



Minutes

2018 Webinar on waste prevention Reuse in Europe Enhancing Waste Prevention

Tuesday, 9 October 2018, 11:00 - 12:45 (CET)

Report

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The European Topic Centre on Waste and Materials in a Green Economy
(ETC/WMGE)

Webinar recording is available at Eionet forum:
<https://forum.eionet.europa.eu/nrc-scp-waste/library/eionet-webinars/2018-eionet-webinar-reuse-europe/eionet-webinar-reuse-europe/webinar-reuse-recording/index.html>

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1 Background information

The European Environment Agency (EEA), supported by the European Topic Centre on Waste and Materials in a Green Economy (ETC/WMGE) organized the webinar on waste prevention with a focus on reuse on Tuesday, 9 October 2018. The webinar aimed at exploring reuse as a policy approach to enhance waste prevention.

1.1 Presenters

Daniel Montalvo, Head of Group response for waste prevention in the EEA, opened the webinar, which was co-chaired by Lars Fogh Mortensen (EEA) and Mona Arnold (ETC-WMGE)

The webinar included three presentations.

The first presentation, by Henning Wilts from the EEA's European Topic Centre on Waste and Materials in a Green Economy (ETC-WMGE), provided a summary of the status of reuse in countries' waste prevention programmes based on the recently published EEA report "Waste prevention in Europe – policies, status and trends in reuse in 2017" <https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/waste-prevention-in-europe-2017>.

The second presentation, by Piet de Baere from OVAM, Flanders, focused on the experiences with reuse in the region of Flanders.

The third presentation, by Jana Zurkova from the NGO RReuse, was on examples of how reuse is promoted by various organisations in Europe.

1.2 Participants

32 participants registered for the webinar for which we registered 22 established computer connections during the webinar itself.

Participants were National Reference Centres (NRCs) on Waste from EEA countries as well as the European Commission and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

2 Summary of presentations

Below, a short summary of each presentation is provided, along with a short bio of the presenter.

The presentations and recording are available at the EINOET Forum (Requires EIONET password)

Presentations:

<https://forum.eionet.europa.eu/nrc-scp-waste/library/eionet-webinars/2018-eionet-webinar-reuse-europe/eionet-webinar-reuse-europe/presentations>

The recording:

<http://forum.eionet.europa.eu/nrc-scp-waste/library/eionet-webinars/webinars-waste-prevention/sdfd>.

For non-EIONET participants, the presentations can be obtain by sending a request to Catherine.Brytygier@eea.europa.eu at EEA or Mona.Arnold@vtt.fi from the ETC-WMGE.

2.1 [Waste Prevention in Europe: policies, status and trends of reuse in 2017](#) by Henning Wilts, ETC-WMGE

Henning Wilts provided an overview of how reuse is addressed in Member State's Waste Prevention programmes, and on available data for status and trends of reuse systems in Europe. He addresses selected product groups and described the policies, instruments and business models in place to support reuse systems. His presentation was based on the recently published EEA report [Waste prevention in Europe -policies, status and trends in reuse in 2017](#).

Dr. Henning Wilts, Director of the Division on Circular Economy at the Wuppertal Institute for Climate, Environment and Energy, a partner of the European Topic Centre on Waste and Materials in a Green Economy (ETC-WMGE). He studies economics and political science at the University of Cologne, and PhD-Fellowship by the Hans-Böckler-Foundation at the TU Darmstadt, Chair for Infrastructure Planning. He coordinates several research projects on transition processes towards a circular economy, waste prevention and especially reuse/remanufacturing policies.

2.2 [Flemish reuse policy - Results and success factors](#) By Piet de Baere, OVAM

Piet de Baere from OVAM described Flanders' targets for reuse (7 kg/inhabitant per year by 2022) with the current trends and support actions. Piet argued that reuse should not been seen in isolation as a pure environmental protection action, but is also connected to social protection and social employment. Collaboration with and support from policy makers from different sectors is a key factor.

Piet de Baere is a materials science engineer who has been working for the OVAM (Public Waste Agency of Flanders) since 2003. He describes himself as a generalist interested and busy with waste prevention, re-use and separate flows as carpets, mattresses, textiles and furniture. Biggest challenge at the moment is turning the buzz words "circular economy" into a real policy with special attention for transparency and life time extension by repair, re-use and re-manufacturing.

2.3 [Making the EU circular economy social & inclusive](#) by Jana Zurkov, RREUSE

Jana Zurkova from RREUSE provided some statistics on reuse of certain product groups, showed how re-use is positioned in relation to EU Policy, giving concrete examples of activities of reuse organisations. She argued that one important step is to establish networks of activities, and thereby scale its impact towards a critical mass that can be integrated into local waste prevention and waste management strategies.

Jana Zurkova joined RREUSE in 2016 as the Network Coordinator and Communications Officer. She facilitates exchange of experience and know-how among social enterprises working in re-use & repair and monitors good practices across Europe as well as EU policy developments. Jana is working on the SURFACE Interreg project, which aims to create Smart re-use parks in Central Europe. She is also involved in Tournevie, the Brussels non-profit tool library fighting overconsumption by sharing quality tools and promoting DIY.

3 Discussion points

The presentations were followed by Q&A, summarised below.

Presentation by Henning Wilts, ETC-WMGE:

Q: Most policy instruments for reuse have a voluntary basis; where lies the biggest potential for regulatory instruments?

A: One large barrier for increased reuse for the consumer is the quality of the reused product and the reused product's guarantee. The second barrier relates to product regulation especially for electronic goods. Here we see a large inflow of cheap goods, which makes it difficult to establish a market for reused goods.

Q: How is the data availability and consistency for reuse?

A: Data is very scattered and variably available in different member states. Data from different countries are not easily comparable. Better and more consistent data are key point in order to promote reuse in Europe

Q: Can the lack of long-term targets for reuse depend on the fact that there is a lack of good indicators?

A: Both long- and mid-term European targets are needed to enhance reuse. Enhanced reused would require investment in production lines for more durable products, and also innovation in business models. This cannot happened without clear indicators and target setting.

Presentation by Piet de Baere, OVAM:

Q: What happens to the goods that are collected for reuse but are actually not reused? Are these goods that cannot be reused or goods put into the stores that are not sold?

A: These goods can belong to either category mentioned and they will ideally go to recycling.

Q: Construction material is an important part of the total flow of material use. Anyway, the reuse of buildings is not accounted for in Flanders' statistics. Likewise, there are established systems for reuse of cars but these do not show in the Flemish statistics on reuse?

Why is the indicator given in absolute mass/inhabitant?. Would it not be more interesting to look at the numbers as share of total material use?

A: Flanders has a separate plan for building materials and in this plan, reuse plays an important role. However, building materials and cars are not included in the reuse centres' activities. Flanders is also currently investigating suitable indicators for circular economy and the share of reused material in relation to the total flow is indeed a valid parameter.

Q Which product groups are most sold in the reuse centres? Any statistics about the percentages?

A: Counted in tons, furniture is scoring number one. In number of items, it is clothing.

Q: Are you considering getting data from private second hand stores and web places?

A: Flanders has been trying to get data from private vendors, but data is currently quite fragmented. It seems as a whole that the public reuse centres play anyway a significant role in the reuse sector. It is reasonable to consider that the higher quality and higher value goods

will go to private reuse channels, i.e. because the reuse centres are not allowed to pay for the goods, but people need to bring them there for free.

Q: Do you have an idea about the volume of web based reuse activity outside Flanders' own reuse centres and shops and how does this relate to the umbrella organisation?

A: Existing data are not sufficient to give a clear picture of the reuse activities outside their own organisation.

Q: Have you tried to see if the sales of new products are decreasing when the sales of reused products are increasing?

A: Data on the link between sales of new goods and reused is not existing. Also, the number of reused items is likely to be so small in relation to sales of new items that good statistics would be very difficult to establish.

Presentation by Jana Zurkov, RREUSE:

Comment (Chiels Berend, EC): EC have recently launched a study on establishing a methodology for reporting on reuse and it can hopefully be presented in early 2019. The study aims to give an overview on existing methods for reporting on reuse in different countries and give possible options to measure and report on this. EC also intends to provide a guidance document for the Member States on how to implement these new rules.

Q: RReuse's statistics give rather equivalent figures for the reuse of clothes, electronic goods and furniture, granting the average bulkiness of these product groups is quite different. On the other hand, the flow of construction material is a lot lower, although this is a very bulky product group. What is the reason for such statistics?

A: Electronic products include also big housing appliances (dishwashers etc.) adding to the tonnage. Again, construction material are niche activities and these figures are from only 2-3 members. Generally, members do not have a reporting obligation, they apply quite different reporting methods and the data is not harmonised.

Q: Many of your members also include repair in their activities. Do you have information about the reparability of the goods, trends?

A: Many members work with electrical equipment. Availability of spare parts is an issue as well as availability of information and repair manuals. Often the manufacturers do not provide this information and it is considered intellectual property. Moreover, the design of the product might hinder repair from an economic point of view, when disassembly requires more labour, which is expensive. Eco-design is developing to look beyond only energy efficiency and to include also material efficiency.

The commission is involved in looking into a reparability scoreboard that tries to assess the durability of certain products.

The general trend is however, declining quality,

Q: Also in Rreuse's data there is a significant difference between volumes collected for reuse and actually being reused. Do you have information on the reason for this and are there any actions aiming to decrease the difference?

It is a combination of goods not being sold and goods not being reusable in the first place. These goods go to material recycling. There is a huge potential in raising awareness, branding and making the customer more confident with buying reused products and by that increase local sales.