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PLASTIX

Interreg Europe
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PLASTIX

Did you know that only 5% of all plastics are recycled?!

There's no getting around it. Plastic is a widely used (packaging) material in our daily lives. But compared to paper, glass and metal, plastic is the least recycled and reused. Only 5% of all plastic worldwide gets a second life. Time to take action!

As the province of Fryslân, we want to set a good example. We want to show how we deal responsibly with people and materials. So that others will do the same. We have set ourselves the goal of being the most circular region in Europe by 2030. To achieve this goal, we need to take action on a regional scale. Our contribution in the transition to a circular chain of plastics is hugely important in this regard.

In January 2023, from our economic agenda, we started the Interreg Europe project PLASTIX. This circular project focuses specifically on supporting this transition. Within PLASTIX, we share knowledge about recycling materials throughout the chain, but with a focus on circular plastics. The goal is to help SMEs in each region innovate. They often have the will to become more sustainable, but still have many questions. The partners in the project will actively help these companies. They will do this by stimulating cooperation between the companies and schools, by offering administrative support and by helping to use funds to achieve their sustainable goals.

Province of Friesland is facilitating a benchmark tool for PLASTIX that originated in the Interreg project Replace. With this tool, knowledge can be made measurable and comparable. This gives us insight into which areas regions are most ahead and which are less so. This allows regions to help each other more effectively with each other's development issues.

During several partner meetings, the partners inform each other about the work files and we learn more about the initiatives in each other's regions. This month, the second partner meeting of PLASTIX took place in Spain. Project leader Esther Hofman represented our circular economy team. She participated in the program together with Martine Brandsma from the National Circular Plastics Test Center (NTCP) in Heerenveen and Dennis Mous from the municipality of Heerenveen.

Esther Hofman: "We visited the Barcelona Supercomputing Center.

This research institute can use AI and big data to create designs for circular plastics and green chemicals, among other things.

For example, they are working on a protein design to facilitate the degradation of plastics in the oceans. Fascinating to see how these worlds come together and what kind of developments are occurring there.

A tour and talk at GCR Plastic Solutions were also scheduled. They have a plastic recycling plant. Whereas the NTCP is primarily committed to the sorting washing process of plastics, the beginning of the recycling loop, this center is committed to the end of the loop. From recycling plastics to new products. Therefore, they were able to learn a lot from each other's processes. Furthermore, there was a lot of time in the program to exchange knowledge with the different European partners about collaborations between the government and companies working on recycling plastics."