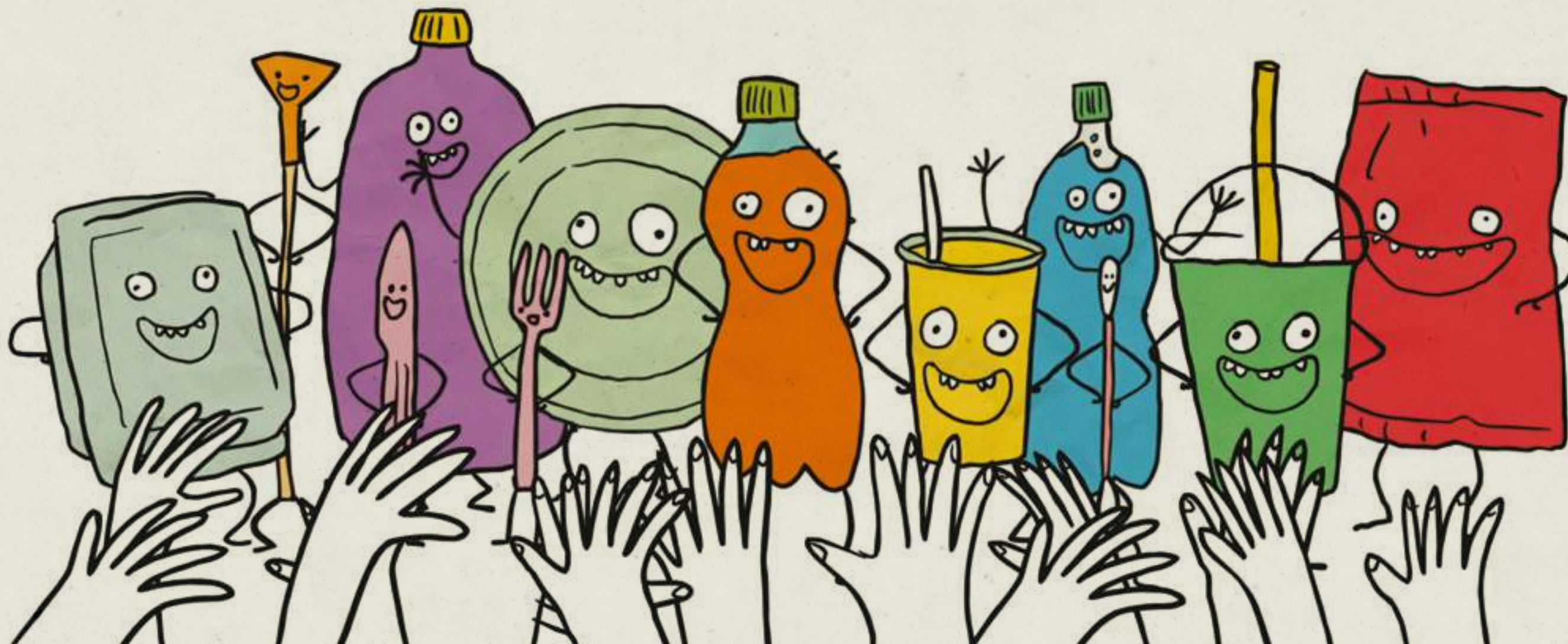
Cleaning the ocean of plastic is impossible. The only way forward is systemic change that tackles plastic pollution at source.

According to a study published by Seas At Risk in 2017, “Single-use plastic and the marine environment”, the most polluting marine litter found on European beaches are items made from single-use plastics and discarded fishing gear. With global production of plastics rising steeply, adopting effective solutions to prevent plastic from polluting the open environment has become crucial.

The European Union has been a front runner in the fight against plastic pollution with its Plastics Strategy and the adoption of the Directive on the reduction of the impact of certain plastic products on the environment, also known as the Single-Use Plastics Directive. This legislation, adopted in July 2019, aims to reduce marine plastic pollution by 70% and targets the top ten most polluting plastic items in the EU. It bans a series of disposable plastic products such as plastic plates, polystyrene food and drink containers, plastic straws and cutlery.

The Directive also requires Member States to: achieve ambitious consumption reduction targets for other items such as cups and food containers; to apply extended producer responsibility for food and drink containers, tobacco products and wrappers; and to achieve a 90% collection rate of single-use plastics bottles.

The purpose of this publication is to support an ambitious implementation of the Single-Use Plastics Directive and inspire national and local public authorities, businesses and civil society actors in reducing single-use plastics. The catalogue provides over 160 innovative best practices that have already been implemented and proven successful, and which could be easily replicated in other geographical areas and on a wider scale. The best practices have been collected from 27 countries thanks to the valuable input of member and partner organisations across and beyond the Seas At Risk network and the Break Free From Plastic movement.



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PLASTIC

AUSTRIA

“In cooperation with Greenpeace Austria, Austria’s largest dairy company Berglandmilch introduced a refillable one-litre glass milk bottle in February 2020 with the aim of reducing packaging waste.”

Reusable packaging and bottles **Consumption reduction – Businesses**

Erhard Meindl, the Unimarkt partner, is the first retail company in Upper Austria to replace plastic packaging with a reusable box, the ecoBOX. This practical and sustainable deposit system allows the company to reduce about 70% of their plastic waste.

In the wine region of Styria, using “Steiermarkflasche” refillable wine bottles saves up to 96% of the energy needed to manufacture single-use wine bottles, according to the project founders.

While the federal state of Burgenland has implemented a local deposit return system for small plastic bottles in schools. Thanks to this initiative, over 40,000 bottles are collected annually for recycling.

Eco-label for green events **Consumption reduction Public authorities**

Austria has introduced an eco-label for “Green Events”, where events need to meet a number of criteria and demonstrate compliance with them to earn the label. The main focus lies on mobility, location and waste management, but reusable plastics are also promoted.

One of the certification criteria is the use of reusable tableware and cups, and serving drinks from reusable bottles or large reusable containers. According to the government programme 2020-2024, the political goal is to turn the majority of sports and cultural events into green events.

The main benefits of green events are improving the events’ quality and image, saving resources and costs, while creating awareness for sustainability.

In western Austria, large municipalities like Doren exclusively host green events. While in cities including Salzburg and Vienna, local laws have been implemented to guarantee the reduction of single-use waste.

Refillable glass milk bottles **Consumption reduction – Businesses**

In cooperation with Greenpeace Austria, Austria’s largest dairy company Berglandmilch introduced a refillable one-litre glass milk bottle in February 2020 with the aim of reducing packaging waste.

Customers pay a deposit of EUR 0.22 cents per bottle, which they get back when returning the bottles. Instead of being seen as an inconvenience, the change in packaging actually resulted in an increase in sales.

Berglandmilch invested around EUR 8 million to convert its packaging sites in Aschbach in Lower Austria and Wörgl in Tyrol, introducing an additional glass-filling plant, a washing facility and warehouses for glass bottles.

Other reusable products were planned for 2020, such as a half-litre reusable bottle, low-fat milk in reusable bottles as well as yoghurt in reusable glasses. Berglandmilch fills organic milk for its trading partners REWE and Spar in the same returnable glass bottles, in addition to its own Schäringer Berghof Milch and Tirol Milch. The reusable milk bottles can be returned via the deposit return machines of trading partners throughout Austria.

National 3-point action plan **Consumption reduction – Public authorities**

The Austrian Ministry for Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology is currently working on a 3-point plan to be implemented as of 2021 that includes:

1. Mandatory quotas for the proportion of refillable beverage containers retailers sell. The quota will increase from 25% in 2023 to 40% in 2024, reaching 55% in 2030.
2. A national deposit return system (DRS) for plastic bottles and cans.
3. A staggered producer tax for plastic packaging, with lower taxes for more easily recyclable packaging.

All points are still under discussion between the two governing parties, with no final political decision yet. The first point is to be addressed in an upcoming amendment to the Waste Management Act; the second is to be implemented in the form of an authorisation to issue local laws; and the third is to be regulated as part of the budget.

100% climate-neutral lemonades **Consumption reduction – Businesses**

Beverage producer Egger introduced a new lemonade “LIMÖ”. The Radlberger LIMÖ will be sold exclusively in modern looking one-litre returnable glass bottles, and the previous 1.5 litre PET container will be discontinued. As a result of the change to returnable glass bottles, Radlberger lemonades are 100% climate-neutral.

The glass bottles are available in a sustainable six-bottle crate that has a practical central carrying handle. With no visible branding, the crates can also be used for other brands.

Reusable coffee cup schemes **Consumption reduction – Businesses**

Cup Solutions offers a comprehensive rental and washing solution for reuse systems and events in Austria. The company has a stock of over two million cups available for rent, mostly made from styrene acrylonitrile resin (SAN). Offering different size cups for both alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages, Cup Solutions customers include leading entertainment establishments and event organisers in Austria.

The Mycoffeecup initiative – a collaboration between Cup Solutions and the City of Vienna – provides a reusable cup solution for outlets serving takeaway coffee. The goal is to reduce the 84 million single-use beverage containers used in Vienna annually.

Similar local initiatives include BackCup and K2go. Some outlets offer a small discount (on average EUR 0.20) on coffee ordered with the deposit cups.

All these solutions have the same aim: to reduce the massive waste that is produced by single-use coffee cups. Thankfully the movement is growing, because at 6.65 kg per person per year, Austria ranks seventh in the world for coffee consumption.

Skoonu reusable takeaway boxes **Consumption reduction – Businesses**

In Vienna, there is a reusable solution for food delivery services. When customers order takeaway food from a restaurant that is a Skoonu partner, the food is delivered in sustainable, reusable tableware instead of disposable packaging – a perfect way to reduce the tons of plastic waste that result from increased demand for food deliveries.

The company aims to reduce up to 1,700 tons of packaging waste per year – which corresponds to 485 average 3.5-ton elephants according to the company’s website.



BELGIUM

“An increasing number of Belgian cities are encouraging parents to invest in washable nappies by offering subsidies.”

Brussels' Zero Waste Challenge **Awareness-raising – Public authorities**

The European capital and its Environment ministry [Brussels Environment](#) have been engaged in a [Zero Waste Strategy](#) for some time, with various inspiring initiatives, including:

- a monthly [zero waste newsletter](#);
- a [Facebook page](#) and an [agenda](#) for the promotion of zero waste events;
- an online resource showcasing [best practice projects](#); and
- the organisation of municipal [Zero Waste Challenges](#) in 2019 and 2020, with 50 and 200 participating families respectively and impressive results.

The Zero Waste Challenge consists of eight months (February–October) of personalised coaching and support to help families reduce their waste. Families commit to attending at least three practical workshops/visits. Every two weeks, participants receive a specific challenge – 13 in total – several of which target alternatives to single-use packaging and products, e.g. the bulk sales challenge, zero waste picnic challenge, and the drinking challenge.

Participants in the city's first Zero Waste Challenge in 2019 reduced their waste by 30% in one year, from an initial 61 kg per year to 43 kg per year, which is 75% less waste than the average Brussels citizen. The project also serves to raise awareness of single-use plastic pollution and available alternatives.

Ecopoon edible tableware **Consumption reduction – Businesses**

Liège

Although the preferred evolution is to stop using single-use products completely, innovative single-use materials can also be part of the solution for specific circumstances such as for hospitals, airways or catering companies.

[Ecopoon](#) is a Belgian SME that has developed an innovative material for tableware that is both edible and biodegradable. Spoons and verrines are sold in packs to professionals and to the general public and become part of the food experience.

Tiffin reusable food containers **Consumption reduction – Businesses**

[Tiffin](#) is a reusable and refillable stainless steel lunchbox sold online in various [sizes and formats](#) to the general public as well as to restaurants and catering professionals.

The company also developed a partnership programme with restaurants that allows customers to get a discount on takeaway meals. This service is mostly available in Brussels, but also in some cities in Wallonia and Flanders.

Annual cigarette butt clean-up **Awareness-raising – NGOs**

Brussels

For the last four years, three municipalities of the Brussels area (Saint-Gilles, Brussels city and Etterbeek) have partnered with citizen movement [#LeoNotHappy](#) – named in honour of American actor Leonardo Di Caprio – to clean up the cigarette butts that litter the streets of Brussels.

The movement was launched in April 2016 by a 26-year old student who wanted to harness the power of social media to drive positive change. In 2017, volunteers collected 120,000 butts in just three hours; in 2018, they collected 270,000; and in 2019, 500 volunteers collected 500,000 butts and distributed free ashtrays to smokers. The 2020 event was cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic, and the next edition should take place in spring 2021.

The movement has become an NGO with over [32,000 followers on Facebook](#). It plans to partner with more public authorities to raise public awareness around the pollution generated by cigarette butts, each of which can pollute up to 500 litres of water.

Cloth nappy subsidies **Consumption reduction – Public authorities**

An increasing number of Belgian cities are encouraging parents to invest in washable nappies by offering subsidies. Using washable nappies not only represents financial savings for families, but also greatly reduces the waste caused by disposable nappies.

The NGO [Ecoconso](#), which promotes sustainable consumption, published a dedicated article in February 2020 that identified 28 municipalities in the Brussels and Wallonia regions that offer such subsidies. [In Flanders](#), dozens of municipalities also offer subsidies.

Where subsidies are offered, families can typically benefit from maximum EUR 125 per family, while in some municipalities, such as [Herstal](#) in Wallonia, inhabitants can claim back 50% of what they spent on washable nappies, at up to EUR 250 per child. In [Ghent](#), inhabitants can receive a subsidy to rent washable nappies for a period of 4 weeks, up to EUR 85 per child.

Cloth nappy rental and training **Consumption reduction – Businesses**

In recent years, Belgium has seen the development of many individual businesses specialising in the production and sales of reusable, washable nappies.

Examples of this trend are [La Renarde](#) in Thuin, which also offers a rental service for families to test newborn nappies for a month without having to invest in them; or [La Petite Marmite](#) in Namur which also offers training for new parents on washable nappies.

These shops operate online and their platforms often include a blog section dedicated to zero waste or sustainable initiatives. The full list of shops selling reusable nappies in Brussels and Wallonia can be found at www.coconso.be/fr/content/ou-trouver-des-langes-lavables-en-wallonie-et-bruxelles.

BULGARIA

Ocean-saving tote bags

Awareness-raising – NGOs

In 2012–2015 and again in 2018, the Sofia chapter of the NGO Surfrider Foundation Europe organised a tote bag exhibition (example of the 2015 edition at <https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?vanity=surfriderbg&set=a.816185611751371>) to raise awareness about the pollution generated by single-use plastic bags through art and local collaboration.

Volunteers called on local designers to create cotton bags and decorate them with Surfrider messages, specifically denouncing the harm that plastic bags cause to marine life and ecosystems. Each year the exhibition was organised, one hundred reusable cloth bags were decorated with ocean-themed drawings.



CROATIA

Marine litter clean-up events

Awareness raising – NGOs

In spring 2020, the Sunce Split association launched a series of marine litter clean-up events in collaboration with the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Energy. The aim was to remove marine litter from the seabed and coast, while at the same time, raise public awareness of the impact of marine litter on the Adriatic.

21 clean-up actions were carried out in seven counties along the Croatian coastline: Istria, Primorje-Gorski Kotar, Lika-Senj, Zadar, Šibenik-Knin, Split-Dalmatia, and Dubrovnik-Neretva. 5 tonnes of underwater marine litter were removed by divers, then collected by fishermen with trawl nets. Volunteers and Sunce Split staff also took part, monitoring litter collected to track its source and advising on appropriate waste management.

Locations were selected in cooperation with relevant stakeholders, such as public institutions that manage Marine Protected Areas, local authorities, citizens associations, diving clubs and fishing communities. The results of each event were made public to raise public awareness of marine litter pollution. In addition, based on the experience and results, Sunce Split association drafted a proposal for a national protocol setting guidelines for all future ocean clean-up initiatives in Croatia.

“5 tonnes of underwater marine litter were removed by divers, then collected by fishermen with trawl nets.”



CYPRUS

Biodegradable beach ashtrays Awareness-raising - Public authorities

Larnaca

In summer 2017, cone-shaped, biodegradable ashtrays were placed on ten of Larnaca's most popular beaches as an alternative to disposing of cigarette butts in the sand. Steel bins were placed alongside them, with full instructions on how to use them.

At the end of the season, the collected cigarette butts were counted – a total of 84,300 cigarette butts, weighing 42.15 kg in total, had been disposed of in the specially provided bins during the summer.

“A total of 84,300 cigarette butts, weighing 42.15 kg in total, had been disposed of in the specially provided bins during the summer.”



DENMARK

#CigaretteButt-FreeDenmark Awareness-raising – Public authorities

In July 2020, the Danish Ministry of Environment launched a campaign to illustrate the problem of discarded cigarette butts in nature.

An installation of 30 oversized wooden cigarette butts was set up on Amager Beach in Copenhagen, and later moved to other popular beaches and nature areas across Denmark.

Reusable Festival Cup Consumption reduction – Businesses

In 2019, the brewery Tuborg, in cooperation with plastic producer KIFA Plast, four of Denmark's largest music festivals and the NGO Plastic Change, succeeded in setting up a reuse system to serve beer at Danish festivals.

The new system involves reusable plastic cups that customers bring back after use. Cups are then washed on-site in a specially designed, mobile dishwasher that can wash 9,000 cups per hour, before being used again.

When the recycled plastic cups reach the end of their lifespan, they are returned to the supplier, who ensures that the material is recycled.

LØS packaging-free supermarket Consumption reduction – Businesses

In 2016, Franco-Danish former export manager Frederic Hamburger made history by opening LØS market, the first packaging-free supermarket in Denmark.

Here, products are sold without any single-use packaging, so shoppers need to bring their own containers, borrow free containers or buy reusables container in the store. LØS market also has a takeaway concept and is currently working on becoming a franchise with many national outlets.

Reusable Tivoli Cup Consumption reduction – Businesses

Copenhagen

As early as 1998, Copenhagen's amusement park Tivoli Gardens launched a reuse system to serve drinks in a sustainable way.

Drinks are served in reusable cups, with guests paying a DKK 5 deposit. After use, they return the cups to the designated machines and get their deposit back. Staff pick up the cups, wash them and bring them back to the stalls so they can be reused.

The park estimates that this initiative saves the environment around 10 tons of plastic waste each year.

Plastic water bottle-free Aalborg Bans – Public authorities

Aalborg

In September 2020, the municipality of Aalborg chose to phase out bottled water, allowing municipal employees to use only tap water.

The municipality estimates that the initiative will save the environment around DKK 250,000 worth of plastic bottles each year.

Reusable fishing crates Consumption reduction – Businesses

Danish company Pack and Sea has operated a tracking system for reusable fishing crates since 2008. Key to the tracking system's success and sustainability is a cooperation between ten Danish harbours, which has made it possible for the harbours to rent the same green crates. Each crate is equipped with two RFID tags with barcodes and a visual number, meaning that they can easily be registered either by scanning or manually.

Vessels can pick up crates in any Danish harbour, and exporters who buy fish at auctions can return them at any Danish harbour or at one of a wide selection of Pack and Sea facilities in Sweden, Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, the United Kingdom and France.

ESTONIA

“The municipality of Harku, which has just over 15,000 residents, has developed their own reusable cups for use at local events.”

Community mask-sewing **Awareness-raising – NGOs**

The Teeme ära civic action day, organized by Estonian Fund for Nature, takes place every year in spring. The 2020 edition was dedicated to adapting to the Covid-19 pandemic, resulting in a countrywide, community-driven DIY mask-sewing campaign.

Cigarette butt clean-up event **Awareness-raising – Public authorities**

On World Cleanup Day, a clean-up event focused on cigarette butts was organised in Estonia. The campaign was led by the City of Tallinn and the World Cleanup Day, with the main partners being the Port of Tallinn, Tallink, Eckerö Line, Viking Line and Tallinn Airport. Several national celebrities were involved as spokespeople, which amplified communication to the general public.

Green shopping awareness campaign **Awareness-raising – NGOs**

Things Foundation, a collaborative web-based platform that enables its users to learn about the origin, usage, and recycling of man-made objects ran an awareness-raising campaign in September 2020 to draw attention to the amount of packaging we use in our daily lives. The main calls for action were to plan purchases, bring your own box and bag, buy in bulk, or buy less heavily packaged goods.

Plastic-free public events **Bans – Public authorities**

Tallinn

Tallinn has imposed a city-wide ban on the use of single-use plastic packaging at public events. There are still some exemptions for compostable plastics during the transition towards plastic-free alternatives. However, the longer-term plan is to move towards allowing only reusable and refillable products at public events in the city.

Harku's reusable cup scheme **Consumption reduction – Public authorities**

Harku

The municipality of Harku, which has just over 15,000 residents, has developed their own reusable cups for use at local events. A deposit return system (DRS) ensures that consumers return the cups.

National deposit return scheme **Consumption reduction – Businesses**

Eesti Pandipakend, which was founded in 2005, operates the national deposit return system for plastic and glass bottles for soft drinks, bottled water, and beer as well as metal cans.

The collection rate for bottles is over 80%, and most of these go on to be recycled. The percentage of reusable bottles has been dropping in recent years (from around 20% to 12%) due to the fact that drinks producers have increased the use of bottles that are only suitable for recycling.

Eesti Pandipakend also runs a reusable cup service as well and plate and bowl rental for events. They have a stock of over 250,000 cups, which is sufficient for large-scale events in Estonia. A full-service option is available, with collection points at events, as well as a traditional rental and washing service.

Reusable cup rental and washing

Consumption reduction – Businesses

Topsiring, founded in 2014, was the first reusable cup rental system in Estonia. The company offers a wide variety of reusable plastic cups (from teacups to wine glasses), and plans to offer reusable plates, bowls and cutlery in the near future.

Circup is a cup-washing service for events, which allows visitors to rinse their reusable cups on the spot. Their simple, portable washing stations use small water tanks, and operate without electricity using only manual power. Circup have also been developing an additional function that uses UV-C light to disinfect the cleaning area.



Planning green events

Consumption reduction – Businesses

Tartu Nature House published a manual for organisers of green events, available both in Estonian and Russian. They also manage a Facebook group called “Green events” to share best practices on topics like waste prevention and alternatives to single-use plastic products and packaging.

Acento is newly established company offering consulting and practical management for event organisation. Their goal is to increase environmental awareness and reduce waste production at events. A strong emphasis is put on the use of reusable tableware and food/drink containers. Apart from consulting work for event organisers, they are also working towards offering consulting services to local governments on waste management and waste prevention.

Bring Your Own initiatives

Consumption reduction – Businesses

Cafes and gas station chains have started to offer small discounts when consumers bring their own coffee cups.

Supermarket chain **Rimi** has run several campaigns encouraging customers to come with their own container. The chain also manages a Facebook group called “Consume wisely”, where, for example, they invite celebrities to try out different environmentally friendly actions such as BYO and package-free shopping.

Both Rimi and supermarket chain Selver have also placed net bags prominently in their stores as a sustainable alternative to traditional plastic bags.

The organic chain **Biomarket** – present in Estonia's three largest cities – lets shoppers use their own containers when buying dry ingredients, some types of sweets and several cleaning products.



BEPCO returnable packaging

Consumption reduction – Businesses

BEPCO has a mission to develop universal and efficient Returnable Transport Packaging (RTP) systems that can be used to deliver all types of products from producers to retailers.

RTP systems replace one-trip disposable packaging that has negative environmental and economic impact. A reduction in waste and possible landfill charges has immediate cost savings and increases overall profitability. BEPCO are also planning to test reusable primary packaging for food products.

Ilma pood packaging-free shop

Consumption reduction – Businesses

Tallinn

Ilma pood was the second packaging-free shop to be established in Estonia, and the only one still operating. The shop opened in September 2020 in Tallinn and offers both a physical store and an online shop.

Packaging-free online shops

Consumption reduction – Businesses

Estonia has several online stores offering zero waste alternatives, including **Elamisekergus**, **Zero Waste**, **Slow**, **Rohepakend**, **Munt**, and **Veepudel**.

FINLAND

RePack returnable packaging

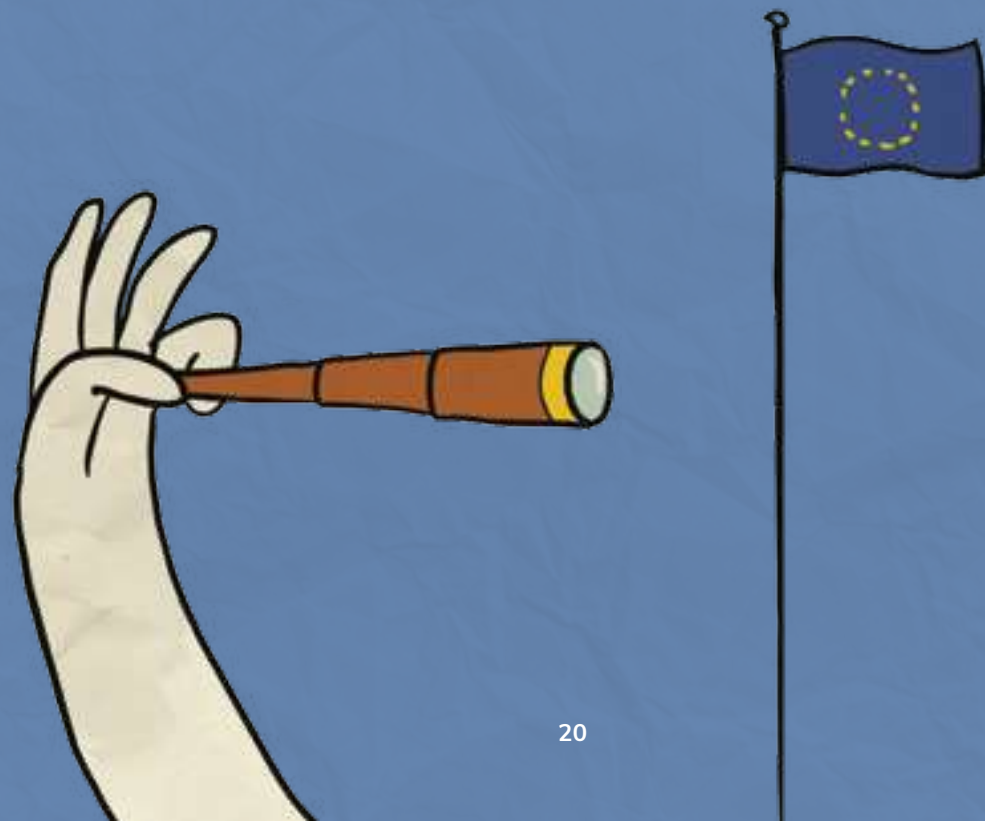
Consumption reduction – Businesses

RePack's reusable and returnable packages come in three adjustable sizes and are designed to fold into letter size when empty so they can be returned to RePack via a regular post box. RePack takes the packaging back, checks it, cleans it and redistributes it for reuse. RePacks are designed to last at least 20 cycles, which is why they are made from durable, long-lasting material that is fully recyclable.

A RePack fee covers the package itself plus a global, empty packaging return so that returning an empty RePack is free from anywhere in the world. This fee can be paid by the retail partner, or by the customer, depending on how the retail partner integrates RePack into their business model.

According to RePack's assessment, their model reduces CO2 emissions by up to 80% when compared to single-use disposable package deliveries. The direct return rate is 75% – some users decide to keep the packaging and reuse it themselves. Some RePacks are returned directly to brands as customer returns; brands can then reuse the packaging for new customer deliveries, saving the need to use yet more single-use packaging.

“According to RePack’s assessment, their model reduces CO2 emissions by up to 80% when compared to single-use disposable package deliveries. The direct return rate is 75% – some users decide to keep the packaging and reuse it themselves.”



FRANCE

“Each spring, 200 volunteers from the French NGO “No Plastic In My Sea” invite the public to mobilise on social media and commit to reducing their plastic consumption.”

National anti-waste law

Bans – Public authorities

The French [Loi Antigaspillage pour l'Economie Circulaire](#) has been pioneering in implementing the EU single-use plastics directive, introducing a series of ambitious initiatives that go beyond the directive's minimum requirements. The main goals of the law include:

- banning all single-use plastic packaging by 2040;
- reducing plastic bottles by 50% by 2030; and
- increasing reusable packaging to reach a goal of 10% by 2027; and
- recycling 100% of plastic packaging by 2025.

In particular, the French law introduces imminent additional bans on plastic confetti, cup lids, single-use plastic packaging for fruit and vegetables, and on the use of single-use plastic in fast-food restaurants and public events. It also mandates that all public buildings open to the general public provide water fountains as of 2022.

All foodware used for food deliveries will have to be reusable by 2022, while foodware used for on-site consumption in cafes and takeaway restaurants will have to be reusable by 2023.

#NoPlasticChallenge

Awareness-raising – NGOs

Each spring, 200 volunteers from the French NGO “No Plastic In My Sea” invite the public to mobilise on social media and commit to reducing their plastic consumption, using the hashtag #NoPlasticChallenge.

As part of the event, 15 daily actions are promoted, all related to reducing or eliminating the use of single-use plastic items, e.g. no disposable cups, no plastic cutlery, no over-packaged goods or single-serve portions, homemade detergents, buy unpackaged, in bulk fruit and vegetables, solid shampoo and use of refillable bottle and reusable bags.

Specific events are also organised involving service providers such as schools and sports centres; companies such as Publicis, Clickandboat, Actes Sud, SAP; and some universities (in the 2020 edition of the challenge). Private businesses that participate can optimise their plastic consumption in offices and also encourage staff to participate individually in the challenge.

A self-evaluation form lets participants measure and compare their plastic consumption at the beginning and at the end of the challenge. Thanks to the use of social media, with people posting eco-tips and inviting others to do so, the event is highly visible, reaching around five million people.



Plastic-free Paris

Bans + Public authorities

The city of Paris is set to become [single-use plastic free](#) by 2024 and has started a consultation project involving several stakeholder working groups to develop a roadmap together with businesses, NGOs and consumer associations.

In the meantime, awareness-raising projects have been developed, such as the promotion of tap water, water fountains – 1,200 fountains are being promoted across the French capital – and sustainable consumption practices.

[Eau de Paris](#) initiated a dialogue with stakeholders for the promotion of tap water and, in partnership with the NGO Surfrider Foundation Europe, developed an awareness-raising project called [Le Paris de l'eau zéro déchet en plastique](#) (the Paris of zero plastic water waste). As a result, 19,550 people signed a manifesto committing to more sustainable behaviour. An Action Tank was also set up to experiment with different solutions for banning plastic water bottles in sectors such as restaurants, hotels, sport events, festivals and schools.

Réseau Vrac bulk sale shop

Consumption reduction – Businesses

The [Réseau Vrac](#) is a trade association set up by an NGO which aims to develop the national network of bulk sale shops in France.

To structure and professionalise the emerging sector, Réseau Vrac provides businesses with training, tailor-made logistical and business solutions, and communication and monitoring services.

Launched by Célia Rennesson in 2016, the network now includes 465 independent shops and over 1,400 professionals both within and outside France. Since 2018, it has organised an annual trade fair for the sector which [attracted 100 exhibitors and 2,000 visitors in September 2020](#). The network is also actively engaged with public authorities to advance a progressive national legislative framework for bulk sales.

To build on this success, Réseau Vrac Belgique was launched in 2019, and 260 professionals have already been identified in Belgium.

Drastic on plastic charter

Consumption reduction – Businesses

[Drastic on Plastic](#) is a support service to help festivals reduce or phase out single-use plastics in their events. It is based on a British initiative launched in 2018 by the UK-based Association of Independent Festivals (AIF) and the [Raw Foundation](#).

Officially launched on in January 2020, the French project was developed in 2019 by the R2D2, a local regional network for sustainable development, and the Collectif des festivals, the regional trade association for festivals.

The [Drastic on Plastic website](#) and a [dedicated guide](#) were developed in 2019 and made available online to festivals organisers and the general public. In total, 60 festivals have already signed up to the [Drastic on Plastic charter](#).

Ecocup reusable cups

Consumption reduction – Businesses

[Ecocup](#) is a French social integration enterprise based in Céret that sells and rents out reusable cups for festivals, trade fairs and other national events across the country, such as the Tour de France and the 2015 COP 21.

Milubo reusable containers

Consumption reduction – Businesses

Milubo provides restaurants and event organisers with an innovative solution for reusable containers and cups. On a daily basis, they provide and collect food containers (Milubo box) and plastic cups (Milubo cup) to be washed and reused.

A deposit return system (DRS) has been set up to collect and reuse both containers and cups, and consumers can return their used cup or container to any partner coffee shop.

FRANCE CONT.

Uzaje packaging reuse solutions **Consumption reduction - Businesses**

This expanding [social enterprise](#) offers a wide range of services to professional caterers, school or staff canteens, restaurants, food producers and food distributors across the country. Services include industrial washing centres, as well as logistical solutions for the provision, collection and transport of reusable and sustainable takeaway food and drink containers and cutlery.

Many options are available such as in-store communication for shops, and the set-up of a dedicated deposit return system to collect used containers for caterers or takeaway restaurants, or of an externalised washing service for canteens etc. The company also offers tailor-made support to businesses to help them evaluate the financial impact of their reuse model.

Biocoop, the Naked Shop, Delicorner, Franprix, Citeo, the Agency for ecological transition (ADEME) and other public authorities are among their clients.

Reconcil takeaway containers **Consumption reduction - Businesses**

Paris

This young [French SME](#) provides a network of Parisian takeaway restaurants with a customised solution for the large-scale provision, collection and washing of reusable food containers.

A deposit return system is implemented to ensure containers are being returned, with a deposit included in the sale price of takeaway meals. The company has also run an [awareness-raising blog](#) on its online platform since 2017. Reconcil is part of the national network “Réseau Consigne”.

Zero-waste company restaurants **Consumption reduction - Businesses**

[Marmeat](#) offers ready-to-operate sustainable corporate restaurants for big companies (over 150 staff) with a zero waste, responsible approach and reusable food and drink containers. In addition, all reusable food containers are made of glass, cutlery is stainless steel or edible, and the company makes a plastic-free commitment.

Jean Bouteille bulk sales **Consumption reduction - Businesses**

[Jean Bouteille](#) is a pioneering bulk sales and refill service company for liquids, based in Lille in the north of France. It combines its services with a deposit return system.

The company has announced the upgrading of its Gravity fountain to dispense products such as marmalades, ketchup, mustard, mayonnaise, spreads and tomato sauce. As of 2021, fresh products such as dairy products, juices, yogurts and liquid cosmetics should also be provided.

Drive tout nu bulk sales **Consumption reduction - Businesses**

Toulouse area

The [Drive tout nu](#), or “the naked drive” promotes bulk sales and local production through an online shop with no physical outlets. Reusable containers made of sustainable materials like glass or canvas have replaced plastic for packaging, and thanks to a “reverse deposit system”, customers get a discount when they return the containers.

Drive tout nu sells products from over 140 local producers, sees 2,500 food containers reused each week, offers a choice of local collection points, and engages with the local community via a dedicated [blog](#).

Vrac'n Roll bulk sales **Consumption reduction - Businesses**

Lyon area

This zero waste [e-commerce bulk sales start-up](#) was created in 2016 by Sarah Benasman and delivers organic products in glass, paper or reusable plastic containers by bike in the Lyon area. Customers can also pick up products themselves. Food containers are provided in return for a deposit, and are collected to be washed and reused.

Vrac'n Roll has offered a national service since 2019, with parcel delivery to 15,000 collection points using special bulk sale parcels that can be reused.

Since 2020, the same service is [available in Belgium](#) thanks to local partners.

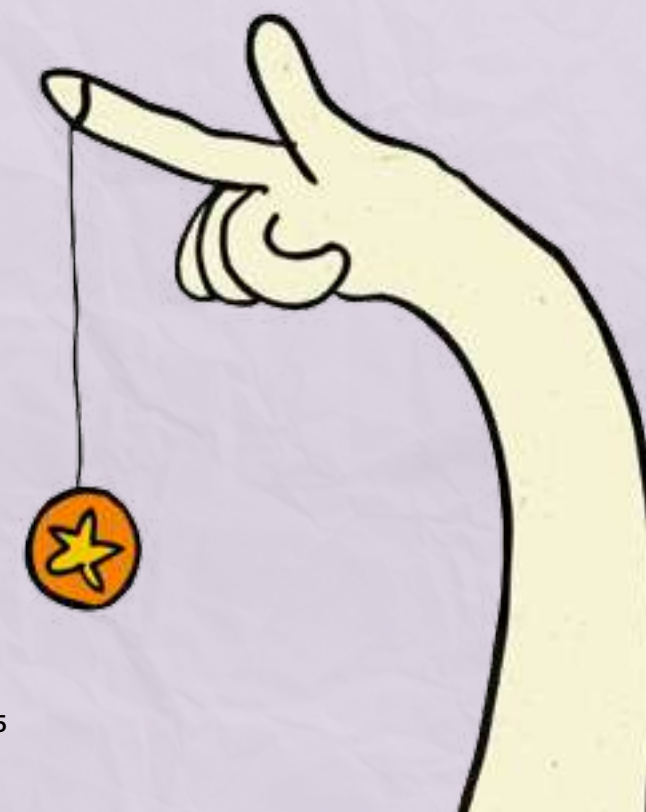
Terracycle's Loop programme **Consumption reduction - Businesses**

Launched in 2019 by [Terracycle](#) together with the Carrefour distribution group, the Loop programme lets shoppers buy a wide range of products from well-known and smaller brands in reusable containers with a deposit return system.

Until now, the programme has operated online only, with brands providing refills via retail partners' e-commerce sites, and Terracycle looking after the collection, cleaning and refilling of the reusable containers.

Following Loop's success, several retail giants like Tesco and Carrefour have revealed plans to bring the Loop system into their stores by mid-2021.

“Uzaje packaging reuse solutions also offers tailor-made support to businesses to help them evaluate the financial impact of their reuse model.”



GERMANY

“To date, 2,700 business partners are involved with RECUP in 450 cities across the country.”

Non-smoking beaches

Awareness-raising – Public authorities

In 2009, beach sections on the island of Rügen were declared non-smoking beaches for the first time. The Kurverwaltung (spa administration) of the Baltic resort Göhren works in close cooperation with the beach chair rental companies, who remind people about the cigarette ban or distribute beach ashtrays on beaches without a smoking ban.

Spülbar mobile dish-washing

Awareness-raising – Schools and universities

Kiel

The “Spülbar” is a mobile dish-washing station, consisting of an industrial dishwasher on a cargo bike. Students following the master’s degree Sustainability, Society and the Environment at the Christian-Albrechts-University of Kiel, Germany, designed the project, which made it possible to use reusable coffee cups and plates at the local farmers’ market.

The water needed by the dishwasher comes from portable canisters, which means the “Spülbar” is completely mobile and autonomous. The Kiel waste management company had sponsored 100 coffee cups for the project. The project therefore has its own coffee cups but also offers to wash returnable cups from the participating market stalls.

Plastic-conscious accommodation

Awareness-raising – NGOs

In cooperation with [the National Park Partner Initiative](#), holiday apartments and holiday homes or guest rooms are awarded the “plastic-conscious accommodation” label if they are equipped and furnished with a special awareness package for guests with tips for avoiding plastic. The three award levels bronze, silver and gold reflect different degrees of plastic reduction, from the first steps to an almost plastic-free accommodation.

Regional reusable coffee cup rules

Consumption reduction – Public authorities

The Ministry of the Environment of the Schleswig-Holstein region is encouraging national food and catering businesses to accept reusable coffee cups. In a “[Recommendation for the filling of reusable containers with hot drinks in accordance with hygienic standards in bakeries, coffee houses, service areas and service providers in company catering](#)”, the government advocates the use of reusable containers and provides businesses with clear instructions on the practicalities. The publication aims to reduce doubts or barriers that businesses may have on the handling of reusable cups.

REBOWL takeaway containers

Consumption reduction – Businesses

Launched by the founders of the RECUP project, [REBOWL](#) is a deposit return system (DRS) for reusable food containers, designed to replace single-use takeaway and delivery food packaging. It is available all over Germany.

Customers can borrow a REBOWL – a BPA-free polypropylene bowl with a thermoplastic rubber lid – from participating restaurants and cafes for a EUR 5 deposit. Once returned, bowls are washed and used for the next customer.

VYTAL takeaway containers

Consumption reduction – Businesses

VYTAL is a [reuse/return system](#) for food containers available for restaurants, cafes, catering companies and workplace cafeterias in several German cities. Customers can find participating outlets through an app, which is also used to rent reusable, BPA-free containers instead of disposable ones when ordering food for takeaway or delivery.

The bowls can then be returned to the restaurant/ cafe or, in the case of cafeterias/caterers, can be left in designated “return boxes” that are emptied by VYTAL.

GERMANY CONT.

Packaging-free shopping label

Awareness-raising – NGOs

This label for packaging-free shopping was initially launched by the Munich-based NGO Rehab Republic, and can now be found in other areas of the country.

It identifies shops and restaurants where goods can be bought without disposable packaging and where customers can bring their own reusable containers.

Participating shops, restaurants, cafes, groceries shops and supermarkets can be recognised by the “Einmal Ohne, Bitte” sticker in their windows and counters, and can also be found through an interactive online map.

RECUP national share system

Consumption reduction – Businesses

The German company RECUP has implemented a national share system for the collection, washing and refill of takeaway beverage cups. Consumers pay a EUR 1 deposit when they order their drink in a reusable cup, and the cups can be returned in any other participating shop or restaurant where the deposit is then refunded. To date, 2,700 business partners are involved in 450 cities across the country.

Cup for Cup return-reuse system

Consumption reduction – Businesses

North Sea coast

Cup for Cup is an open return-reuse system for takeaway coffee. They offer solutions and support to business caterers, festivals and events, as well as to municipalities and communities who want to reduce the use of single-use coffee cups in favour of reusable and refillable cups.

Many bars and restaurants on the North Sea coast have switched from disposable drinking straws to reusable options. Some restaurants use engraved and reusable metal straws that can also be bought as souvenirs. Other owners use paper or “pasta” straws.

Freiburg reusable coffee cups

Consumption reduction – Public authorities

In 2017, the city of Freiburg, Germany, launched a reusable coffee cup scheme to reduce disposable coffee cup waste. The cup, made from heat-resistant and dishwasher-safe plastic, can be collected from participating outlets, including the city’s university cafes, in exchange for a EUR 1 deposit.

Customers can use it up to 400 times before returning it to one of the participating outlets, which can be recognised by a green sticker in their window, and get their deposit back. The cafe or shop washes and disinfects the cup themselves so the next customer can use it.

The initiative has been very successful and has been replicated in other German cities such as Munich with the RECUP project.

Municipal deposit return systems

Consumption reduction – Public authorities

Some German municipalities have actively promoted the introduction of a returnable cup deposit system and supported it in various ways:

- The Hanseatic City of Greifswald aided the adoption of a deposit cup system by paying the system fee for participating partners for a one-year test period. This made Greifswald a pioneer throughout Germany.
- The City of Hamburg set itself the goal of introducing a city-wide returnable cup system in 2018 and was looking for a private operator. Companies were invited to submit their concept for a privately supported deposit-based cup system via public tender. The start-up financing was a one-time payment of up to EUR 30,000. In addition to long-term economical operation, ecological and functional aspects were also important criteria for the application.
- With the campaign “Refill instead of throwing away”, the Hanseatic and University City of Rostock calls on locals and tourists alike to avoid waste and to make the city cleaner. For example, school canteens and the Rostock sailing club RSC 92 were equipped with reusable cups. The Rostock tram operator also received 100 returnable cups from the city administration for tram drivers to avoid the use of disposable cups. In addition, the city’s Waste Regulations request the priority use of reusable tableware at events and in public spaces.

Municipal green procurement

Consumption reduction – Public authorities

Hamburg

In 2016, the senate of the city of Hamburg introduced mandatory “Green Procurement Guidelines” for public procurement. The guidelines impose more eco-friendly choices of products and a ban on the purchase of a certain number of items, such as plastic bottles and coffee capsules.

Following the ban on single-use bottles – including those eligible for deposit returns – in public buildings, green alternatives such as drinking-water fountains and jugs are now provided. Reusable cups were introduced in several public institutions, which saves up to 675,000 single-use plastic cups a year.

As well as being more environmentally friendly, purchasing longer-lifetime, reusable products is less expensive than repeatedly buying limited-lifecycle products.

Baltic Sea Ashtray pilot

Awareness-raising – Public authorities

The Baltic Sea Ashtray aims to combat the most common form of waste on the beaches of Warnemünde, Germany: cigarette butts. This pilot project organised by the Küsten Union Deutschland e.V. (Coastal Union Germany) and the Rostock and Warnemünde Tourist Office encourages smokers to dispose of their cigarettes in dedicated bins by giving them the chance to “vote” on a topical question such as “Which soccer team plays better?”.

With one windowed container for each answer, public opinion is captured as the number of discarded butts increases. The questions are changed regularly and the public can even submit their suggestions online on the marine waste portal.

In the city of Neustadt, on the Baltic coast, the tourism service and the city marketing department were also given six of these ballot bins for beaches and the city centre. In addition, 15,000 portable beach ashtrays were distributed to visitors by the beach guard and the DLRG life-saving association in the 2019 season.



Packbuddy BYO campaign

Consumption reduction – Public authorities

Bremen

The Packbuddy campaign in the city of Bremen encourages people to bring their own containers or cups from home when buying takeaway food and drinks. Caterers who participate in the campaign label their establishment with a BYO sticker to show customers that they offer their products as refills.

Firework-free beaches

Bans – Public authorities

Baltic Sea

On the island of Usedom in the Baltic Sea, the three “Kaiserbäder” health and sea resorts of Ahlbeck, Heringsdorf and Bansin have had fireworks-free beach sections since New Year’s Eve 2018.

After 97% of respondents to an online survey agreed to not have private fireworks displays, the municipal council cleared the way for the project, and the move has been well received. In addition, on New Year’s Eve, beach visitors are further motivated to throw their rubbish in the containers provided thanks to Kaiserbäder’s pledge to donate EUR 0.50 to the project “Oceans without plastic” for every kilo of rubbish in the containers – around five tons of waste are collected during a typical New Year’s Eve.

PooPick plastic-free waste bag

Consumption reduction – Public authorities

The PooPick is a plastic-free, 100% ecological dog excrement “bag” made from 70% recycled paper; the non-recycled part is made from wood residues. Thanks to a clever folding technique, the PooPick fits into any pocket before use and is available in three sizes.

In 2018, the island community of Wangerooge replaced plastic dog excrement bags with the “PooPick”. These were initially distributed free of charge to all guests arriving on the island with dogs. Also, at the dog beach, free PooPicks are given out along with the beach chairs to encourage visitors to dispose of dog excrement correctly. PooPick can also be purchased at the tourist information centre for a small fee, and they are also available in PooPick’s online shop, where island vacationers get a discount.



GREECE

Clean up the Med project

Awareness-raising – NGOs

For 24 consecutive years, NGO MEDSOS has been running the “Clean Up the Med” project which includes:

- clean-ups during the months of May and June with schools, municipalities, environmental and athletic associations, companies and an average of 15,000 volunteers across the country; and
- collection of data on the composition of the litter collected during clean-ups, including data on single-use packaging and microplastics.

Full results of the project can be found at <http://medsos.gr/medsos/2008-08-12-07-14-43/2008-08-28-11-24-19/2008-08-28-11-55-31/1886--2019-.html>

Sea4All schools programme

Awareness-raising – NGOs

The two-year Sea4All Project, running from 2019–2021, aims to help school-age students and their teachers become more conscious of the effects of marine pollution – with a focus on oil spills and floating plastic debris – through the development of technology-based educational materials.

The project brings together seven partner organisations, including Archipelagos Institute of Marine Conservation, leading universities and research institutes from across the EU, education authorities, and ICT experts.

Research by the Archipelagos Institute of Marine Conservation on marine litter and on risk analyses of shipping accidents contributed significantly to the [educational materials](#) that were developed as part of the project.

Plastic bag free Alonissos

Awareness-raising – NGOs

Run by MEDSOS in cooperation with the Hellenic Society for the Study and Protection of the Monk Seal (MOM) and the municipality of Alonissos, the [Plastic-bag free Alonissos project](#) was funded by Thalassa Foundation. NGO Surfrider Foundation highlighted the project in their *Good practices guide: Banning single-use plastic bags*.

Activities included:

- 11 clean-ups;
- distribution of posters and leaflets to raise awareness among the general public;
- environmental education activities targeting all local schools;
- participatory events involving stakeholders, such as questionnaires to shop-owners, meetings at the town hall etc.; and
- door-to-door distribution of fabric shopping bags by pupils and volunteers.

Results of the project can be found at http://medsos.gr/medsos/images/stories/PDF/ALONISSOS_LAYMAN_REPORT.pdf

Waste prevention education

Awareness-raising – NGOs

The [Ecological Recycling Society](#) launched an innovative “Prevention for Students” project in collaboration with the municipalities of Agioi Anargyroi-Kamatero, Zakynthos, Hersonissos, Kozani and the Regional Union of Attica Municipalities. The goal was to improve information and raise public awareness on waste prevention, which is one of the general objectives of the National Strategic Waste Prevention Plan.

The main deliverables of the project included a waste prevention guidebook for students and teachers, a PowerPoint presentation for schools, a poster, and a TV ad. Prevention workshops were also organised.

As well as informing school communities about waste prevention (with a focus on single-use plastics) and wasteful consumption, the project also encouraged students to take part in waste prevention actions and alternative waste management actions.



LIFE DEBAG against plastic bags

Awareness-raising – NGOs

The [Ecological Recycling Society](#) joined forces with MEDSOS, the University of Patras, TERRA NOVA and the Research University Institute of Sustainable Development and Human Resources to implement an integrated information and awareness-raising campaign to reduce plastic bag pollution in the marine environment. The campaign was carried out at national level, with a specific pilot at local level on the Greek island of Syros.

The main objective of [LIFE DEBAG](#) was to change consumer behaviour. In particular, the project aimed to increase knowledge and create awareness of the problem of plastic bag use and disposal at national level, to ensure a sense of public ownership to build support for relevant measures, to improve educational efforts directed towards teachers and pupils, and to contribute to changing Greece to a sustainable society.

On Syros, the project conducted a rigorous assessment of the marine litter load on the island’s beaches and seafloor using drones, towed underwater cameras and underwater remote operated vehicles (ROV).

At national level, an intensive information campaign was developed, involving TV and radio, printed publications and electronic newsletters, and social media, which succeeded in reaching approximately 600,000 people. A national voluntary agreement was reached with five supermarket chains (representing more than 50% of Greece’s market share), containing a variety of measures to reduce plastic bag consumption.

The project also organised seven stakeholder consultation forums that brought all the pertinent stakeholders together for the first time. Networking activities involved 95 groups in Greece and six other EU countries. The project finally developed a Replication Handbook, which summarises the steps interested parties can take to reduce consumption of plastic bags and other single-use plastic items.

Return to tap water campaign

Awareness-raising – NGOs

Athens

Since March 2015, [MEDSOS](#) has run the “Return to Tap Water” campaign in Athens, which aims to:

- promote the value of tap water as a public good and the right to water in public places;
- promote the use of tap water in businesses and schools;
- reduce plastic bottles as marine litter that ends up on our coasts; and
- disseminate and promote alternatives for drinking water (public fountains, refillable bottles) while avoiding single-use plastic bottles.

‘In My Cup’ network

Consumption reduction – NGOs

Since 2018, Greenpeace volunteers in Greece have operated In my cup, a network of small coffee shops around the country that aim to promote reuse systems.

The coffee shops that join the network offer a discount of their choice to customers that buy their coffee and beverages using their own reusable cup. In 2020, the number of participating coffee shops reached 550.

Staramaki wheat-based straws

Consumption reduction – Businesses

Kilkis

[Staramaki](#) is a social cooperative based in Kilkis, a rural region of Greece, that uses the most widely produced local product, wheat, to create a viable eco-friendly alternative to single-use plastic straws. As well as supporting the local economy by creating an alternative market avenue for the region’s agricultural output and creating employment opportunities, the project also promotes social cohesion.

In addition, its circular economy business model goes one step further: the straws are not only sold, but also traded for coffee residue, which is then mixed with the remaining wheat, in collaboration with FoodTreasure, to produce bio pellets and briquettes for heating. The aim of this exchange is to engage the local society in waste reduction, and to change people’s mindsets about what actually constitutes waste.



HUNGARY

River clean-up races

Awareness-raising – NGOs

The Hungarian initiative **Plastic Cup** (PET Kupa) has greatly contributed to raising awareness of the plastic pollution of the River Tisza. Plastic Cup is a non-profit, non-governmental initiative launched in 2013 to clean up the Tisza and its floodplains from the plastic waste brought there by floods. It was initiated by a filmmaking NGO, Filmjungle Society, who is specialised in wildlife and conservation documentaries.

This unique initiative uses waste itself to fight back against the pollution – the Plastic Cup started out as a race (named after the prestigious America's Cup) where teams compete in waste collection as they float down the river on self-built boats made from waste. Part of the secret to Plastic Cup's success is that it turns a difficult and potentially dangerous task into a fun and inspiring team-building activity.

After eight years, there are now multiple races each year on both the Tisza and Bodrog rivers, as well as shorter team-building activities. The communication around these events was a key way to reach more people and inform them about the environmental impacts, with each event and milestone being filmed and promoted on social media.

Over the years, Plastic Cup has grown from a clean-up initiative to a partnership with national-level decision makers, sponsoring companies and local communities. Waste management and water professionals have joined the team of nearly 2,000 committed volunteers. These "Plastic Pirates" are ready for action not only on the Upper Tisza but also at the Tisza Lake, all year long, wherever, whenever needed. The community has not only removed around 120 tons of waste from the river, but has also sorted and recycled it. The Plastic Cup develops ways to upcycle riverine waste and create products.

Due to the systematic mapping done by the volunteers, knowledge about the location and types of waste dumps along the Tisza River has increased. These dumps are carried downstream by the river in times of flood, spread across the floodplain, and fed by the illegal landfill sites upstream. The latter are mostly in Ukraine, where basic waste collection and management infrastructures are lacking.

Plastic Cup activities have now gone international, with projects covering the whole Danube Basin and also including Ukraine to try to stop the pollution at the source. Activities are also carried out on the Bodrog river, a tributary of the Tisza, with the involvement of the relevant water directorate and a local partnership.

Recup and Cupler systems

Consumption reduction – NGOs

Since 2009, the Greenzone Environmental Association has been introducing and promoting the Újrapohár/Recup system to festivals, corporate events and clubs. For example, they presented the Recup washing service, which uses mobile industrial dishwashers, to a festival that welcomes over 50,000 people.

Thanks to Greenzone's involvement, the national reusable cup production has also increased. The NGO started out with grant-supported Recups, which they produced themselves. Later they supported the expansion of a Hungarian enterprise that specialises in producing Recups.

From 2010 to 2014, the NGO also ran a Recup rental service which they intended to revive before the pandemic situation.

In the last ten years, at least 1,000 events gave preference to Recups over single-use cups, which has led to tons of avoided waste. As Recups are mainly used to serve cold drinks, Greenzone recently started to also support the Cupler system, a closed coffee cup system founded in 2019.

Reusable nappy rental

Consumption reduction – Businesses

A baby that wears single-use nappies from birth until they are potty-trained produces 1.5 tons of waste. Greenzone Environmental Association accepted the challenge to reduce this form of waste across Hungary by informing families about zero waste alternatives to single-use nappies. They did this through presentations, brochures, and by sharing good practices.

The association started a reusable nappy rental system in 2019. Renting a package lets parents try out different types of reusable nappies before buying them. To support national businesses, the packages only contain nappies made by Hungarian WAHMs (Work At Home Mums).

During the workshops, other reusable products are also presented, such as washable wet wipes and reusable menstrual products.



IRELAND

National Waste Action Plan

Bans – Public authorities

In 2020, the Irish government released its [new Waste Action Plan](#) with provisions to:

- institute a “latte levy” on single-use coffee cups as of 2022 to incentivise the use of reusable alternatives. This measure should also extend to other cold drinks cups;
- introduce bans on condiment and sugar sachets, small hotel toiletries, disposable plastic cups (starting with a trial banning them first for on-site consumption in selected towns, higher education institutions and other transport/commercial centres) and non-medical wipes;
- introduce measures to the unnecessary use of plastic cups (such as in sit-in cafes and large-scale events) and to oblige retailers to offer a price reduction to consumers bringing reusable cups;
- set up a deposit return system (DRS) for plastic bottles and aluminium cans by the end of 2022, in close collaboration with the food and drink industries, retailers, waste collectors and treatment facilities.

While Member States are not allowed to stop packaging being placed on the market, the EU single-use plastics directive does give them the discretion to ban packaging items under a notifiable procedure in accordance with Directive (EU) 2015/1535. Using this mechanism, Ireland has committed to banning a further range of single-use plastic items.

There are also specific provisions in the plan to research and promote reusable alternatives in partnership with stakeholders (e.g. IBEC, RAI, ISME, EPA), to stop “buy one get one free” promotions in supermarkets, and to make producers pay for 80% of the waste collection and management costs of their products/packaging under Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) schemes.

Latte levy

Consumption reduction – Public authorities

As of 2022, Ireland will impose a “latte levy” of EUR 0.25 cent on single-use coffee cups, including compostable cups. The income raised from the scheme will support the development of reuse systems.

In the longer term, additional environmental levies will also be imposed for cold drinks and other single-use plastic containers.

In the meantime, Ireland has committed to the following proposals:

- Trialling a total elimination of disposable coffee cups in selected towns, higher education institutions and other transport/commercial centres.
- Introducing measures to ban unnecessary use of disposable coffee cups (such as in sit-in cafes) and to oblige retailers to offer a discount to consumers who use reusable cups.
- Education and awareness programmes.
- An eventual full ban on disposable cups.

Conscious Cup campaign

Consumption reduction – NGOs

The [Conscious Cup](#) campaign was launched in 2016 by a small group of concerned citizens who met through the Zero Waste Ireland Facebook Group and decided to take action to reduce, and eventually eliminate, disposable coffee cups in Ireland.

It encourages both independent cafes and chains to incentivise the use of reusable cups by offering a reward or discount to customers who bring their own cups. Participating cafes can be identified thanks to a window sticker and can also be found via a dedicated map on the campaign’s website.

Plastic-free week

Awareness-raising – Public authorities

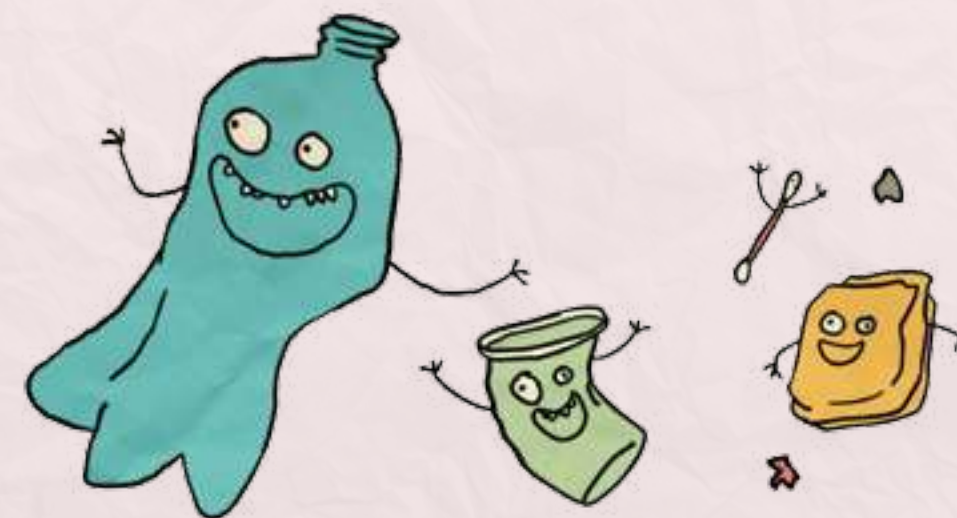
Galway

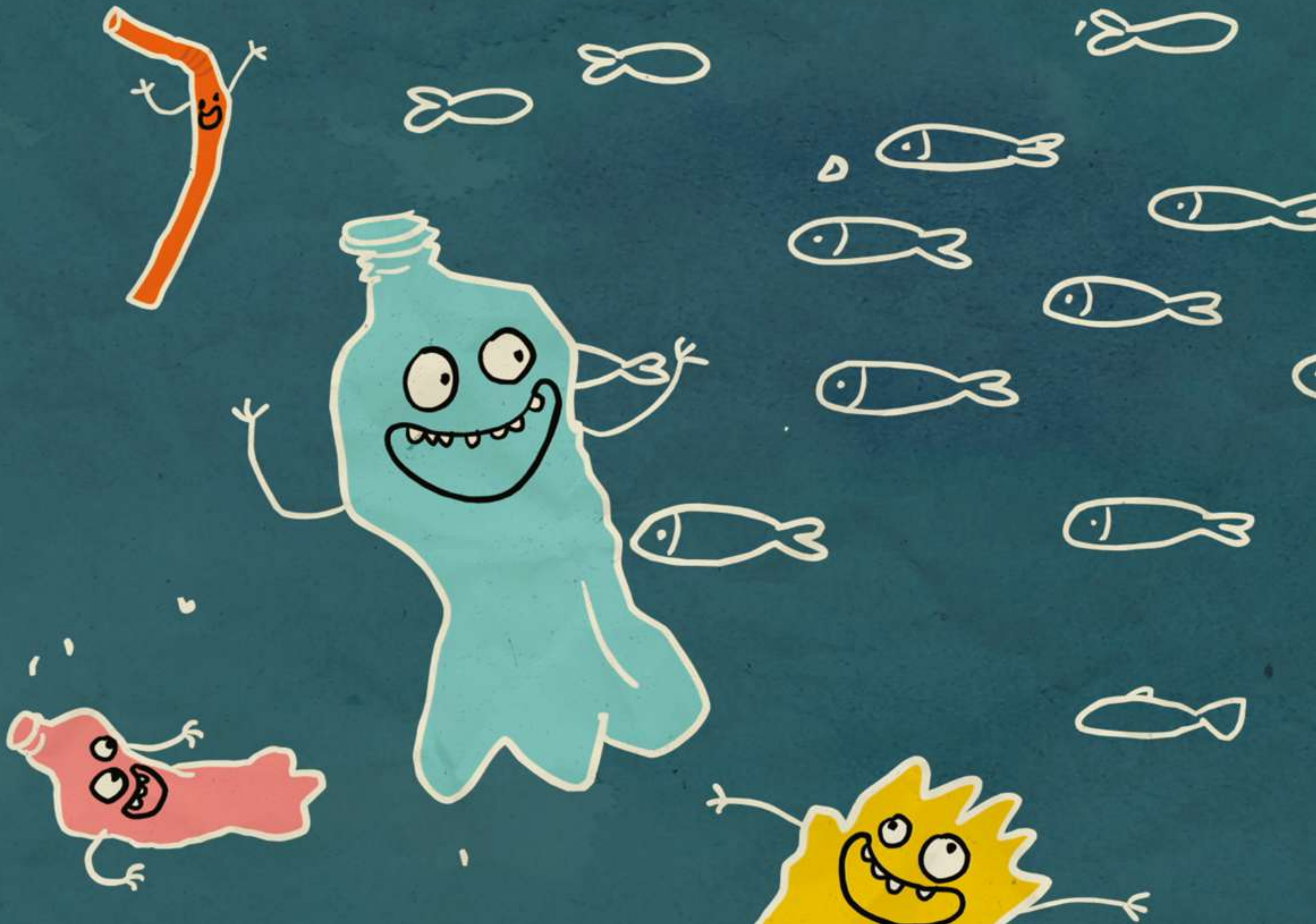
In February 2018, the City of Galway launched [Plastic Free Week](#) to raise public awareness about the marine pollution caused by single-use plastics. The initiative, spearheaded by the city’s mayor, Pearce Flannery, was supported by a host of personalities – including local rugby players, actors and a Michelin-starred chef – who pledged to reduce their plastic consumption and encouraged citizens to get involved.

Everyone participating received a “zero-waste” kit comprising reusable alternatives, such as a reusable drinking bottle, to help them complete the challenge. Local schools helped spread the message and implemented best practices thanks to an educational guide drawn up by the City Hall. The challenge was widely publicised over social media.

Galway’s efforts and exemplary behaviour sent the powerful message that it is possible to put an end to the use of single-use plastic, in particular plastic bottles, and that all levels of society are concerned. The next phase is likely to be a change in the city’s public procurement.

“As of 2022, Ireland will impose a “latte levy” of EUR 0.25 cent on single-use coffee cups, including compostable cups. The income raised from the scheme will support the development of reuse systems.”





ITALY

“The Environment Minister launched the plastic-free challenge in 2018 to encourage municipalities and regions to eliminate several single-use plastic products from public spaces.”

Regional Plastic Free Challenge Bans – Public authorities

Since January 2019, Italy has imposed a national ban on the production and selling of single-use plastic cotton buds.

Anticipating the application of the EU “Single Use Plastic” directive, the Environment Minister Sergio Costa launched the “Plastic Free Challenge” to encourage municipalities and regions to eliminate several single-use plastic products from specific public places, such as municipal offices, school canteens, shops, festivals, fairs and markets.

To date, over 50 municipalities and 15 regions of Italy have already risen to the challenge by issuing local laws in 2019 and 2020 that prohibit the use of disposable plastic products (plates, glasses, cutlery, bags, straws, crockery) and replace them with reusable and refill systems, or, when these are not available, certified compostable materials.

The regions which took up the Plastic Free Challenge include:

- The Marche region: Regional law no. 27, adopted in March 2017, aims to reduce the production of waste derived from the use of disposable plastic products, such as cotton buds, straws, plastic plates and cutlery, balloon sticks, food containers (either for immediate consumption or for takeaway), drinks containers in expanded polystyrene and their lids. The law indicates March 31, 2020 as the ultimate limit to have stocks of such products. The prohibition is mostly aimed at public but also private bodies: the region, provinces and municipalities, accredited public and private health facilities, universities, public education and education institutions, anyone who carries out an economic activity in the state-owned area, and events that make use of regional contributions.
- The Friuli Venezia Giulia region: The region, through regional law no. 36, decided to permanently prohibit the use of disposable plastics within the offices of regional administrations, instrumental bodies and wholly owned subsidiaries. The ban will not only cover offices, but also all events promoted by the region.
- The Valle d'Aosta region: With the resolution of the Regional Council no. 731, the region imposed a ban on disposable plastic objects within all its administrative structures starting with bottles in February 2019. Plates and glasses have been progressively replaced by biodegradable alternatives.
- The Tuscany region: In June 2019, the Tuscany Region approved regional law no. 37 which prohibits the use and marketing of disposable plastic products in all municipal and state-owned properties, from beaches, parks, and protected areas, to the festivals, fairs and events organised for the region. The law allowed for warehouse stocks to be exhausted, provided this was completed by 31 December 2019.





ITALY CONT.

Municipal water houses **Consumption reduction – Public authorities**

Italy has a well-developed network of over 4,000 municipal “water houses”, typically run by local water service suppliers, that provide both still and sparkling water. Some municipalities charge a small amount for the service, e.g. a few euro cents per litre, which still makes this a cheaper option than bottled water; others adopt a maximum volume per person per week, which can be controlled through a dedicated card.

The practice, which started around ten years ago, has succeeded in making people drink tap water again, which in most situations is perfectly safe. The water houses use the same tap water as is available in homes, and mayors use this fact to promote tap water use at home.

The city of Milan currently has 22 water houses – soon to increase to 40 – delivering seven million litres a year, saving some five million single-use bottles.

Larger cities also have dedicated programmes with water fountains scattered across the city. For example, Rome has 80 water “kiosks”, and Florence has a network of water fountains in Florence, which are indicated on an online map.

Handbook for municipalities **Bans – Public authorities**

In 2019, NGOs Legambiente and Chimica Verde Bionet joined forces to develop a handbook to assist municipalities that want to develop local plastic-free strategies and local laws.

The handbook focuses on consumption reduction, reuse, awareness-raising, and refers to the measures of the EU single-use plastics directive. It walks public administrations through the process of implementing local bans and measures using a comprehensive approach and involving all relevant stakeholders.

The NGOs do not intend the handbook to be a static document but rather an evolving one that they will regularly update in light of new best practices. The handbook currently includes a series of actions that municipalities can take both in the short and long term, including local single-use plastic bans, green public procurement practices and awareness-raising campaigns.

Terna Plastic Free initiative **Consumption reduction – NGOs**

Legambiente establishes partnerships and projects with large Italian companies to help them become more sustainable. Their collaboration with national electricity grid operator Terna aims to help the company identify the processes needed for the gradual elimination of single-use plastics and for their recycling in the company’s workplaces. A best practices guide has been produced.

As Terna’s website mentions, “*The Terna Plastic Free initiative was created and implemented in order to reduce consumption of single-use plastic as much as possible in all locations, first and foremost at our headquarters at Via Galvani in Rome, where over a thousand people work.*”

The main targets of the initiative have been Terna’s canteen and cafe, events with catering, and break rooms. Water dispensers have been installed, replacing PET water bottles, and glass has replaced many single-use plastic items in the cafe and for event catering.

Environmental consultancy AzzeroCO2 calculated the environmental impact reduction of the initiative using the Life Cycle Assessment method. The use of water dispensers made the most significant contribution to reducing emissions (21.5 tonnes of CO2eq), followed by the introduction of a bread dispenser in the canteen (saving 228 kg of polypropylene waste per year). Replacing single-use water bottles by a water dispenser and reusable bottles led to annual savings of 3,700 kg in PET waste.



ITALY CONT.

“Plastop” for plastic bottle-free schools **Awareness-raising – Schools and Universities**

The “Plastop” project by the University of Bologna community aims to limit the use of disposable plastic, specifically plastic bottles. The university started the project in 2018 by implementing various strategies including:

- the production of reusable metal water bottles that were distributed free of charge to students and administrative and teaching staff;
- the installation of natural and sparkling water dispensers at a controlled price; and
- infographics that convey sustainability messages through stickers to be placed in strategic locations in schools and universities.

In Rome, the Roma Tre University distributed 30,000 steel water bottles for free, with the initiative “The message is the bottle”. Moreover, the regional council of Lazio has allocated EUR 500,000 to finance other initiatives aimed at combatting the use of single-use plastic. A call for tenders will be published to support the purchase of eco-compactors to recover and recycle materials, and the launch of projects for the progressive elimination of containers and other disposable plastic products in all school locations.

The municipality of Padova, adhering to the “Plastic Free Challenge” campaign launched by the Ministry of the Environment is working to reduce the use of disposable plastics from all primary and middle schools by giving all students a water bottle.

The University of Catania has set itself the goal of distributing 2,500 water bottles to university staff and 9,000 to students. It plans to install 60 natural and sparkling water supply points, including a water house.

Following the “Milano Plastic Free” initiative launched by the mayor, the municipality of Milano distributed 100,000 reusable bottles, 40,000 of which were destined for middle school children and 60,000 for elementary school children.

The municipality of Brescia, A2a and Unibs started an initiative that foresees the distribution of 7,500 aluminium water bottles in 29 middle schools in 2020, while 17,000 will be distributed students at the University of Brescia.

Nearly 2,600 reusable bottles were distributed in the municipality of Florence. This is an important element of the plan that Publiacqua, in collaboration with the municipality of Florence and the other municipal administrations, has put in place to bring tap water to schools.

On the initiative of the Amalfi Coast Tourist District, 5,000 Tritan water bottles were purchased and distributed to the students of the Amalfi Coast schools. Tritan is a last-generation plastic polymer that does not contain chemical or toxic substances, and that is resistant to large temperature changes. For this reason, it is dishwasher safe and can be reused without fears over hygiene. According to data released by the Tourist District, the use of a water bottle of this kind reduces carbon dioxide emissions in the atmosphere, with each Tritan bottle saving the emission of around 80 g of CO₂.

Plastic-free airports **Consumption reduction – Businesses**

Rome, Florence and Pisa

Rome's Fiumicino-Leonardo da Vinci airport has taken on the challenge to become a “plastic-free” international hub. Of the plastic waste produced at the airport, 98% is recovered and sent for recycling. With the separation of the waste remaining a strategic priority, the airport has also set itself the goal of a progressive reduction of the waste produced.

As part of this initiative, the airport is building a composting plant that will allow it to transform organic waste from bars and restaurants into compost, thus reducing the quantity of waste produced by over 1,000 tons a year.

In addition, the airport has started a project to reduce the amount of plastic used in the airport in collaboration with airport operators. The aim is to eliminate or gradually replacing plastic such as plates, glasses, cutlery, straws and containers and become a plastic-free airport within a few years. They also started the “hey give me a cork!” initiative to collect plastic bottle caps, which supports placing people with disabilities in the production world. Finally, the airport is installing PET bottle and aluminium can compacting machines at the security controls in the terminals in order to reduce the amount of liquid waste to be disposed of, and ensure that the containers themselves are recovered.



According to management company Toscana Airports, the airports of Florence and Pisa should become the first European airports to be 100% plastic free and at the forefront of water recovery. Every day, a total 150 kg of plastics are collected at both airports and over 3,000 litres of bottled water are thrown away.

The plan, which involves everyone from personnel to passengers (an approach that was also used for the ‘Don’t be an ostrich!’ campaign), will be developed in three phases:

- Installation of four bins in the security controls area that let passengers empty water and other liquids and put the empty plastic bottles into bins for separate collection. The collected water can be reused in airport systems, for watering or for draining in the bathrooms.
- Installation of drinking water fountains thanks to the collaboration with Acque and Publiacqua and the distribution of water bottles to employees and passengers.
- A total ban on the sale and use of plastics inside the two airports by modifying the contractual clauses for the brands that operate shops and cafes.

BEach CLEAN campaign **Awareness-raising – NGOs**

Legambiente, together with COMMON project partners in Tunisia and Lebanon, launched the BEach CLEAN campaign in 2020 to raise public awareness of marine litter on Mediterranean beaches and of the impact our daily actions have on the marine ecosystem. The campaign targets tourists and beach lidos in five Mediterranean areas in these three countries. It provides ten tips for reducing plastic litter and surveys visitors in order to gather key information on the state of Mediterranean beaches.

The BEach CLEAN campaign is a broader campaign about waste reduction and disposal, which also targets single-use plastic items, in particular cigarette butts, disposable plates and cutlery, straws, cotton buds and plastic bags.

Posters with the campaign's ten golden rules were displayed in the most popular Italian, Lebanese and Tunisian tourist areas, where a massive influx of summer tourists sees a corresponding increase in the volumes of waste found on beaches.

In the visitor survey, the questions are broader, with some specific to single-use plastics and tourist facilities, e.g. “At the beach restaurants/cafes you usually go to, do you find disposable or reusable plates and cutlery?”

Bibione beach smoking ban **Awareness-raising – Public authorities**

On Bibione beach in the municipality of San Michele al Tagliamento (Venezia), a campaign to raise awareness of clean, smoke-free beaches began in 2011. A “Smoke Free” area was created on the beach and signs were put up asking people not to smoke there. A total of 1,500 questionnaires, in various languages, were distributed to evaluate public approval of the initiative: 65% of respondents reacted favourably to a total ban, while 27% said they were in favour only on condition that smoking areas were created.

The “Respira il Mare” (Breathe the Sea) project introduced a ban on smoking at beach establishments, with fines for those in breach. Beaches such as the Bagni di Sant'Antonio delle Fornaci, near Savona, and Bibione beach, joined the initiative. An initial ban was imposed in 2014, with signs placed on the beach to inform visitors and invite smokers to put out their cigarettes. Transparent containers for cigarette butts were installed to show visitors how much of this waste was being collected day by day.

In 2018, Bibione asked visitors not to smoke on most of the beach, providing hardened smokers with a reserved smoking area. The Ministry of Health was immediately interested in the proposal and wanted details on how to apply the model. Many beaches have since then followed suit.

Importantly, the 2014 initiative gained the support and attention of the WHO (World Health Organization), the Regione, the ASL local health service and the Italian National Cancer Institute. More recently, Codacons, the coordination of associations for the defence of the environment and the rights of users and consumers, declared its concern about the effects of smoking by the sea, and indicated that Bibione beach was a model to follow.

ITALY CONT.

Reusable school lunchboxes

Awareness-raising – Schools and Universities

Vicenza

In Vicenza, ten primary schools (making up about one quarter of the city's classes in total) started the Zero Waste in Mensa project in 2013, which was promoted by the municipality to reduce the production of waste.

The project is presented to all school directors who can engage one or two of their school's classes in a trial to replace single-use plastic plates (35 g of plastic per person per meal) by a reusable lunch box or container made of unbreakable, washable material and that contains dishes and cutlery provided free of charge by the municipality. Alternatively, children can use dishes and cutlery brought from home in an airtight container provided by their families.

Those who adhere to the experiment receive a discount of EUR 0.15 on the cost of each meal as a small incentive, making the practice even more attractive.

Nine out of the twenty-six schools that use the municipal canteen service participated in the experimental phase of the project, which involved a total of 34 classes, 734 pupils and 57 teachers. Out of 6,168 meals provided in the first phase, from 10 to 31 March, only 4% involved the provision of a replacement lunch box and dishes – 90% of these cases were due to pupils forgetting their lunchbox, and 10% due to insufficient cleaning.

The pupils generally showed great appreciation for the initiative and even appeared to enjoy their food more. Broken lunch boxes were replaced free of charge thanks to the collaboration with supplier Snips SRL which is a big advocate of the project. The production of waste has drastically reduced: the Rodari School alone has reduced its waste from 20 plastic bags a day to one bag of organic waste and one paper bag of waste a day.

Pelagos Plastic Free Project

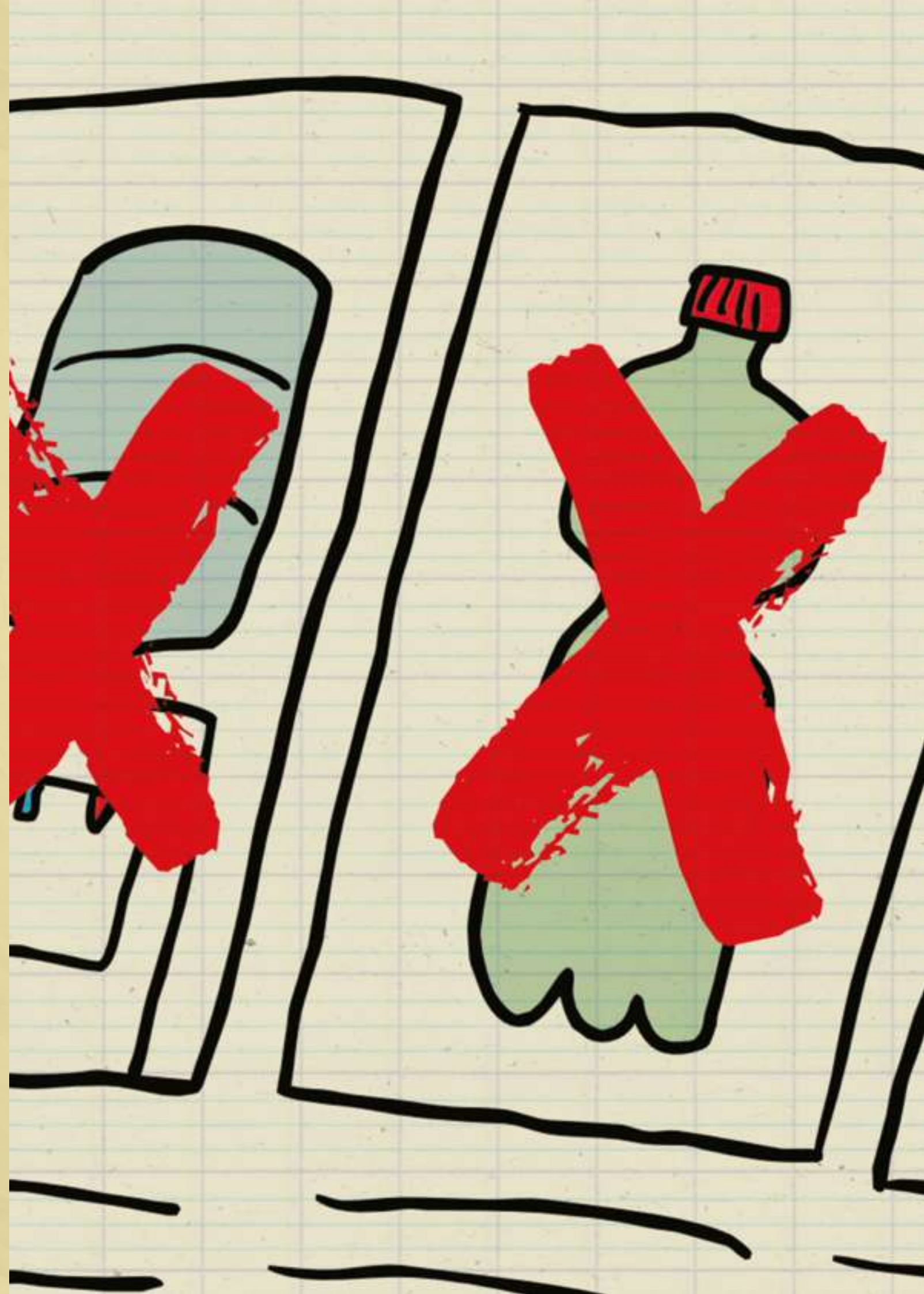
Awareness-raising – NGOs

Led by NGOs Legambiente and Expédition Med, the Pelagos Plastic Free project stems from the need to reduce marine pollution caused by plastic waste and to protect the different species of cetaceans living in the Pelagos Sanctuary.

The project has been conducted on three axes: improving governance, to encourage local administrations to take preventive measures against the disposal of plastic in the sea and on beaches; scientific research, to deepen understanding of the impact of plastics on cetaceans and the marine ecosystem; and dissemination and awareness-raising, to increase awareness among citizens and operators about plastic litter.

Waste produced in towns and cities continues to accumulate on the beaches and in the waters of the Mediterranean basin, including in protected areas that are rich in biodiversity, such as the Pelagos Sanctuary. Plastic constitutes 95% of the waste dispersed on beaches, and on the seabed and marine surfaces. In the waters of the Tuscan Archipelago, there is a concentration of 10 kg of plastic waste per square kilometre, one of the highest concentrations in the world.

This situation is mainly caused by the mismanagement of waste produced not only in coastal towns and cities, but also in those further inland. It is therefore essential that administrations of the regions concerned are informed about good practices in terms of reuse, recycling and correct disposal of litter. To facilitate this, Legambiente has put together a list of examples of good practices that have been implemented by some administrations and that can be replicated. They have also called on local and regional public administrations to try to implement some of the proposed initiatives.



ITALY CONT.

Green municipal tax incentives

Consumption reduction – Public authorities

The municipality of Capannori (Lucca) is promoting an initiative to ensure that inhabitants are increasingly able to purchase packaging-free products such as food, beverages and detergents, thus reducing the amount of plastic waste produced.

By adopting a change to the waste regulations in part of the Lucca area, the municipal administration introduced a 20% discount on the fixed part of the waste tax for all businesses that sell food and other products without packaging. This implies significant savings for the shops that join fight against packaging, regardless of how much waste they produce, which is already rewarded by production-based taxation.

Shops that want to take advantage of the discount must show the municipality that they have introduced packaging-free products in their shops.

In the municipality of Legnago (Verona), the “Save-Environment” initiative, approved in March 2019, led to changes to the waste tax regulation (Tari). A partial reimbursement of the garbage tax was introduced for companies participating in the “Buy Recycling” project.

The initiative has allowed the placement of three “eco-compactors” where citizens can bring used plastic bottles and receive “ecopoints” in return. The ecopoints can be used in any shop or participating activity for a discount on purchases or services. The reimbursement of EUR 100 on the Tari introduced by the initiative is aimed at the business owners who will offer such “eco-discounts”. Overall, the project helps businesses improve customer retention, while at the same time encouraging greater attention to waste.

In December 2017, the municipal council in Talamone (Grosseto) introduced the possibility of obtaining a 30% to 70% reduction of the variable part of the waste tax. This reduction applies to neighbourhood shops of a maximum 150 square metres in size that sell refill products, as well as to shops that offer loose products or an empties return policy.

Those who sell only refill products are entitled to a discount of 70%, while those offering refills alongside a more traditional model will benefit from a 30% tax reduction.

Reusable nappy subsidies

Consumption reduction – Public authorities

For residents of the municipality of Trento who purchase washable nappies for one or more of their children under the age of 30 months, the municipality provides a 50% reimbursement, with a maximum benefit of up to EUR 50 per child. A receipt or invoice from the purchase of the nappies must be provided with the application.

Lavanda closed-loop nappies system

Consumption reduction – Businesses

Bologna

Lavanda is a project developed by the social cooperative Eta Beta in collaboration with the University of Bologna after a study into the environmental harm caused by disposable nappies. Based on a “product as a service” concept, Lavanda rents cloth nappies to kindergartens and offers a nappy-washing service (which has a lower environmental impact than individual washing by kindergartens). The project also creates new employment opportunities for people in social difficulties that would otherwise be supported by the municipality.

The service to kindergartens is based on agreements between Eta Beta and the municipalities and tailored to the needs of the nurseries. It provides for the supply of clean nappies, daily collection of dirty ones, and centralised washing. The washing and drying process respects all hygienic norms and has been organised to reduce the environmental impact of the transport and washing to the very minimum (e.g. no excess use of water, energy or detergents).

Lavanda aims to gradually open up to families, offering them a cloth nappy rental and washing service.

Eta Beta also promoted a similar scheme (named ‘DPIClean’) for masks used as a PPE during the COVID crisis. The scheme services large users such as schools, offices and hospitals – clean masks are delivered, and used masks are collected and sanitised according to the rules stipulated by health authorities.

Promotion of packaging-free shopping

Consumption reduction – Public authorities

A recent national law, no. 141/2019, which modifies and supplements Decree no. 111/2019 (the “National Climate Act”) introduced two fundamental measures related to the reuse of plastic and packaging in general:

- The introduction of an incentive for small, medium and large shops to provide “packaging-free areas.”
- The “right to bring your own container.” Customers are now allowed to use their own reusable containers for fresh products such as dairy products, ham and meat cuts, fish, etc. BYO practices had previously been essentially banned due to hygiene concerns. As a safety measure, the new law stipulates that the container must be clean and have no detectable odour. The seller, or its employees, may refuse to place products in the container if they consider it not fit for purpose, e.g. if it is broken, without a lid etc.

Municipalities against cigarette butts

Awareness-raising – Public authorities

The municipality of Sestri Levante (Genova) has conducted a campaign to raise awareness about discarding cigarette butts in the environment. The initiative began thanks to a regional contribution to the municipality’s waste collection projects.

The municipality purchased 1,500 environmentally friendly cases for the collection of cigarette butts which were distributed for free at the municipal offices, the URP public relations office, the tourist information office and the offices of Mediterraneo Servizi. Leaflets were distributed, posters displayed, and notices attached to waste bins which were equipped with a cigarette butt container. Dedicated containers were also placed on beaches and business owners willing to distribute the cases through their businesses received window stickers.

The municipality of Castel Gandolfo (Roma), thanks to the allocation of funds generated by the Metropolitan City of Rome’s ban, started an awareness project to fight the discarding of cigarette butts in 2019. This involved installing cigarette butt collectors in busy and touristic parts of the city, including the lakeside promenade where dedicated bins to collect cigarette butts were also placed.

In August 2019, the municipality of Mogliano (Macerata) started a project to increase awareness among smokers of how to correctly dispose of their cigarette butts. At the tourist office and tobacconist shops, smokers can get free pocket containers in which to store cigarette butts.

“Plastic constitutes 95% of the waste dispersed on beaches, and on the seabed and marine surfaces. In the waters of the Tuscan Archipelago, there is a concentration of 10 kg of plastic waste per square kilometre, one of the highest concentrations in the world.”







LATVIA

“Make no waste” campaign Consumption reduction – NGOs

Jurmala

The NGO “Environmental Protection Club of Latvia” (VAK) ran a campaign in the city of Jurmala called “Whatever you buy or taste, make no waste” as a pilot project for service providers, caterers, merchants and tourist information centres.

The aim of the campaign was to encourage a reduction in the use of single-use products and promote environmentally friendly habits, with different sets of activities being implemented:

- Posters, leaflets and cardboard table racks were provided to local service providers and businesses for dissemination.
- An educational sustainable bag contest on alternatives to single-use plastic bags was organised with 1,200 participants. Four regional contests were organised, with final exhibitions in several big shopping malls.
- A green hiking cycle was organised.
- Educational seminars was organised for teachers of coastal municipalities. A total of 180 educational institutions were involved in the pilot.

To participate in the campaign, local businesses such as cafes, shops and museums had to make the campaign materials available on their website and inform employees and clients about the principles of environmentally friendly behaviour in the context of their activities. One of the outcomes of the pilot was the idea to introduce a deposit return system (DRS) for plastic glasses, which was supported by most of Jurmala’s cafes that were interviewed.

“An educational sustainable bag contest on alternatives to single-use plastic bags was organised with 1,200 participants. Four regional contests were organised, with final exhibitions in several big shopping malls.”



LITHUANIA

“Two years later, the country’s deposit initiative, which is powered by TOMRA’s reverse vending machines, has seen return rates increase to 92%.”

Plastic-free municipal events

Bans – Public authorities

Vilnius

In March 2020, the city of Vilnius adopted a municipal ban on single-use plastic catering products (such as cups and tableware) for all municipal public events, as well as the requirement to provide separate collection containers. Another Lithuanian city, Joniškis, was actually the first city to successfully take that step in 2019, which inspired other cities like Vilnius, Trakai and Panevėžys to take up the challenge.

All event organisers and civil society organisations were informed ahead of the decision and were given over two months to prepare for alternatives. Companies and start-ups who could provide the reusable cups, plates, and other eventware that were critical to the success of the ban, were identified.

This decision is the first important step to helping reduce the amount of plastic waste generated in the city, while also encouraging citizens to be more aware of the impact that plastic, especially single-use items, has on our environment and on the climate.

The Vilnius's ban is yet to be implemented, but authorities expect the amount of plastic pollution within the city to be significantly reduced.

National deposit return system

Consumption reduction – Public authorities

Lithuania introduced a “bottle bill” in 2016 with the aim of reducing litter, cutting local government costs, and boosting recycling rates. The system works with multiple-use glass bottles, single-use plastic, and aluminium cans.

Prior to the introduction of the deposit return system (DRS), only one third of plastic bottles were collected to be recycled (34%). Two years later, the country’s deposit initiative, which is powered by TOMRA’s reverse vending machines, has seen return rates increase to 92%.

CupCup for greener festivals

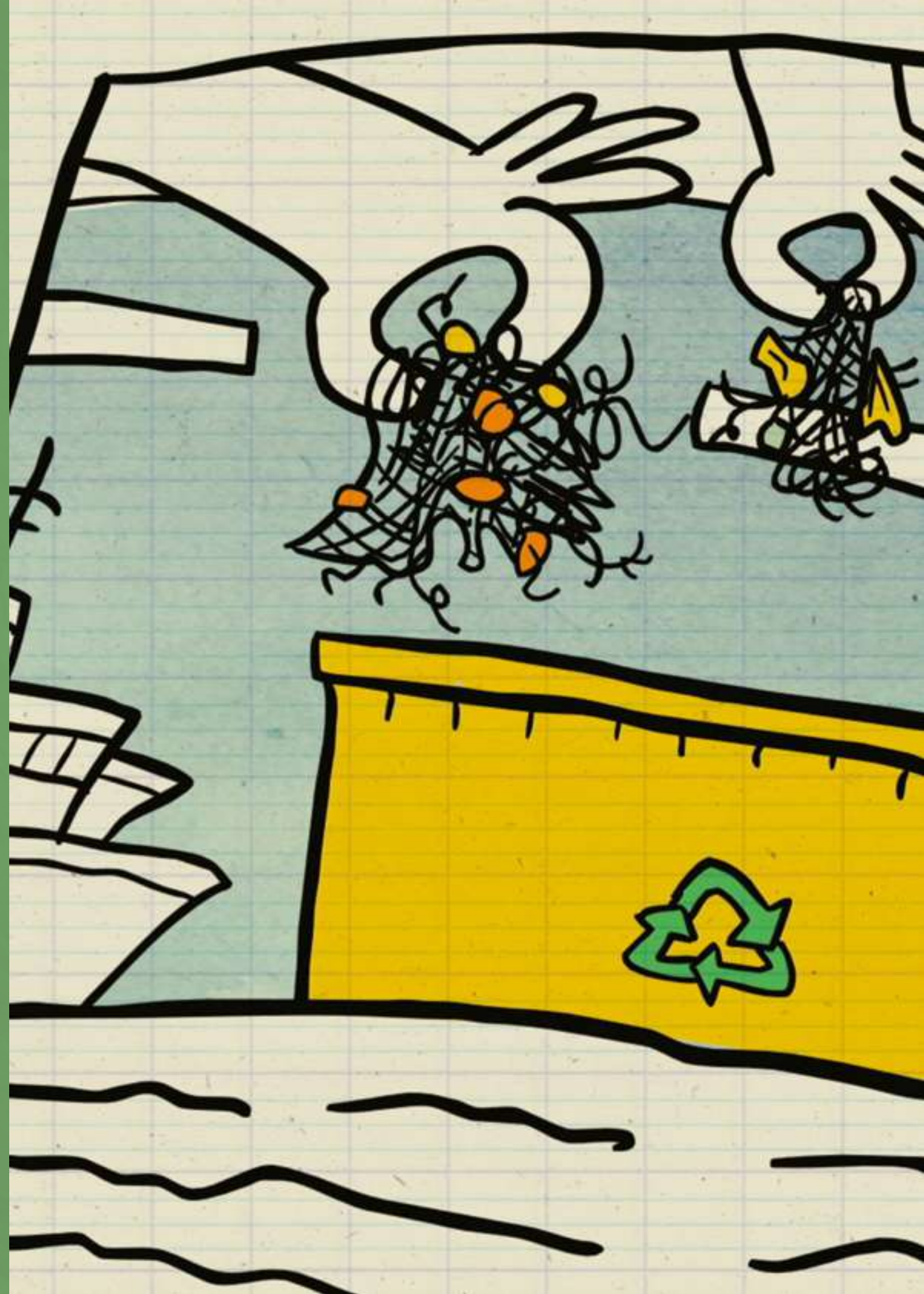
Consumption reduction – Businesses

Founded by the musician Ermantas, who was shocked at the quantities of plastic waste left behind at music festivals, CupCup is a pioneering social business that provides reusable coffee cups for cafes and reusable cups and glasses for festivals.

With an eco-participation of EUR 1, CupCup funds the collection, transport and washing of the cups, and a EUR 1 deposit incentivises people to bring back the cups.

Around 90% of national music festivals now use their services. Latvian and Estonian festivals have also started to work with the company.

The company collaborates with an international NGO, Precious Plastic, to recycle and improve their cups. CupCup have decided to replace their plastic-lined cups with latex-coated cups made of paper and latex.



LUXEMBOURG

National zero waste strategy

Bans – Public authorities

Luxembourg's Minister of the Environment, Climate and Sustainable Development [Carole Dieschbourg](#) wants Luxembourg to go beyond the requirements of the European directive on single-use plastics and become a world leader in terms of waste management. The main goal is to promote both elimination and reduction of single-use plastics, with additional bans for single-use plastic cups and bottles.

Resulting from a national stakeholders' consultation process carried out in 2019, the national zero waste strategy, "[Null Offall Lëtzebuerg](#)", was presented in September 2020. It provides for a zero-littering goal and the promotion of eco-design, reuse and repair on a wide scale to achieve a truly circular economy.

A draft law was published on August 25, 2020 to start transposing the EU directive on single-use plastics into national law, with an ambitious target for consumption reduction being imposed on plastic manufacturers. The zero-waste strategy also announced additional bans on single-use plastics in restaurants as of January 1, 2022 (plastic cups, plates and cutlery) and in packaging for fresh fruits and vegetables.

Zero Single-Use Plastic manifesto

Consumption reduction – Businesses

Luxembourg's leading Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) network [IMS](#) works with Luxembourg-based national and international companies and their CEOs to move towards more sustainable practices, including the elimination of single-use plastics. In 2018, IMS started a two-year project following the EU's agreement of legislation on single-use plastics.

In September 2018 during its Luxembourg CEO Sustainability Club dinner, IMS called on the participating leaders to sign a Zero Single-Use Plastic manifesto. The objective was clear: get companies to eliminate single-use plastic from their organisations by the end of 2020 and provide tailor-made support to enable that transition.

The #IMSPlasticPledge includes the following commitments:

- Implement all necessary actions to reach the goal of withdrawing products covered by the "Zero Single-Use Plastic" manifesto by the end of 2020.
- Support sustainable alternatives and integrate the principles of the circular economy within the organization.
- Appoint a Zero Single-Use Plastic ambassador who acts as a reference person for the topic.
- Communicate its actions to different stakeholders to raise awareness.
- Support IMS Luxembourg in its campaign and allow IMS to engage in discussions with suppliers to identify sustainable alternatives.

With specific funding from the Environment Ministry, IMS has been providing the [manifesto signatories](#) with a dedicated contact person to liaise with the internal "ambassador" and conduct regular audits of their consumption reduction strategy for single-use plastics.

IMS shares a range of resources with participating companies to support the transition: communications tools such as an e-banner, e-signature, brochure, presentation, certificate; a mobile educational exhibition on single-use plastics that companies can use to communicate internally on the topic; and a "transition kit" that provides a wide choice of alternatives to single-use plastics for the items listed in the manifesto, each evaluated according to the implement time, difficulty, cost, durability and recyclability of the alternative.

From the very start of the project, IMS has also been organising specific workshops with ambassadors to develop ideas and strategies around ending single-use plastic and transitioning to sustainable alternatives. Workshop topics ranged from office supplies, catering, events, feedback on meetings with suppliers, and sustainable purchasing policy to the question of new emerging alternatives such as bio-based and biodegradable plastics.

To date, 74 companies and institutions have taken up the challenge and signed the manifesto, including BEI, Cargolux, Solar Screen and [Sodexo Luxembourg](#). Moving forward, IMS's ambition is to build on existing materials to increase corporate awareness outside their network.

ECOBIX food containers

Consumption reduction – Businesses

[ECOBIX](#) offers multi-purpose containers, with a deposit return system, that can be used either for takeaway food, or to take leftovers home from a restaurant or canteen. Containers are made of polybutylene terephthalate (PBT) with a PET lid, and are available in two sizes, 500 ml and one litre.

The "ECOBIX – Méi lang genéissen" project was initially developed to fight against food waste in Luxembourg, upon request from the Environment Ministry. Set up in 2018 by [SuperDrecksKëscht®](#) in partnership with the national trade association Horesca, it provided six restaurants, corporate restaurants and cafes with a convenient product for their clients while allowing for substantial food waste reduction. The network of users soon expanded to include 80 restaurants across the country in 2019, and 124 restaurants, 66 corporate restaurants, and 60 school restaurants in May 2020.

The initiative offers considerable potential to reduce the overall volume of waste, because it reduces not only the amount of packaging but also the quantity of food waste. The system is also ecological and sustainable, because defective or damaged ECOBIXes are sent back to the manufacturer and can be reused as raw material to make new products.

To date, ECOBIX remains a voluntary initiative and, for that reason, does not cover all restaurants and catering services in the country. The Environmental Ministry is therefore promoting the model to ensure that its coverage increases, and with it, the corresponding environmental benefits.

“To date, 74 companies and institutions have taken up the challenge and signed the manifesto (Zero Single-Use Plastic).”



NETHERLANDS

“Bringo acts as a matchmaker between 'bring your own' initiatives worldwide and the partners or investors that can facilitate international expansion.”

Plastic bottle deposit returns

Consumption reduction – Public authorities

In April 2020, the Dutch government decided to expand the existing deposit return system (DRS) to also include small plastic bottles. This enabled the country to meet the 90% separate collection target for plastic bottles as stated in Article 9 of the EU single-use plastics directive.

Mission Reuse programme

Consumption reduction – NGOs

Mission Reuse is a partnership between three Dutch NGOs – Recycling Netwerk Benelux, Stichting Natuur & Milieu and Enviu – that aims to scale up reusable packaging systems at national level through R & D, innovative projects, communication and advocacy.

Their current focus is on cups and food containers, and Mission Reuse has already published [a report](#) where it shares its insights into the conditions needed to successfully scale up a reusable cup system.

The first pilot project is Cup for Life which aims to develop and test a reusable cup system in the city of Utrecht, in collaboration with two companies, Vers and Lebkov. The goal is to prevent three billion coffee cups per year from being wasted by developing a sustainable business case.

Circular economy blueprint

Awareness-raising – NGOs

The Plastic Soup Foundation's Plastic Urban Mining programme helps companies, educational institutions, governments and communities in the transition from a linear to a circular economy by managing the whole plastic cycle.

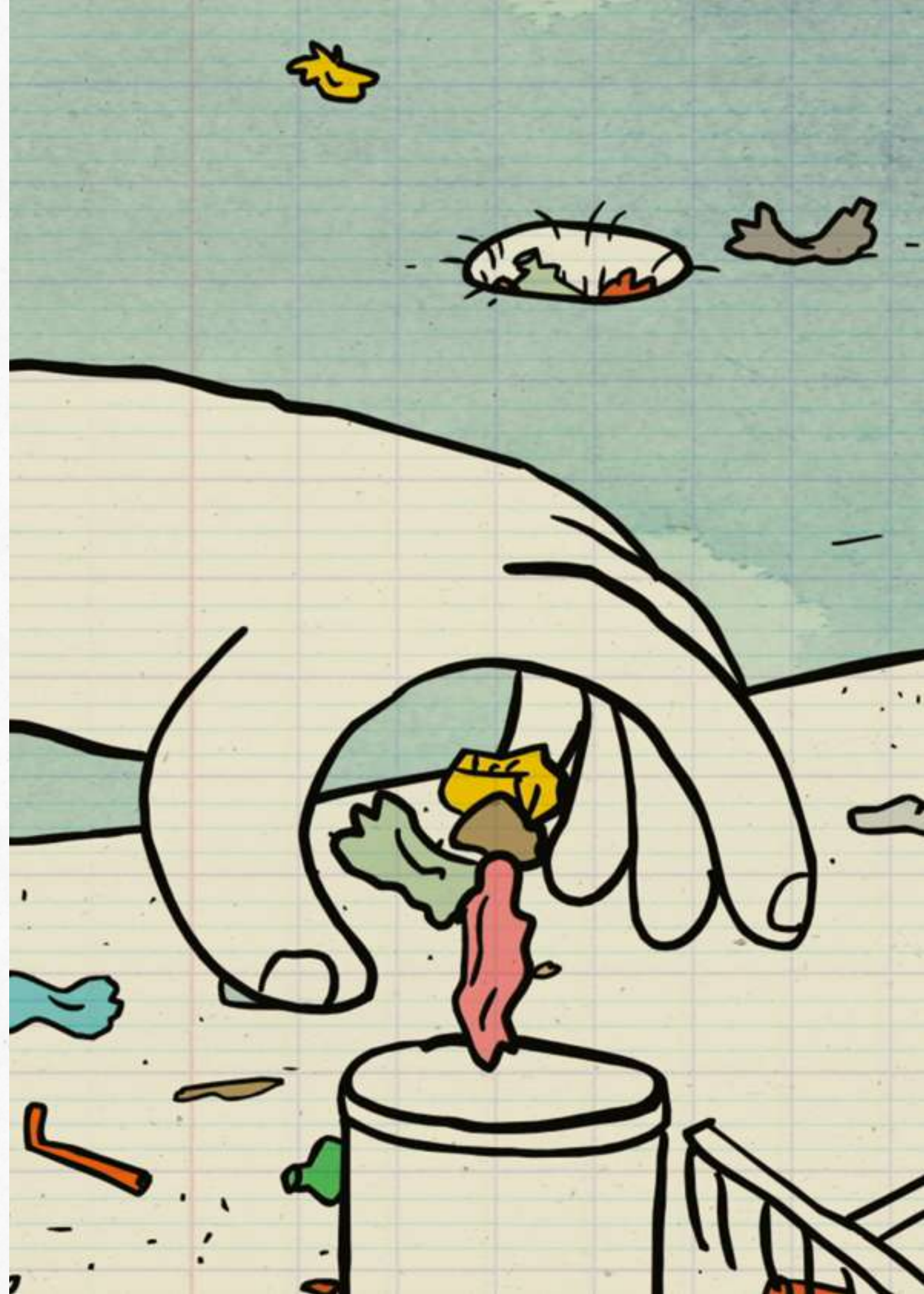
From creating awareness and education to the development of products made from recycled plastic, Plastic Urban Mining is an all-in-one solution.

Bringo BYO match-maker

Awareness-raising – Businesses

Bringo acts as a matchmaker between “bring your own” initiatives worldwide and the partners or investors that can facilitate international expansion. Via their online platform, they map and champion the doers focused on replacing single-use bags, cups, bottles and containers with more sustainable, reusable solutions.

From spotting and sharing innovations that are ready to be partnered with, copied, or improved, to actively getting involved with promising innovators, this boutique matchmaking agency aims to bring together the “doers” who are working hard to reduce waste, worldwide.





NORWAY

Greener public procurement Consumption reduction – Public authorities

Oslo

As Norway's second-largest public sector purchaser, the City of Oslo's purchasing power can have considerable impact on the consumption of single-use plastics. The City is working on new purchasing agreements to include strict requirements that reduce the use of single-use plastics.

Through their public procurement policies, the City of Oslo aims to change their consumption behaviour and reduce the unnecessary use of plastic in municipal bodies. It will do this by supporting products that contribute to a circular economy, i.e. products that are designed for recycling and encourage reuse.

The City mapped all purchases of plastic products across the municipality, with particular attention on single-use plastics, to fully grasp the scale of the use of plastic products in the municipality. By mapping plastic consumption, the City was able to identify which products were problematic and which agencies they needed to target.

The City is also working on building a more eco-conscious culture by facilitating the process with a manual on smart purchasing. New procurement framework agreements will also include strict climate and environmental requirements that focus on high rates of reuse, recycling, recovery and sharing.

“By mapping plastic consumption, the City was able to identify which products were problematic and which agencies they needed to target.”



POLAND

Zero waste stores

Consumption reduction – Businesses

The zero waste philosophy is spreading in Poland, with an increasing number of zero waste stores opening up across the country. Some of these include:

BEZ PUDŁA, in Wrocław:

BIOre, which has two stores in Poznań:

Planetarianie, which has two stores in Warsaw:

Kooperatywa Dobrze, which has two stores in Warsaw:

DEKO zakupy in Warsaw:

NAGRAMY, in Łódź and Warsaw:

ODWAŻNIK, in Warsaw:

ZIELONY SMAK, in Warsaw:

KUBEK Z PRZYPRAWAMI, in Gdańsk:

AVOCADO, in Gdańsk:

ZIEMIOSFERA, in Gdańsk:

NA WAGĘ ZDROWIA, in Zamość:

More stores can be found on the “zero waste vademecum” website.

In addition, cosmetics brand Yope offers a refill service (packaging return service), and the Too Good To Go application helps to save food waste from restaurants.

#BringYourOwnCup

Consumption reduction – NGOs

Billions of disposable cups are used every year around the world, creating a mountain of waste that is difficult to recycle. To address this problem, the Polish Zero Waste Association carried out a successful campaign under the hashtag #zWłasnymKubkiem, which translates as #Bring your own cup.

The aim of the campaign was to raise awareness among customers and coffee shop owners about the environmental impact of disposable packaging, and to shape attitudes and habits that will contribute to reducing waste in the longer term. The double goal is to encourage customers to use reusable cups when buying takeaway coffee, and to convince cafe owners that serving coffee in a customer’s own cup is safe, environmentally important, and beneficial in terms of the brand’s image.

Poland’s Boomerang Bags

Awareness-raising – NGOs

Inspired by Australia’s Boomerang Bags and receiving their blessing and materials, Zero Waste Poland created its Polish equivalent, Torby Bumerangi (#Bumerangbags) to replace single-use plastic bags and help empower local communities all over Poland.

Boomerang Bags is about making reusable bags, diverting waste, starting conversations, bringing people together, fostering sustainable behaviour, and having fun. Local communities are given a toolkit that covers everything from bag patterns, engaging the community, promotional materials, and supporting tips and ideas based on the experience of existing communities. Boomerang Bags volunteers are also connected thanks to a dedicated global platform.

The idea is that a shopping bag should circulate like a boomerang and be available where we need it, i.e. in a shop, not in a kitchen drawer. Participating volunteers put their bags into circulation and reuse them.

Each of the workshops, lectures or meetings developed for the project result in an incentive to act and spread the word. Results so far show that many Boomerang points were doing very well before the pandemic started. The next step is to professionalise the campaign, by giving it structure and additional tools.

HelloWielo nappy campaign

Consumption reduction – NGOs

The HelloWielo educational campaign familiarises young and future parents with reusable alternatives to disposable nappies. With as much as 1.5 tons of non-recyclable waste generated from birth to potty training age, the stakes are high.

In 2018, the campaign was such a success that it was internationally recognised and won an award in the European Waste Reduction Week competition for the best initiatives. The HelloWielo campaign was one of the three best campaigns in the NGO category, and beat a total of 14,000 initiatives from across Europe on its way to the final.

In 2019, over 40 free HelloWielo workshops were organised all over Poland, and two were organised in Norway, giving the project an international dimension. The initial project was expanded with workshops on reusable intimate hygiene products such as menstrual cups and reusable pads. The third edition of the campaign was conducted online in 2020.

“Wrzucam. Nie wyrzucam!” campaign

Consumption reduction – NGOs

The Wrzucam. Nie wyrzucam campaign (“Throw it, don’t throw it away”), which has been running since mid-2019, aims to familiarise the public with the mechanisms of the deposit return system (DRS), which would include glass, metal and plastic beverage packaging.

Research conducted as part of the project revealed that almost 90% of Poles were in favour of a mandatory deposit system for single-use and reusable beverage packaging. Over 60% of respondents believed that the deposit system could be extended to other food packaging.

As part of the campaign, over 10,000 people signed a petition that was submitted to the Polish Minister of Climate. Activities continue within a working group at the Ministry of Climate, whose aim is to develop solutions in the field of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), including the deposit system.

Greener cosmetics and detergents

Consumption reduction – Businesses

Several brands of natural cosmetics and detergents – such as Kostka Mydła, Luch Botanicals, Ministerstwo Dobrego Mydła, Fridge by Yde, Purite, Jan Barba, Creamy and Simple as That – have introduced measures to reduce the amount of plastic packaging used for their products, including:

- the option to return the glass (or reusable plastic) packaging for percentage discount on future purchases;
- a “zero waste order” option for the customer to have their order packed with less paper, using recyclable and biodegradable materials;
- a loyalty programme for returning packaging;
- the possibility to send back packaging in exchange for a 3% discount
- reusable packaging, e.g. washing powder in glass jars.

Other Polish cosmetics producers that sell products such as bars of soap, shampoo and conditioner without packaging or packaged with non-plastics materials include 4Szpaki and Shauska.



POLAND CONT.

Packaging-free bulk sales

Consumption reduction – Businesses

In 2017, Auchan was the first supermarket/hypermarket to serve bulk products in customers' own packaging. Since then, Carrefour and Kaufland have trained their staff and adapted their procedure to be able to do the same. Generally speaking, hypermarkets have developed a range of dry bulk products, such as nuts, dried fruits, beans etc., making it easier for customers to shop with their own containers.

Carrefour Polska introduced the possibility of buying products by weight in customers' own reusable packaging, while at the same time, running an information campaign for customers. In addition, in all the "Tasty" bistros operating at Carrefour hypermarkets, clients can drink coffee poured into their own reusable mugs.

Gdansk without plastic

Awareness raising – Public authorities

The "Gdansk without plastic" campaign aims to support a pro-ecological attitude and public awareness on environmental protection by reducing the use of plastic in everyday life. It also encourages proper waste separation, which is particularly important as the city is located on the coast, and its pollution is largely caused by plastic.

The main message of the campaign is ten simple rules of conduct, which were promoted through different public displays. The implementation has started but some activities were postponed because of the Covid-19 pandemic. The outcome of the campaign therefore remains to be assessed, but many other cities are expected to replicate this kind of initiative, albeit with different levels of ambition.

As part of the campaign, various types of activities were planned to promote the assumptions and ecological activities of the campaign, such as art competitions for pupils, pilot projects for families who want to change their habits and stop using plastic, competitions in social media, and picnics for local residents.

"Research conducted as part of the project revealed that almost 90% of Poles were in favour of a mandatory deposit system for single-use and reusable beverage packaging."



PORTUGAL

“At the beginning of 2020 – which was also the Green Capital year for Lisbon – fifteen promoters of national summer festivals joined forces to call on younger generations for a large-scale action on social media.”

“Há mar e mar” campaign

Awareness-raising – NGOs

National law no. 69 of 2018 provided for an incentive system for the return of non-reusable plastic beverage containers as well as for glass, ferrous metals and aluminium containers. In 2019, a pilot incentive system was launched, and from January 2022, this type of system should become mandatory.

To prepare for this significant environmental breakthrough, national NGOs such as Sciaena, Zero and ANP started developing activities in 2019. They organised a national seminar, technical meetings with different stakeholders involved in the implementation of the EU single-use plastics directive, two workshops to coordinate with other NGOs working on plastics, and a plastic policy group.

In 2020, the NGOs met with government bodies to push for an ambitious implementation of the EU single-use plastics directive, as the coronavirus crisis was expected to delay its national implementation. In July, a dedicated awareness-raising campaign, Ha Mar e Mar, was launched, with an online petition (which has gathered 4,000 signatories to date), a Facebook page and a symbolic cleaning event involving several local NGOs as well as special ambassadors such as the Dutch partner organisation Plastic Soup Surfer and world circuit bodyboarder Joana Schenker. In November, the campaign called for wide participation in the national consultation on the draft text of the law, and for the Portuguese government to maintain the initial high level of ambition.

The campaign secured national media coverage, and the last version of the transposed national law included national targets for reusable packaging. The NGOs have also started to develop coalition work with international partners to secure similar ambition in Mediterranean countries such as Spain and Italy.

Maria Granel bulk shops

Consumption reduction – Businesses

The packaging-free Maria Granel bulk shops in Lisbon not only provide the local community with zero waste shopping and reduced use of plastic containers and packaging, but also with regular awareness-raising activities.

Festivals for green action

Awareness-raising – Businesses

An increasing number of music and cultural festivals across the country, such as Andanças festival, EDP Cool Jazz festival and Boom festival are implementing awareness-raising, waste prevention, consumption reduction and waste management measures.

At the beginning of 2020 – which was also the Green Capital year for Lisbon – fifteen promoters of national summer festivals joined forces to call on younger generations for a large-scale action on social media.

To promote their common sustainable and plastic-free vision, they used well-known tools and social media hashtags to engage all spectators of shows, festivals and events. As part of the campaign, they invited spectators to adopt sustainable measures, photograph them and disseminate them on social networks, with gifs specifically created for the initiative and with the hashtag “DeclareAçao”.

The mayor of Lisbon supported the initiative which will also produce awareness-raising materials and a webpage, following the involvement of young leaders from across the country to define 17 sustainable behaviours to promote. These are based on the UN's Sustainable Development Goals and focus on areas as diverse as climate change, diversity, social inclusion, economic development, waste reduction and recycling.

Plastic-free free airlines

Consumption reduction – Businesses

Some airline companies are starting to implement plastic waste free flights by using reusable cups and cutlery, and more sustainable materials etc. The first airline is Hi Fly – a wet lease and charter specialist operating worldwide, operated by one Portuguese and one Maltese airline – but others are also joining the movement.

As part of an integrated materials management strategy, Hi Fly makes a deliberate decision about prevention, reuse, generation, source separation, recovery, collection, transfer, recycling, treatment and disposal of materials. Since January 2020, none of Hi Fly's own flights have any single-use plastic items on board as a result of a collaboration with the Mirpuri foundation.

Lisboa Limpa reusable cups

Consumption reduction – Public authorities

Lisboa Limpa is a project focused on reducing waste that provides an alternative to one of the disposable items that causes the most pollution in the city of Lisbon: plastic cups. The project proposes reusable cups in bars and restaurants in Lisbon, with a deposit return system (DRS) to ensure the cups are collected and reused.

By offering an effective alternative to disposable cups, Lisboa Limpa gives people the opportunity and power to consume sustainably. This project drastically reduced the amount of waste generated in the city, while directly contributing to the adoption of more sustainable behaviour.

Reducing plastic over-packaging

Awareness raising – NGOs

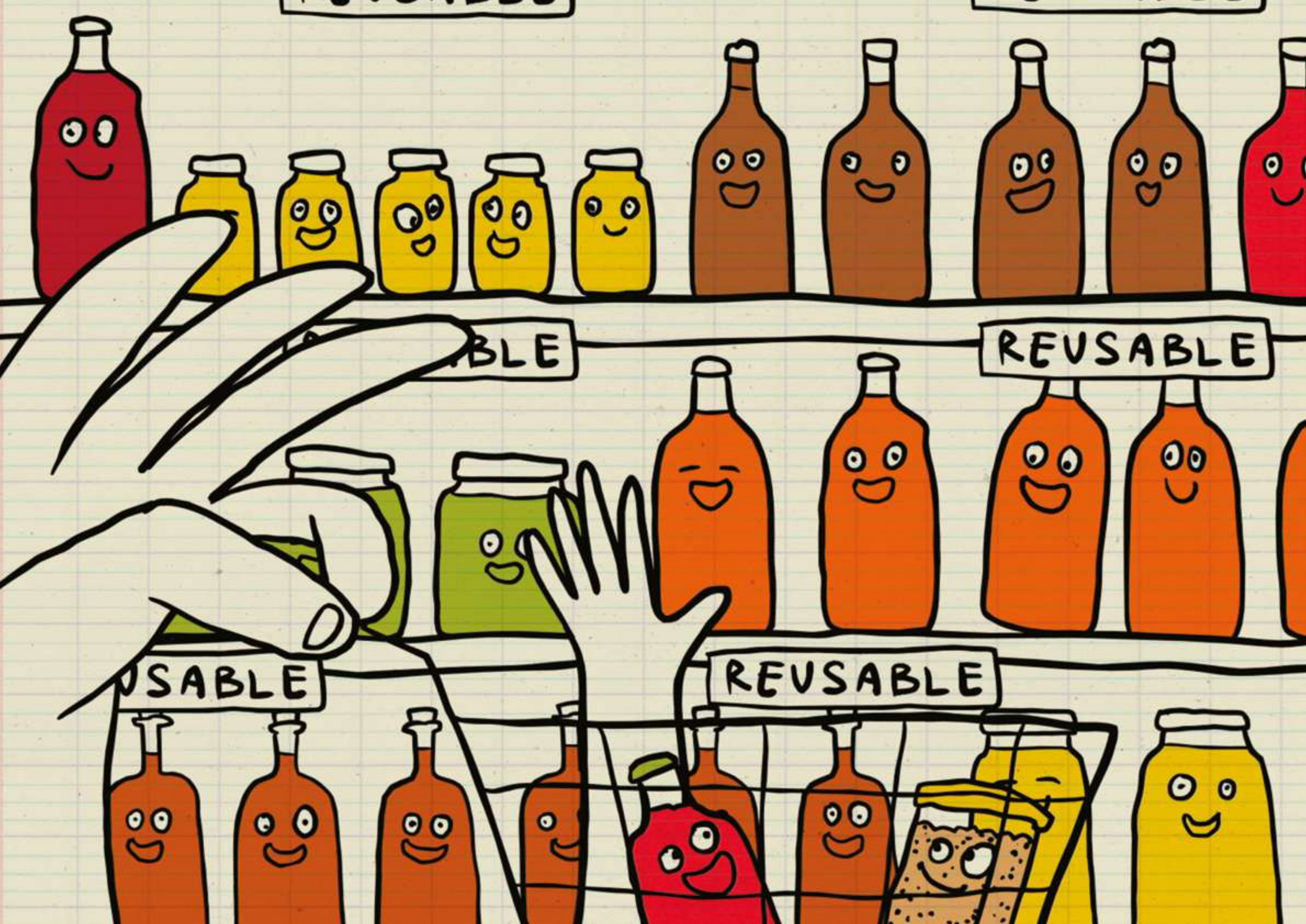
The Plastico à mais campaign, organised by DECO, a consumer rights association in Portugal, called on packaging companies to eliminate or develop alternatives to plastic over-packaging in their products.

The association asked consumers to take photographs of over-packaged products in supermarkets and email them to DECO. DECO then contacted the companies to raise the over-packaging issue and inform them about various ways to develop alternatives or reduce plastic in their products.

The campaign ended in 2019 with great results: over 5,300 consumers took part, 960 cases of over-packaging were reported, and DECO collaborated with over 80 companies that showed willingness to reduce the plastic packaging used for their products. Some companies have already implemented changes.

The campaign also let DECO identify which kind of products had the most plastic packaging: 41.05% of the complaints were related to packaging of fresh products like fruit and vegetables, while 19.35% were about dry grocery products like grain and rice. Cleaning products resulted in the least reports, at 1.96%.





ROMANIA

“Single-use coffee cups have been removed from vending machines, and employees get a small discount when they bring their own reusable cup.”

National deposit return scheme

Consumption reduction – Public authorities

National law no. 31/2019 for the approval of Emergency Ordinance 74/2018, which amends and clarifies aspects related to packaging and packaging waste management, introduced a deposit return system for drinks containers.

Also, a minimum of 5% of the packaging weight that producers put on the market each year must be reusable. This percentage is to be increased by 5% every year until 2025 inclusive. [Zero Waste Romania](#) and the Reloop Platform are campaigning for increased use of reusable packaging.

First zero waste office building

Consumption reduction – Businesses

Amera Tower, in the city of Cluj-Napoca in north-west Romania, is currently undergoing a zero waste building certification managed by Zero Waste Europe and Zero Waste Romania. The building is occupied by three companies, with a total of 800 employees. As part of the move to zero waste:

- single-use coffee cups have been removed from vending machines, and employees get a small discount when they bring their own reusable cup;
- single-use plastic straws, stirrers and non-recyclable packaging have been removed from vending machines;
- PET water bottles have been replaced with reusable glass bottles and tap water filtering systems have been installed in the building;
- machines using single-use coffee capsules have been replaced with machines that use coffee beans.

In addition, single servings of milk, honey and sugar were replaced with more sustainable alternatives: glass for milk, jars for honey, and sugar cubes in reusable cardboard boxes.

These measures are combined with kerbside collection of 12 different types of waste, internal zero waste policies, and extensive education and monitoring.

CUIB zero waste restaurant

Consumption reduction – Businesses

CUIB is in the process of becoming the first zero waste certified restaurant in Romania. The project was initiated and developed by the Mai Bine association in the city of Iași.

The restaurant uses local products and sustainable procurement practices, and promotes an environmentally friendly lifestyle with zero single-use plastics. As part of its waste prevention measures, CUIB offers free tap water to its customers, uses reusable tableware and cutlery, and reuses the boxes, jars and glass bottles from the ingredients they buy as containers for takeaway or delivered food. Food deliveries are transported in cloth bags.

Packaging-free shops

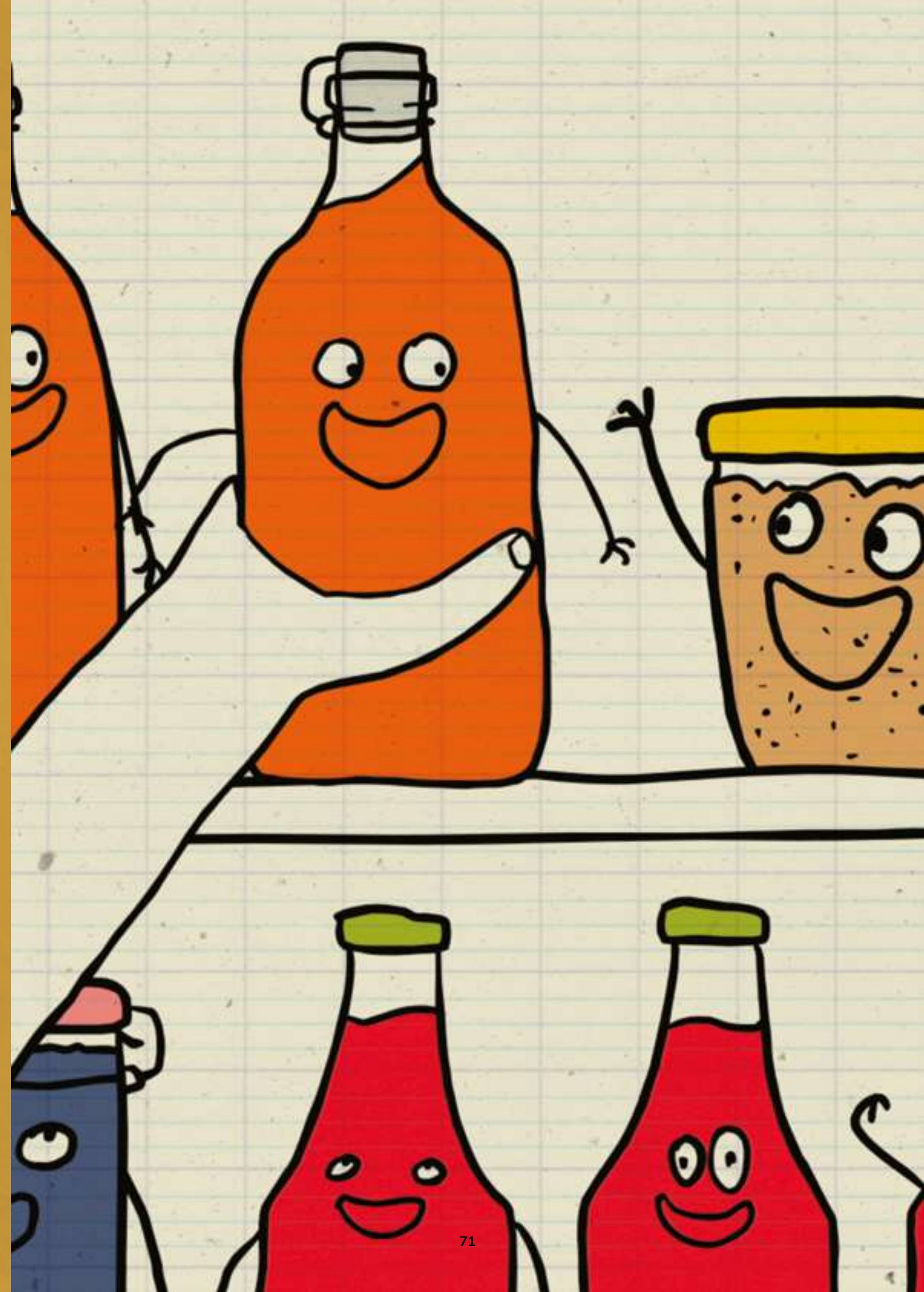
Consumption reduction – Businesses

An increasing number of shops have adopted a packaging-free policy in the last four years, including [Alternative](#), [REDU](#), [Zero Waste Living](#), [Magazin Zero Waste București](#), [esen9](#), [Nullka – Zero Waste Webshop](#), [Terrawell](#), [Greenmade zerowaste](#), [ONO-despachetărie](#), [Wrapmama's Shop](#), [Vera Green – Bio products & zero waste](#), [Less2zero](#), [Wasteless](#), and [Naked Shop](#).

Home-grown nappy brands

Consumption reduction – Businesses

Reusable nappies are becoming more widespread, with an increasing number of Romanian brands on the market, including [Analuca Prod](#), [Baltic Evolution SRL](#), [Bubble Bums](#) and [Trezy](#).





SLOVENIA

“Euromonitor International has selected Ljubljana’s vending machine as the most innovative retail concept of 2019 as part of its annual global retail market research. ”

Self-service plastic-free refills Consumption reduction – Businesses

Consumers can buy plastic- and packaging-free refills of ecological cleaning products from automated liquid-refill stations using their own reusable packaging. The vending machine produces stickers that act both as a receipt and a product description.

The vending machines are made by a Slovenian company, and are an example of reuse and recycling practice themselves, as their frames are typically made from recycled materials.

Euromonitor International has selected Ljubljana’s vending machine as the most innovative retail concept of 2019 as part of its annual global retail market research. The machines are also now available in some Slovenian cities, as well as in Rijeka in Croatia.

‘Less is more’ platform Awareness-raising – NGOs

The online platform [Manj je več](#) strives to be the one-stop-shop where consumers can find providers of repair services, packaging-free shops and information on circular economy events (e.g. clothes exchanges and workshops). It aims to give people ideas on how to change their habits to create as little waste as possible, saving money along the way.

The platform offers three specific and practical options:

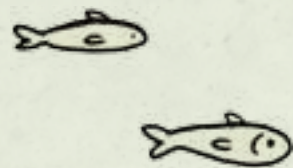
- A map of shops offering at least a part of their merchandise in bulk or allowing customers to bring their own packaging.
- A [map of providers](#) offering repairs, exchanges, rental of different household items or sale of second-hand items.
- Daily updated information about events, workshops and lectures that raise awareness and help people to learn how to repair items or make environmentally friendly versions of common products (soaps, detergents etc).

Subsidies for washable nappies Consumption reduction – Public authorities

A number of Slovenian cities offer subsidies to parents who purchase washable nappies. Among them is the municipality [Sevnica](#), which offers a EUR 240 gift certificate to purchase nappies from a local social enterprise.



SPAIN



Balearic Islands single-use plastic bans **Bans – Public authorities**

Spain's Balearic Islands collectively welcome over ten million tourists each year, resulting in huge quantities of waste that often ended up littering the coasts and sea. To tackle the problem, the government has taken a holistic approach, combining practical prevention and reduction measures at source with waste management strategies.

In 2019, the Balearic Autonomous Government approved sweeping legislation that, as of January 2021, will ban many single-use plastic products, including lightweight plastic bags, plastic cutlery, plates and straws, disposable razors and lighters, and single-use coffee capsules. In doing so, it aims to reduce the total volume of waste by 20% by 2030.

The law also makes producers responsible for waste collection and management, allows for deposit return systems (DRS) for beverage containers and incentivises sustainable consumption and reuse through green public procurement.

The Balearic Islands are going further than the EU single-use plastics directive by banning more items and setting more ambitious reuse objectives, thereby establishing a benchmark for European countries transposing the new directive into national law.

Plastic-free San Fermín fiesta **Consumption reduction – Public authorities**

During Pamplona's annual Sanfermin festivities – of which the “Running of the Bulls” is one of the most widely known attraction – where the whole city becomes an event, reusable cups and plastic-free celebrations have been established as the rule. 2020 would have been the third plastic-free edition of these well-known fiestas.

Zero Beach pilot projects **Awareness-raising – NGOs**

Zero Beach is a project run by the NGO Rezero and the association eco-union to promote zero waste strategies on the beaches of the Catalonia region. In the summer of 2019, Rezero and eco-union, in collaboration with the Metropolitan Area of Barcelona and the municipalities of Castelldefels, El Prat de Llobregat and Gavà, carried out pilot studies to reduce pollution on beaches from cigarette butts and plastic containers:

- Participating beaches established a smoke-free area for one week. Information signs and ashtrays were installed around info points to encourage citizen participation.
- Beach users were encouraged to return beverage containers to the info point, receiving EUR 0.05 for each container returned.
- Information panels were displayed on participating beaches, illustrating the environmental impact of the most common single-use items found on beaches, and explaining existing alternatives.

The first two studies were only conducted during summer 2019 but the information panels are permanent. Some municipalities wanted to continue awareness campaigns and smoke-free areas for summer 2020, but these initiatives were halted due to the Covid-19 crisis.

Comerç Verd's green network **Consumption reduction – NGOs**

The Comerç Verd network was launched by Rezero in Barcelona and other municipalities of the Catalonia region to identify and promote small local businesses that offer bulk products, local products, returnable or reusable packaging, and alternatives to single-use plastic bags. Shops in the network also actively work to minimise packaging, reduce waste, and save energy and water.

Participating outlets receive a Comerç Verd certification to showcase their green credentials to customers, and have access to support and advice on good practices to prevent and reduce waste. Over 200 shops in the Catalonia region are certified.

Catalonia's wet wipes campaign **Awareness-raising – Public authorities**

The Generalitat de Catalunya, in partnership with Barcelona City Hall and region, developed an awareness campaign run by the Catalan Water agency, Agència Catalana de l'Aigua, to inform citizens about good practices when disposing of wet wipes.

Using the slogan “Estamos creando un monstruo, y esto no es una película” (“We are creating a monster, and this is not a movie”), the campaign is centred on the environmental and health consequences of inappropriate waste disposal of wipes.

Barcelona's zero waste strategy **Awareness-raising – Public authorities**

The first zero waste plan for Barcelona was drawn up in 2012, with a number of measures to raise awareness and reduce plastic packaging. Since then, a zero waste strategy for Barcelona was developed for the period 2016–2020, with concrete measures to fight single-use plastics:

- Since March 2019, all municipal facilities have had to avoid single-use plastic bottles, plates, cutlery and cups and replace them with more sustainable alternatives.
- Reusable cups have been introduced for all big events as well as beach bars since 2017, with a EUR 1 deposit system incentive for consumers to return them.
- A system has been set up offering free rental of reusable tableware, cups and plates to municipal services, associations and major events.
- Networks and partnerships have been developed to raise awareness on single-use plastic pollution.
- The City Council launched a campaign called Plàstics for the 2019 edition of the European Week of Waste Reduction. The campaign focused on ten actions to avoid in order to incentivise sustainable behaviour for consumers and businesses.

Canarian strategy on plastic **Consumption reduction – Public authorities**

The Canary Islands' public institutions have banned the sale of water and soft drinks in single-use bottles, and promoted the installation of drinking water fountains. As part of the regional strategy on plastics presented in Spring 2020 by the local regional government, the ban on selling drinks in single-use plastic bottles applies to all buildings and facilities of public administrations as well as facilities for public use, unless there is a deposit return system in place.

In the area of public administration, other measures are also proposed, such as giving priority to the purchase of reused products, regulating the promotion of green purchasing, and prohibiting the use of single-use plastics in public events and local festivities.

Local cider's refillable bottles **Consumption reduction – Businesses**

Galicia, Asturias and Navarra

The origin of the flat cider enjoyed in Asturias and the neighbouring regions of Galicia and Navarra goes back to at least Roman times. Since 1880, a special refillable cider bottle made in a steel mould has been produced and used in local cideries across north-western Spain. Thanks to the bottle's design, it can be “thrown” (i.e. poured from a height of over one metre), and is reusable at least 50 times. Bottles are either purchased empty, or filled with cider and subject to a deposit.

Approximately 45 million bottles are still filled annually, but single-use glass (and even plastic) is slowly taking over, due to pressure from supermarkets who are reluctant to store the used bottles.

Ecologistas en Acción and other local NGOs are working with the regional government and the local cider industry to preserve the refillable bottle scheme and the associated industry. National implementation of the recently adopted EU single-use plastics directive should provide a favourable framework for this initiative to expand and be replicated elsewhere.

ÁRBOL – Recycling writing tools **Awareness-raising – NGOs**

Canary Islands

Proyecto ÁRBOL collects discarded writing instruments from all over the Canary Islands, with collection boxes placed close to where the waste is most commonly generated, e.g. in schools, offices, etc.

The waste is incorporated into the TerraCycle-BIC programme where writing instruments become raw materials for manufacturing new objects such as flowerpots, benches and other urban furniture.

Initially a short-term project, Proyecto ÁRBOL has now secured dedicated funding to develop ongoing awareness-raising activities such as talks, workshops, educational centres, etc. and continue to collect writing materials to create new products with them.





SWEDEN

“In the first year of the collaboration, Apotek Hjärtat, MQ, and Joy reduced their use of plastic bags by 53–65%, which accounts for almost 12 million plastic bags and 124 tonnes of plastic.”

Plastic bag fees and taxes *Consumption reduction – NGOs*

The Swedish Society for Nature Conservation collaborated with three large chains in Sweden – one pharmacy and two fashion retailers – to introduce a fee on plastic bags in their shops.

In the first year of the collaboration, Apotek Hjärtat, MQ, and Joy reduced their use of plastic bags by 53–65%, which accounts for almost 12 million plastic bags and 124 tonnes of plastic. In 2020, the Swedish Government introduced a tax on plastic bags that is estimated to bring in EUR 21 million in tax revenue.

Incentivising BYO coffee cups *Awareness-raising – Businesses*

The organisation Håll Sverige Rent (“Keep Sweden clean”) ran a successful campaign to reduce the use of single-use cups by collaborating with two of the biggest convenience store chains in the country, including 7-Eleven.

Customers who brought their own cup received a discount on coffee and other hot drinks. The campaign’s goal was to reduce single-use cup consumption by 5%, which represents half a million cups.

While the campaign was a short-term one, it suggests that economic incentives can drive sustainable consumer behaviour.

Sustainable healthcare procurement *Consumption reduction – Public authorities*

Several regions in Sweden are examining the climate impact of healthcare systems and identifying the use of single-use products such as plastic bin bags, gloves, and protective clothing as being the main problems. In southern Sweden, about 41% of emissions were estimated to come from the production and use of such products.

In one region, Örebro, local authorities are working on adapting work routines and sustainable procurement principles to reduce the use of single-use products in the healthcare system. Some categories of products that are being considered include medicine cups, shoe covers and plastic bin bags.

Leafymade disposable plates *Consumption reduction – Businesses*

Leafymade aims to reduce the conventional use of plastic- and paper-based disposables by providing plates that are made of layers of hot-pressed leaves. The company raised significant funds via crowdfunding and has now grown enough to enter into collaboration with Sweden’s largest supermarkets to make their products available to consumers.

Zero Waste Stockholm BYO *Consumption reduction – NGOs*

Zero Waste Stockholm works with shop owners to increase usage of reusable takeaway containers such as lunch boxes, bags, reusable cups etc. All the participating shops are listed on Zero Waste Stockholms’ website.

The initiative has developed their own branding and stickers to help identify shops where customers can bring their own takeaway containers. At the moment, 36 shops across the city are connected to the initiative.





SWITZERLAND

reCIRCLE takeaway containers Consumption reduction + Businesses

The **reCIRCLE** business model, originally developed in Switzerland, offers a deposit return system (DRS) for restaurants, grocery stores or individuals based on reusable utensils and packaging for “food-to-go”. In 2020, reCIRCLE won a prestigious Swiss award that recognises SMEs that have proven to be the best in their market over the last 12 months.

Its products include:

reCIRCLE BOXES

- Made of 70% polybutylene terephthalate (PBT) and 30% glass fibre (PBT GF30)
- Lid made of polypropylene (PP)
- No harmful Bisphenol A (BPA), no materials of animal origin, and food-safe colour pigments

reCIRCLE Spifes & forks

- A Spife is a spoon and knife in one
- Made of PBT

GOOD CUPS

- Made of PP
- No BPA, no melamine, no polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAH)

Personalised reCIRCLE BOXES

The scheme is open to everyone, from professional caterers and restaurants to individuals, meal services, school canteens, and corporate canteens. The company has more than 1,300 partners and outlets where reCIRCLE containers can be refilled. In total, reCIRCLE calculates that the use of its products save more than 50,000 single-use containers per day.

The system has been highly successful and has been adopted internationally, in Germany, France, Belgium, Czech Republic and Ireland.

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UNITED KINGDOM

“The CupClub business model has now become international and is being mainstreamed by big brands such as Starbucks and McDonalds in San Francisco, California with dedicated pilot projects.”

Mapping water refill locations

Consumption reduction – NGOs

This Bristol-based NGO Refill maps places where people can refill their water bottles and make the data easily accessible to the public.

Launched in 2015 with the goal of reducing the consumption of single use plastic bottles, the NGO encourages shops, restaurants and offices to refill drinking bottles with tap water free of charge. Those that do so are included in the Refill app, and are given a “Refill-Station” sticker that they can proudly display.

Originally launched for national use, the campaign has grown into a global movement, with local and international Refill schemes now present in over 20 countries all over the world (UK, Spain, The Netherlands, France, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Portugal, Hungary, Bulgaria, Greece, Romania, Poland, Latvia, Lithuania). Over 20,000 businesses are taking part. All participating outlets can be found through an app.

Dabbadrop plastic free takeaways

Consumption reduction – Businesses

London

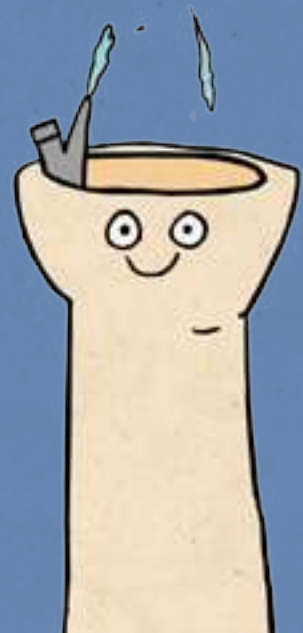
Dabbadrop is a London-based sustainable and plastic-free takeaway service for food. Meals are pre-ordered and delivered by bike in stainless steel containers.

Since the company started in November 2018, they estimate that they have saved 17,820 plastic containers by delivering in their dabbas. They have also made 8,700 km of emission-free deliveries by delivering by bike.

Brighton Uni’s reusable cups

Consumption reduction – Schools and Universities

At the University of Brighton, the My Cup reusable cup scheme encourages staff, students and visitors to avoid using disposable coffee cups. The scheme’s objective is to reduce the number of disposable drinks cups by 125,000 a year. Customers can use their own cup or buy an **Ecoffee Cup**, a bio-based reusable cup available on campus for GBP 6.95. Each cup includes a free drink, and by collecting My Cup stamps each time they refill their cap, customers receive every eleventh drink for free.



Wales’ first plastic-free village

Consumption reduction – Public authorities

Aberporth

Located on the west coast of Wales, the village of Aberporth aims to become the first single-use plastic free place in Wales. Local resident and filmmaker Gail Tudor started the campaign after a fact-finding tour of the British coastline to see the impact discarded plastic was having on marine life and the shore.

Aberporth’s pub has switched from plastic to paper straws and avoids condiment sachets, while milk is sold in glass bottles. The village has also banned plastic cutlery. A series of fundraising activities sustained a poster campaign aimed at raising awareness among villagers and visitors.

CupClub reusable cups

Consumption reduction – Businesses

CupClub was founded in 2015 by award-winning architect, designer and environmentalist Safia Qureshi, and launched April 2018 with its first major client Cushman & Wakefield. The SME partners with brands, retailers and businesses to make drinks on the go more sustainable.

Beverage containers are made from more sustainable materials and delivered and collected daily to be washed and reused – they are designed to be reused at least 1000 times. Services are provided to retail cafes, in-house cafes, canteens, restaurants, coffee/tea points, self-serve stations and drinks vending machines.

The business model has now become international and is being mainstreamed by big brands such as Starbucks and McDonalds in San Francisco, California with dedicated pilot projects.



INTERNATIONAL BEST PRACTICES

reCIRCLE takeaway containers Consumption reduction – Businesses

The **reCIRCLE** business model, originally developed in Switzerland, offers a deposit return system (DRS) for restaurants, grocery stores or individuals based on reusable utensils and packaging for “food-to-go”. The company evaluates the environmental savings made thanks to the use of its products, and communicates these to the public.

This user-friendly system with reusable boxes has now been adopted in Germany, France, Belgium, Czech Republic and Ireland. See the Switzerland section of this catalogue for more details on the scheme.

Mapping water refill locations Consumption reduction – NGOs

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Ocean Friendly Restaurants Consumption reduction – NGOs

Ocean Friendly Restaurants is a certification programme that aims to helping the food service industry progress towards a green transition. It was first launched by the NGO Surfrider Foundation in the United States, and adapted in Europe by Surfrider Foundation Europe.

The programme has defined a set of guidelines that European restaurant owners can subscribe to in order to be certified. The programme guides restaurant owners towards sustainability and helps them reduce their impact, while at the same time, giving customers more transparency and the opportunity to choose restaurants that share their values.

Among the eight criteria restaurants must meet to call themselves an Ocean-friendly restaurant, some are directly linked to the fight against plastic pollution: no expanded-polystyrene or single-use plastics should be provided; the sale of plastic bottles for beverages consumed on-site is prohibited; and ashtrays or trash cans must be made available to smokers outside the restaurant to collect cigarette butts.

Packaging-free shops Awareness-raising – NGOs

Conducted by Eunomia consultancy in collaboration with Réseau Vrac and the Zero Waste Europe network, the **2019 Packaging-free shops in Europe report** provides a state of play of bulk sale and packaging-free alternatives across the EU.



BYO at Carrefour supermarkets Consumption reduction – Businesses

Since 2019, customers of Carrefour supermarkets can bring their own containers when they buy food from the butcher's, fish and fruit departments in a number of European countries including [France](#), [Belgium](#), [Poland](#) and [Spain](#). More countries are to follow but implementation is subject to national variations.

This initiative is part of the much broader **Act for food** campaign for better food initiated by Carrefour in 2018. While the campaign has been seen essentially an image-building exercise, if “bring your own” options were available in all Carrefours outlets, the corresponding reduction of single-use packaging would be huge. The implementation of the Act for food measures across 30 countries is scheduled to be completed by 2022.

Ocean Initiatives beach clean-ups Awareness-raising – NGOs

The **Ocean Initiatives programme** – which celebrated its 25th anniversary in 2019 – is part of Surfrider Foundation Europe's campaigning efforts to raise awareness on the issue of marine litter through field collection of data and citizen science.

In 2019, 2,279 litter collections were organised in 54 countries, bringing together 83,417 people in this citizen science programme. Thanks to the information gathered, Surfrider has been able to alert decision-makers and businesses on the urgency of plastics and microplastics' pollution, backing up their arguments with concrete figures and examples of the most polluting items impacting European coastlines and water bodies.

The programme releases an annual report to highlight the top ten items most commonly found in Europe and per sea basin and to share impactful stories on the mobilisation against marine litter. According to the **2019 environmental report** issued in 2020, the single most collected item in 2019 was cigarette butts. A total of 4,027,435 cigarette butts were collected, representing 400 times the height of the Eiffel Tower.

Ocean Initiatives has recently teamed up with the European Environment Agency and is inviting organisers to report data through the [Marine Litter Watch](#) app.

Litterati – global litter app Awareness-raising – Businesses

Litterati is an app that lets users – individuals, businesses, industry players, and public authorities alike – take geo-tagged images of litter. The data is then recorded, mapped and used as a guide to develop and implement effective solutions.

The Litterati community has grown to over 160,000 people across 165 countries. Anyone can join Litterati on their mission to monitor plastic pollution, raise awareness and help clean up the Earth simply by downloading the Litterati app on any smart device, and taking photos of litter.

Litterati's Global Litter Database has been used to inform government policy, influence changes to more eco-friendly packaging, and inspire greater personal responsibility among citizens.

Plastic-bottle-free cities guide Awareness-raising – NGOs

Developed by the Surfrider Foundation Europe, this **guide** provides decision-makers with a catalogue of 20 initiatives and best practices that could inspire local measures to tackle pollution from plastic bottles.

Every year on average, 52 billion plastic water bottles are consumed in Europe. Typically used for less than 24 hours, each bottle takes over 1,000 years to degrade in the environment. The guide is organised around five key priority actions: reduce at source, promote alternatives, improve design, improve end-of-life, and inform citizens and raise awareness.

The best practices guide is one of the deliverables and activities of Surfrider Foundation Europe's current **Break the Plastic Wave** campaign. This campaign mobilises citizens, businesses, public institutions and governments to transform the way we produce and consume in order to fight plastic pollution and preserve ocean health.

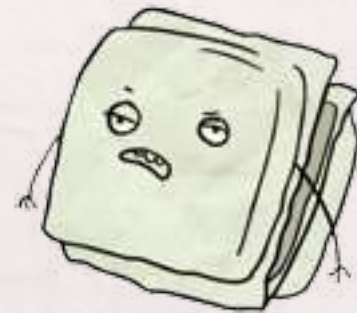
INTERNATIONAL BEST PRACTICES CONT.

Banning plastic bags – local authorities' guide Bans – NGOs

Developed by Surfrider Foundation Europe, this [guide](#) is aimed at local authorities that want to reduce the consumption of single-use plastic bags in their territories. By highlighting 20 best practices or initiatives in tackling plastic-bag pollution in different parts of the planet, the report intends to:

- guide municipalities engaged in reducing the consumption of single-use plastic bags;
- strengthen connections between local authorities, citizens, associations, and businesses that have implemented initiatives or wish to become involved;
- highlight and share the courageous and interesting experiences undertaken; and
- invite and convince other local authorities to ban disposable plastic bags.

It also gives ideas and advice for higher-level authorities, businesses, citizens, or groups that want to implement actions against single-use plastic bags.



References

The data collection for the purpose of this European catalogue of best practices was carried out in 2020 by Seas At Risk using the input of NGOs members of various international networks including Seas At Risk, Friends of the Earth Europe, Zero Waste Europe and the Break Free From Plastic movement. A number of publicly available publications or online platforms compiling best practices were also used, including:

Banning plastic bags – shopkeepers' guide Bans – NGOs

The aim of this [guide](#) developed by Surfrider Foundation Europe is to support European retailers in transitioning towards plastic bag-free shops. Through seven challenges to be taken up, this guide brings together all the questions retailers have asked about a possible future without plastic bags for their shop, from alternative solutions to good practices already used by other retailers. It provides retailers with the tools to implement the proposed solutions, hand-in-hand with their customers, while enhancing the image of their plastic bag-free shop.

The BFFP reuse best practices, which can be found on the website [We Choose Reuse](#).

The CCB (Clean Baltic Coalition) guide, [How municipalities can reduce the use of Single-Use Plastics on a local level](#).

The [Benchmark des solutions](#) published by the French NGO No Plastic in My Sea in 2020.

The [Plastic smart cities initiative](#) of WWF.





BEST PRACTICES TO REDUCE AND PHASE OUT SINGLE-USE PLASTICS IN EUROPE

Send us your best practices,
contact us at secretariat@seas-at-risk.org



#breakfreefromplastic