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Biowaste Challenge in Europe

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A significant part of the waste in EU is municipal biowaste, which should be treated in a way, which supports circular economy statements. Sharing Good Practices and exchanging knowledge is at the core of the [BIOREGIO](#) project activities. BIOREGIO network offers quick access to Municipal biowaste management in the EU available for local companies in Päijät-Häme.

Biowaste Is a Valuable Source

In terms of EU legislation, “[biowaste](#)” means biodegradable garden and park waste, food and kitchen waste from households, offices, restaurants, wholesale, canteens, caterers and retail premises and comparable waste from food processing plants (European Parliament and Council, 2008). Biowaste is a resource with a high potential for conversion. There are several treatments available, which can produce valuable products such as biofuels and fertilizers. However, if the waste management framework is lacking to operate efficiently, biowaste can be wasted unnecessarily. As it is pointed out in a recent study in Romania, uncontrolled waste management leads to more dumping in landfills. An effective solution is to establish a network which gives biowaste the value it has, as well as giving citizens the opportunity to benefit from it (i.e. household composting) (Mihai & Ingrao, 2018).



Biowaste. Photo: Oona Rouhiainen

EU Sets New Rules for Biowaste

As part of the new [EU regulations](#), biowaste separation will become mandatory in the upcoming years (European Council, 2017). In order to promote the circular economy (CE) throughout member states, four main legislations were addressed as part of the waste package. The waste package includes the waste framework, packaging waste, electronic waste and landfill directives.

The initial proposal was presented to the European Parliament in December 2017. The provisional agreement aimed at:

- Decreasing waste generation
- Improving recycling
- Extending responsibility to waste producers
- Implementing stricter measures regarding waste separation, including biowaste

[The EU ambassadors' endorsement](#) arrived this year, as part of the action plan following [the 2015 CE Package](#) (European Commission, 2015). EU members are expected to further improve waste management and upgrade their waste separation standards. In addition, according to the latest press release, they must ensure that by 31 December 2023, biowaste is either collected separately or recycled at source (e. g. home composting) (European Council, 2018).

Biowaste Challenge in Päijät-Häme Waste Management

Two local companies, Päijät-Häme Waste Management company (PHJ) and a biogas and composting company LABIO asked LAMK to find out how biowaste collection takes place in other regions of EU. Regional goal is to increase the recycling rate of biowaste by offering quality service fulfilling a high level of environmental protection at an affordable price. To identify the way bio-waste management works across different European countries, a study focusing on six regional BIOREGIO partners in Finland, Spain, France, Slovakia, Romania and Greece, will be conducted. Three research topics are addressed. First topic covers the collection systems of biowaste across municipalities including issues such as collection methods, biowaste separation and laws concerning the household collection. Second topic focuses on the processing of biowaste and available technologies. Third topic comprehends a study of future plans in biowaste management. This allows regions to address their views concerning obstacles and future legislation. **David Huisman Dellago** is assisting BIOREGIO researchers at LAMK, as part of his graduation competences. His bachelor thesis is focused on circular economy, nonetheless biowaste is closely related to the topic.

BIOREGIO believes that the outcomes of this study will be beneficial for setting up the long-term path towards the bio-based circular economy in Europe.

The exponential increase in the world population means more waste is produced every year. Considering the ever-increasing consumption of resources, it is known that waste management is the key to the sustainable development of cities across the planet. A significant part of the waste produced comes in the form of municipal biowaste.

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