

PRESS RELEASE

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A stronger focus on quality is key to better align waste collection to recycling and move closer towards circular economy

The three-year COLLECTORS project provided insights on how to shift to better-performing waste collection systems during a successful final conference. The need to harmonise data, waste collection systems and quality requirements came back several times in the discussions led by COLLECTORS partners and experts in the field.

Brussels, Belgium – Embodying the project's call for more cooperation between all players of the recycling value chain, the nine partners of the [COLLECTORS](#) consortium concluding three years of successful collaboration by presenting the final results of their work during an online conference on 17 November. Organised in partnership with the European Parliament Intergroup on "Climate Change, Biodiversity and Sustainable Development", the event was opened by Mr. Franc Bogovič, Member of the European Parliament, who presented the general outlines of the EU strategy for Circular Economy. Dr. Marcin Sadowski, Head of Sector of Raw Materials and SILC II of EASME, also introduced the contribution of the Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe programmes for resource management.

The outputs of this comprehensive project, which shed light on existing **good practices of waste collection and sorting for paper and packaging, waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE), and construction and demolition waste (CDW)**, are manifold. This was shown during the conference by the different partners of COLLECTORS, starting with VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland Ltd which highlighted the main outputs and conclusion about decision-making for municipal waste management. In order to improve the environmental impact of waste collection, Leiden University suggested that **waste collection systems should focus more on the quality of the waste collected**. Regarding high recycling performances, PNO Consultants emphasised that **adequate economic framework conditions such as proper EPR compensations and taxes on disposal, could enhance their sustainability**. The question of **citizens' involvement** is equally important, as reminded by Zero Waste Europe, and **they should be more involved in the design and changes of collection schemes**. Before a presentation of the COLLECTORS policy recommendations by ACR+, VITO explained **how waste collection systems can move from a waste-oriented strategy to a "market pull approach" focusing on meeting the requirements and demands from the recycling sector**. The [policy recommendations](#) crystallize both the findings of COLLECTORS and the exchanges made with different

external stakeholders during several working groups and events. They focus on six key topics: harmonisation of separation guidelines, improvement of local WEEE collection, EPR fee modulation, local knowledge and data availability, recycling of construction and demolition waste, and the economic sustainability of high sorting performances.

The conference delved more into the key topics of the project by giving the floor to various experts during two roundtables. The first one focused on **how to improve knowledge of local waste management and traceability of sorted waste**. In her introduction, Silvija Aile, Deputy Head of Unit of the Waste Management and Secondary Materials Unit, European Commission's DG Environment mentioned the necessary changes to meet the new, ambitious EU targets on recycling. Three additional speakers developed their views on the topic: Pascal Leroy from WEEE Forum insisted on the necessity to address the challenges linked with unreported WEEE flows, Christine Leveque presented Suez' recent efforts to better track and trace plastic waste, and Arnout Sabbe from geoFluxus continued on the necessity to better harmonise waste data to allow their proper exploitation.

Mathieu Rama from Rreuse introduced the second roundtable about **economic instruments and how to make recycling financially viable** by insisting on the need for more economic instruments to promote re-use, such as lower VAT. In the following discussion, Joachim Quoden from EXPRA tackled the need for better cooperation between EPR systems and local authorities to fulfil the new targets. He was joined by Michele Giavini from ARS Ambiente and Julien Ruaro, from ADEME. The latter explained how a better understanding of local waste management costs through consistent reporting of data heavily contributed to optimise waste collection while the first showed how top-performing systems in Italy also presented lower costs.

To conclude, the COLLECTORS' project officer Susana Xara from EASME detailed the last steps of the project. The final activities include a **first analysis of the impact of the COVID crisis on municipal waste management**, along with **key recommendations to secure separate collection during pandemics**. The findings will be shared by the end of 2020. Before that, you can find the presentations made during the final conference on the [project's website](#).

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The COLLECTORS project aims to identify and highlight existing good practices of waste collection and sorting in relation to three waste streams: paper and packaging waste, waste electrical and electronic equipment, and construction and demolition waste. It brings together nine partners including consultancies, networks, universities and research institutes. In addition, the COLLECTORS project works with external stakeholders to ensure a participatory approach, to validate project activities and results, and to ensure the relevance of project outputs: local and regional authorities managing waste, citizens, and other stakeholders of the recycling value chain.

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