



SUMMARY REPORT ON THE INTERREGIONAL WORKSHOP ON HOW TO FACILITATE THE MARKET PLACEMENT OF ALTERNATIVES FOR SINGLE-USE PLASTICS

An online event within the framework of the
Interreg Europe project PLASTEKO



Thursday, 15th April 2021

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1. Introduction and information on the workshop

Main aim of the present report is to summarize the findings made during Interregional workshop on how to facilitate the market placement of alternatives for single-use plastics. It describes the organization of the event, its course and main outcomes. Moreover, the report can be used by project partners as the main input for diffusing the lessons learned within their organizations and to promote storytelling. PLASTEKO interregional workshops have been designed to provide partners and participating stakeholders with valuable practical experience, enhancing the learning process on finding alternatives to single-use plastics.

Interregional workshop on how to facilitate the market placement of alternatives for single-use plastics within Activity A3.2b of PLASTEKO project was organized by Stara Zagora Regional Economic Development Agency ([SZ REDA](#)) 15th April 2021. The event took place virtually, due to Covid-19 travel restrictions. The event was bilingual – there was English – Bulgarian interpretation.

In the context of the workshop, the thematic focus is placed on four thematic axes, as dictated in the PLASTEKO Application Form:

1. Green public procurement, as a mean to generate demand for alternatives to single-use plastics.
2. Eco-labelling schemes, drawing from relevant EU initiatives and good practices, which partners and relevant stakeholders could use to boost the use of alternatives to single-use plastics.
3. Policy tools and instruments that partners and their stakeholders could utilise to support the uptake of alternatives to single-use plastics and develop secondary raw plastics markets.
4. Barriers that hinder the adoption of alternatives to single-use plastics and ways for mitigating their impact in partners' territories.



**INTERREGIONAL WORKSHOP ON
HOW TO FACILITATE THE MARKET PLACEMENT OF
ALTERNATIVES FOR SINGLE-USE PLASTICS**

15th April 2021, 11:00 EEST

AGENDA

REGISTRATION LINK: https://zoom.us/join/zoom/register/WN_U-ClROCZQGOnNGmTbMF7uQ

* Agenda according EEST (GMT+3)

11:00 - 11:15	Workshop opening and welcome	SZ REDA & LP
11:15 - 11:30	Get to know each other	All participants
11:30 - 12:00	Topic 1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Green public procurement for generating initial demand for alternatives to single-use plastics Lecturer: Nikolay Dimitrov , Head of Public Procurement And Concessions Department – Municipality of Gabrovo, BG	Nikolay Dimitrov
	Q&A session	All participants
12:00 - 12:30	Topic 2: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eco-labelling schemes For boosting the use of alternatives to single-use plastics Lecturer: Nadezhda Hristova , Ministry of Environment and Water, Representative for EU Ecolabel in Bulgaria	Nadezhda Hristova
	Q&A session	All participants
12:30 - 12:45	What does this sign mean? – interactive game	All participants
12:45 - 13:30	Lunch break	
13:30 - 13:45	Find the alternative! – interactive game	All participants
13:45 - 14:15	Topic 4: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Barriers to market uptake How to mitigate the impact of barriers to single-use plastics alternatives in PLASTECO territories Lecturer: Teodora Zhelyazkova , Ate Plast Ltd. , a leading manufacturer of flexible polyethylene foils and packaging, BG	Teodora Zhelyazkova
	Q&A session	All participants
14:15 - 14:45	Topic 3: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of secondary markets 	Hristo Dikov

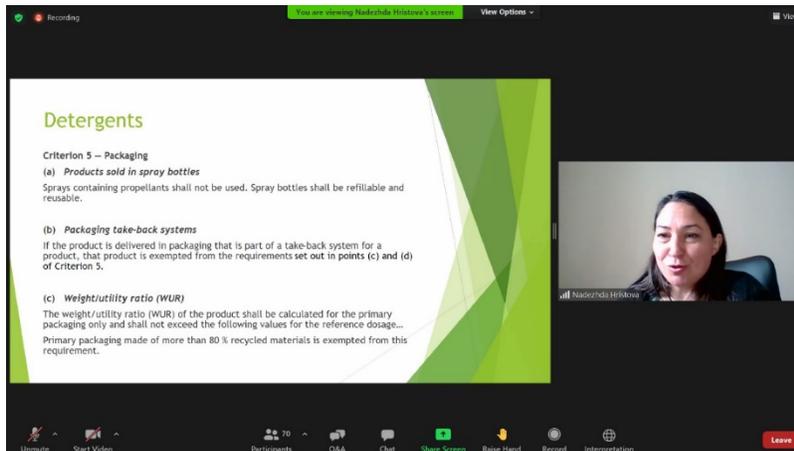
	How to support secondary raw plastic markets through effective policy & financial tools and influence societal behavior Lecturer: Hristo Dikov , Operative Manager, Ecopack Bulgaria , the largest organization for recovery of packaging waste in Bulgaria	
	Q&A session	All participants
14:45 - 15:00	Coffee break	
15:00 - 15:15	Interactive Breakout Session	All participants
15:15 - 15:30	Conclusion and recap	SZ REDA



The event was promoted on PLASTECO's website, on project's social media channels (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter), in various thematic groups on social media, on Interreg Europe platform etc. An event was created on Facebook and LinkedIn with the option for "Click to register". The workshop was also promoted throughout all communication channels of SZ REDA.

The platform used for the seminar was Zoom Webinars. 81 people registered for participation at the event and the maximum number of participants was 70. The group was multinational, with quite a

different attitude towards plastics. The majority of the participants represented the public sector, mainly coming from PLASTECO consortium countries. These results came out from a survey, conducted at the beginning of the webinar.



The event started at 11:00 EEST and finished at 15:30. Its content was balanced between lectures, interactive communication and discussions. Two of the topics in focus were presented at the morning session and the other two – in the afternoon. The event concluded with dividing the participants into breakout rooms and conducting discussions in smaller groups.

After welcome speeches on behalf of the organizer (SZ REDA, BG) and the lead partner (Municipality of Rethymno, BG) a poll was launched, in order to get to study the audience better. The first topic on 1. Green public procurement, as a mean to generate demand for alternatives to single-use plastics was presented by Mr. Nikolay Dimitrov, Head of Public Procurement and Concessions Department – Municipality of Gabrovo, BG. After a short Q&A session the second speaker, Mrs. Nadezhda Hristova, Ministry of Environment and Water, Representative for EU Ecolabel in Bulgaria, presented the topic Eco-labelling schemes, drawing from relevant EU initiatives and good practices, which partners and relevant stakeholders could use to boost the use of alternatives to single-use plastics. The presentation was followed by an interactive game “What does this sign mean?”, which had in game form explained the meaning of the most widespread product signs.



After the lunch break the workshop continued with another interactive game – “Find the alternative”. The purpose of the activity was to provoke the audience think what the substitute of the products could be covered by the SUP Directive.



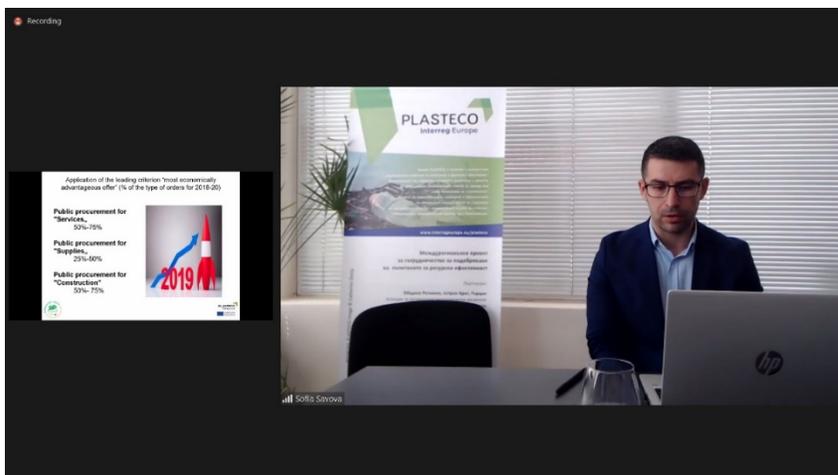
The topic on Barriers that hinder the adoption of alternatives to single-use plastics and ways for mitigating their impact in partners' territories was presented next by Mrs. Teodora Zhelyazkova, Sales Director of Ate Plast Ltd., a leading manufacturer of flexible polyethylene foils and packaging, BG. Last speaker at the workshop was Mr. Hristo Dikov, Operative Manager, Ecopack Bulgaria, the largest organization for recovery of packaging waste in Bulgaria. After a short coffee break the participants were divided into four groups committed to discuss the four thematic fields of the workshop. The workshop concluded with an overview and recap of the event and summary of its findings.

2. Key speakers and thematic fields

2.1. Green public procurement, as a mean to generate demand for alternatives to single-use plastics

According to the definition provided by the European Commission, Green Public Procurement is “a process whereby public authorities seek to procure goods, services and works with reduced environmental impact through their life cycle when compared to goods, services and works with

the same primary function that would otherwise be procured”.¹ In other words, GPP constitutes a vital tool to promote the use of greener products and services by the public authorities and, therefore, to meet environmental policy goals concerning climate change, resource efficiency, and sustainable production and



consumption. Indicatively, GPP can be instrumental in addressing ecological problems such as plastic waste, for example, by specifying processes or packaging which generate less waste or encouraging reuse and recycling of materials.

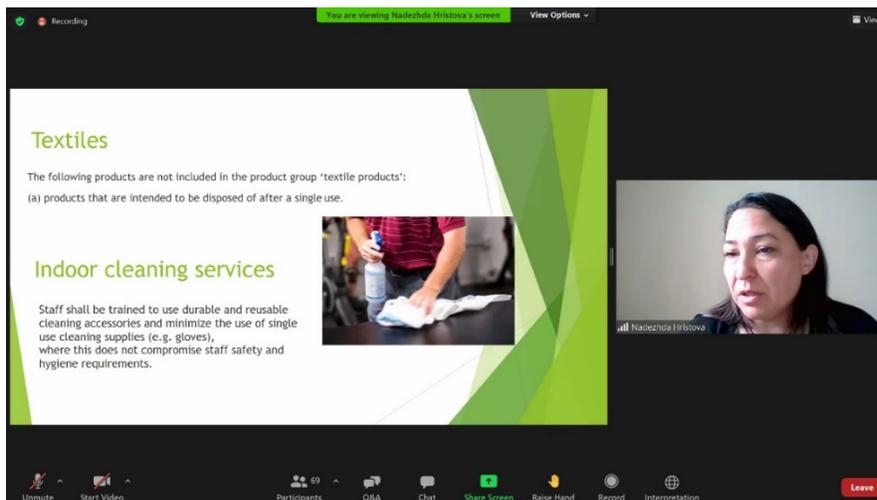
The topic on green public procurement was covered within the workshop by Nikolay Dimitrov – Head of department “Public Procurement and Concession“, Municipality of Gabrovo. He shared the positive experience of the Municipality of Gabrovo with implementing green criteria within its public procurement, despite the challenges met at the level of municipal administration. He presented an Action plan for stimulating the implementation of green public procurement in implementation of the Municipal Development Plan of the Municipality of Gabrovo.

Contact details of Mr. Dimitrov: n.dimitrov@gabrovo.bg

Presentation available [HERE](#).

2.2. Eco-labelling schemes, drawing from relevant EU initiatives and good practices, which partners and relevant stakeholders could use to boost the use of alternatives to single-use plastics.

Eco-labelling is a voluntary method of environmental performance certification and labelling that is practiced around the world. A European-wide eco-labelling scheme was introduced by the European Commission in 1992 as part of its 5th Environmental Action Plan. The EU eco-labelling scheme aims to promote products with reduced environmental harm during their entire life-cycle and provide customers with information about the environmental impact and substances contained in products. More specifically, environmental labels offer a plethora of benefits to consumers, producers, and public authorities.



The Eco-labeling was presented by Mrs. Nadezhda Hristova, expert at the Ministry of Environment and Water, Representative for EU Ecolabel in Bulgaria. She presented an overview over the development of the European labeling schemes and the current products and services covered by it. Main approach of the eco-

labeling is restriction of single use products, refillable and reusable containers, take-back systems, weight/utility ratio, design for recycling, recycled plastic content.

Contact details of Mrs. Hristova: n.hristova@moew.government.bg

Presentation available [HERE](#).

2.3. Policy tools and instruments that partners and their stakeholders could utilise to support the uptake of alternatives to single-use plastics and develop secondary raw plastics markets.



Secondary raw materials (SRMs) are materials and articles that may be used repeatedly in production as starting material after completing initial use. Some of the most important forms of secondary raw materials are a) scrap (usable waste of ferrous, nonferrous, and precious metals), b) wastepaper and glass, c) machines, equipment, and their components that have fallen out of service, d) metal parts obtained in

the demolition of buildings and/or old ships, e) secondary metals formed in the shape of depreciated scrap and industrial waste, and f) end waste products of production.

The topic on secondary raw materials was covered by Mr. Hristo Dikov, Operative Manager at Ecopack Bulgaria, the largest organization for recovery of packaging waste in Bulgaria. He emphasized that increasing demand depends on lower recycling costs compared to primary material together with increased recycling targets on behalf of producers, municipalities etc. A focus of his presentation was the importance of subsidizing part of the recycling costs, introducing requirements for rPET in the product, implementing fees for non-recycled plastic and fostering competition between processors.

Contact details of Mr. Dikov: HDikov@ecopack.bg

Presentation available [HERE](#).

2.4 Barriers that hinder the adoption of alternatives to single-use plastics and ways for mitigating their impact in partners' territories.

The greatest challenge appears to be to lift regulatory barriers to a circular economy. The obstacles in question are multiple and concern an entire spectrum of directives, legislation, and regulations on the circular economy. These obstacles can be summarized as follows: a) low and at times, uneven implementation of EU directives across member states, b) lack of harmonization and non-aligned rules at a national and regional level translate into a diverse yet flawed policy mix concerning recycling, reuse, and introduction of eco-friendly alternatives to single-use plastics, c) lack of stringent government regulations concerning waste management, d) division between government departments responsible for procurement and environmental matters and e) limited government initiatives to promote alternatives to single-use plastics.



recycled in a cost-effective manner; By 2030, >50% of plastics waste generated in Europe is recycled; By 2030, sorting and recycling capacity has increased 4x vs 2015, leading to the creation of 200 000 new jobs; Halt export of poorly sorted plastics waste; Substances hampering recycling processes replaced or phased out; Demand for recycled plastics in Europe grows 4x vs. 2015. The expert identified the main barriers to the implementation of the SUP Directive, which are mainly in social, regulatory, operational/technical or economic.

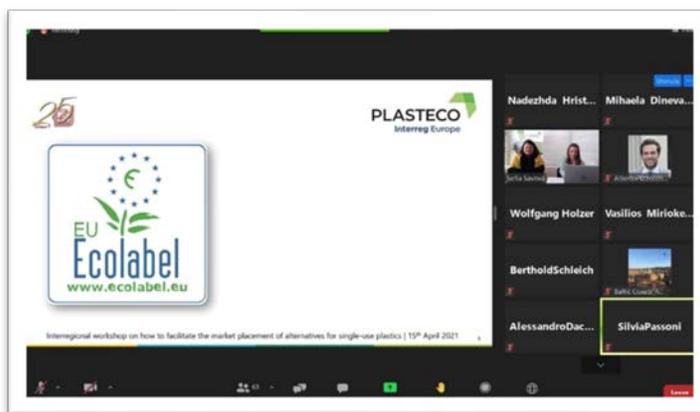
Contact details of Mrs. Zhelyazkova: teodora@ateplast.eu

Presentation available [HERE](#).

3. Interactive activities

To engage more the audience and to provoke the participants to get involved, SZ REDA implemented couple of interactive activities.

3.1. **Zoom poll:** main aim of the activity was to identify the profile of the audience. The poll consisted of 3 questions, one about the country of origin of the participants, another on their professional background and last one on their attitude towards plastics. The results showed that the majority of the participants comes from countries within the European Union and represent mostly the public sector. The responses to the question about participants position towards plastics proved that the biggest share of the audience is engaged with the topic and is aware of the existing problem with plastic pollution.



3.2. **Interactive game “What this sign mean?”:** The game was aimed at proving to what extent the participants are aware of the meaning of different product signs. After showing a popular sign, the audience was asked what it means. The active participation of the attendees allowed to make the conclusion that there is a public awareness

of these symbols and the idea to use such to promote the alternatives for single-use plastics is more than relevant.

Link to the presentation available [HERE](#).

3.3. Interactive game “Find the alternative”:



the idea behind the game was to direct audience’s attention to the fact, that most used single-use plastics have accessible alternatives. After a short presentation of the SUP Directive, coming into force in July 2021 the participants were called to propose an alternative to those products which are in focus of the Directive. The result from the game demonstrated that there are adequate alternatives and participants are aware of them.

Link to the presentation available [HERE](#).

3.4. Videos played during the workshop

- What really happens to the plastic you throw away - Emma Bryce

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_6xINyWPpB8&t=16s

- EU Ecolabel

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u1dDLhTmW8>

3.5. Breakout room sessions

The format of the organized workshop was Zoom Webinar. However, after creating the event and sharing the link with the broader audience we were informed by zoom support, that breakout rooms option is not accessible when having a webinar. This necessitated the inconvenience of changing the event after the coffee break in order to access the breakout rooms. The audience was divided into 4 groups, each of them discussing 1 of workshop’s topics. Despite the decreased number of participants, the discussions in smaller groups were fruitful and meaningful.

4. Conclusion

This report presented the outcomes of the workshop and could be used by project partners as the main input for diffusing the lessons learned within their organisations and to promote storytelling. Despite the difficulties in organizing a practical event such as a workshop in a virtual environment, the event has fulfilled its aim to present a comprehensive analysis of the market placement of

alternatives for single-use plastics. It covered all aspects predefined in the application form, presenting the problematic from different perspectives – local (speaker 1, Mr. Dimitrov) and national authorities (speaker 2, Mrs. Hristova) on the one hand, and business on behalf of waste utilizing companies (speaker 3, Mr. Dikov), and plastic producing companies (speaker 4, Mrs. Zhelyazkova). This multilevel approach allowed deepened sequence of the topic, shaping the notion for alternatives for single-use plastics in the light of the light of the SUP directive.

Besides the presentational part, SZ REDA's team invested significant efforts in proposing an exciting event that, despite being virtual, offers a significant interaction with the audience. The interactive games, the breakout rooms and the videos presented the problematic from a different angle, involving the audience to really participate at the event. SZ REDA's team is convinced that the main messages of the event were well accepted and the idea behind the organization was well appreciated.

The input paper for the Interregional workshop on how to facilitate the market placement of alternatives for single-use plastics and the event itself were recognized by Policy learning platform experts as highly relevant. Thus, SZ REDA's team representative was invited as guest speaker at a INTERREG Europe webinar on policy solutions to stop marine litter and plastic pollution, a part of EU Green Week 2021. The presentation pointed out PLASTECO's consortium's achievements focusing mainly on the regulatory framework in the field of plastics. More information on the event together with a video record available [here](#).