

## Partner Regions Leading the Way in Re-use and Circular Economy Policies

In recent months, the 2LIFES project has demonstrated remarkable progress in its partner regions' efforts to promote re-use policies.

Each partner has made significant policy changes and implemented actions aimed at fostering a re-use culture and reducing waste through a regional Action Plan. A summary of the main policy developments and their implementation, per partner region, can be found below.

To demonstrate the overall impact of 2LIFES and interregional cooperation in a more general sense, it is necessary to emphasize the following points:

- **Policy Impact and Transformation:** The 2LIFES project has catalyzed a wave of policy changes that prioritize re-use and waste reduction. Each partner region has embraced this ethos, resulting in comprehensive Action Plans that underscore the importance of re-use and repair to transition to a low-carbon circular economy.
- **Innovative Initiatives:** One commonality among the partner regions is the implementation of innovative initiatives to promote re-use. From the REUSE Rolling Repair Van in Denmark to the Swap Boxes in Hungary, these initiatives inspire citizens to actively participate in the circular economy. Mobile Repair Cafes, training programs, and revitalized re-use centers further emphasize the importance of repair and re-use in daily life.
- **Cross-Regional Influence:** The partner regions draw inspiration from one another, creating a network of shared best practices. Successful models and ideas from one region have influenced the development of initiatives in others. This cross-regional influence showcases the strength of collaboration and highlights the importance of knowledge sharing.
- **Unique and Continued Impact:** The 2LIFES project has played a pivotal role in shaping these initiatives. Its insights and experiences have been instrumental in guiding partner regions towards sustainable policies and practices. The project's influence goes beyond policy changes, fostering a sense of community and a shared ethos that will ensure continued impact beyond the project's conclusion.

In conclusion, the 2LIFES project has enabled a transformative approach towards re-use and circular economy policies in partner regions. These regions have not only embraced these principles but have also implemented innovative initiatives to help create a re-use culture.

### **Kredsløb – Denmark**

In Aarhus, Denmark, Kredsløb's commitment to re-use and repair has resulted in significant progress. The Waste Plan Aarhus 2021-2026 was shaped through an extensive citizen participatory process, with more than 3,700 citizens participating in surveys, interviews, and public consultations. Participating in the 2LIFES project also gave it insights. This plan, approved in November 2021, puts re-use and repair at the forefront, aligning with the principles promoted by the 2LIFES project.

Two major actions under Kredsløb's Action Plan are the development of a REUSE Rolling Repair Van and the initiation of a project to re-use building materials in Aarhus.

The implementation of Kredsløb's Action Plan has seen significant progress. The REUSE Rolling Repair Van has been successfully launched, participating in over 30 events throughout the city, including the Ocean Race and the NorthSide rock festival. The van has become a symbol of Aarhus' commitment to circular economy principles and has also inspired community groups to establish their own repair initiatives.

However, Kredsløb has highlighted the paradox of using an old diesel van to promote repair and sustainability. Therefore, it has been decided to downscale the external repair activities in the autumn of 2023, and instead prioritize the establishing and staffing of a permanent repair café at the REUSE recycling station.

Similarly, the re-use of building components and materials at the Lisbjerg Recycling Centre has been warmly received, with more than 800 tonnes of materials recycled in the first half of 2022. This success has led to plans for introducing similar re-use areas at two other recycling stations in Aarhus in the near future.

Overall, Kredsløb's Action Plan has demonstrated its effectiveness in encouraging citizens and organisations to actively participate in the circular economy. By focusing on repair, re-use, and material recycling, Aarhus moves closer to its vision of becoming a CO<sub>2</sub>-neutral city by 2030, fostering a more sustainable and resource-efficient city.

The valuable insights and experiences gained from the 2LIFES project have played a pivotal role in shaping these initiatives.

### **Marche Region - Italy**

The Marche Region is moving forward with its Action Plan, which aims to enhance waste prevention and re-use practices in the region. Two key actions have taken center stage: the creation of management software for re-use centers and the development of a specialized training course for "re-use valorisers."

In pursuit of the first action, the Marche Region consulted the expertise of ATA Rifiuti of the Province of Ancona and municipalities with re-use centers and engaged in a comprehensive consultation process with three municipalities to identify software requirements. The specialized software aims to streamline re-use

centers' operations. The software promises to improve services to citizens, enhance monitoring, and boost the overall efficiency of re-use centers.

The software development was outsourced to SISTEMA3, a specialized company. Costs were carefully calculated, covering software, devices, technical assistance, and maintenance for two years. After development, the software was approved by the Marche Region and is now being distributed to selected re-use centres in the region. A mid-term monitoring phase is planned for adjustments. In July 2023, the pilot project's results were presented at a dissemination meeting. The Marche Region intends to extend the software to all re-use centres.

Simultaneously, the Marche Region has developed a comprehensive training program aimed at upskilling and reskilling operators of re-use centers. This program not only equips individuals with the necessary skills but also offers a broader perspective on re-use and training in digital skills. This training program was inspired by a meeting with RESSOURCES, a network of social enterprises in Brussels and Wallonia, and member of 2LIFES' partner RREUSE.

Cooperativa Sociale Risorse was entrusted with the task of organizing and conducting the training. The course's content was carefully designed, and its structure comprises six modules and study visits, with a total duration of 34 hours. The selected Re-use centres, including those in Osimo, Polverigi, S. M. Nuova, Sassoferrato, Serra de' Conti, San Marcello-Belvedere Ostrense-Morro d'Alba, Castel Raimondo, and Fermo, will benefit from this training. A dissemination meeting took place in July 2023 to present the pilot project and its implementation at the Re-use centres in the experimental phase. Following the dissemination meeting, the first training session will take place, and the course is planned to end in November 2023 with a study tour.

### **Central Transdanubia Region - Hungary**

In the Central Transdanubia Region, Hungary, the partnership between Zöldellő Sárrét Association, Veszprém Public Utility Services Ltd., the Municipality of Veszprém, and the Central Transdanubian Regional Innovation Agency (KDRIÜ) has yielded promising results.

The first action of their Action Plan involved the establishment and operation of a Swap Box in Veszprém. Swap boxes are spaces with a pleasant aesthetic that allow citizens who want to get rid of an object still in good condition to donate it there, thus allowing any interested person to take it free of charge. Their design protects donated goods from harm that could affect their re-use potential.

In spring 2023, after preparing the swap box, designing it, and installing information panels, the organization placed the first Swap Box in a district and promoted it accordingly. This move was inspired by a successful re-use initiative in Aarhus, Denmark, and aimed to address the region's current lack of re-use centers while promoting a culture of re-use.

The second action, the GreenTeen Programme to be carried out in schools, is already being implemented with training sessions in secondary schools. This initiative draws inspiration from Italy's Ludoteche del Riuso, an educational initiative promoting waste reduction and re-use through creative activities. The success of Ludoteche del Riuso influenced this program, emphasizing experiential learning and hands-on engagement to instill the importance of waste reduction and re-use among young students. All 2LIFES partners could visit this inspiring initiative during the study visit to Marche Region in March 2022.

### **EMULSA – Spain**

EMULSA, the waste management authority for Gijón, Spain, has taken substantial steps to promote re-use and waste prevention within its jurisdiction. EMULSA's Action Plan was split in two actions: first, improving the local re-use centre and Reusapp while creating green and social employment, and second, developing mobile Repair Cafes.

A local social enterprise, Emaús Riquirraque, was awarded a contract to refurbish and revitalize the local re-use centre, which is linked to the Reusapp initiative. EMULSA's use of a reserved contract for social enterprises demonstrates a forward-thinking approach to public procurement. By involving social enterprises in the collection, transport, and treatment of second-hand products, EMULSA recognizes their pivotal role in the circular economy, and demonstrates a commitment to create circular jobs for individuals at risk of social exclusion.

The first action also included the establishment of swapping sites for citizens, in line with the Swap Boxes used in Aarhus, Denmark. These sites will be established around the city center and aim to promote direct re-use and waste prevention. Public procurement was employed by EMULSA to implement this initiative.

The social enterprise Emaús Riquirraque has extended opening hours in the Reusapp area and runs awareness workshops. These monthly workshops cover themes such as making furniture with pallets, refurbishing furniture, re-using costumes, techniques to avoid food waste, repairing bicycles, and more. This initiative empowers residents with the knowledge and skills to re-use various products, in line with the principles of the 2LIFES project. Over a hundred people have attended.

With respect to the second action, the development of mobile Repair Cafes, the first steps to locate the appropriate vehicles have been taken. On the one hand, a Rolling Repair Van serves as an advertising tool to promote re-use and repair. On the other hand, it can be used as a mobile Repair Café that connect with citizens by going to events, green markets, etc. This initiative will provide a service to citizens for the repair of small household products.

EMULSA has already organized "pop-up" events in various locations throughout Gijón, showcasing the possibilities of re-using items and raising awareness about the importance of incorporating reuse practices into daily life.

### **ANEL - Cyprus**

ANEL, acting as an intermediary consultative body, has played a pivotal role in facilitating collaboration between various stakeholders to promote a circular economy in Nicosia, Cyprus.

Drawing inspiration from successful initiatives in Region Marche, Italy, ANEL is on track to establish an Inter-municipal Reuse Centre in the District of Nicosia. This center, financed through the Cyprus Recovery and Resilience Plan, focuses on creating green jobs for disadvantaged individuals, emphasizing training programs to integrate vulnerable groups into the labor market.

The Centre, approved to be funded by the Cyprus Recovery and Resilience Plan, will provide job and training programs to disadvantaged individuals while facilitating the collection, sorting, and distribution of re-usable products and materials. ANEL's efforts align with the Waste Hierarchy, and they are collaborating closely with the Ministry, Municipalities, academia, NGOs, and the private sector to ensure the project's success.

The space will be accessible for people with reduced mobility. It will have a total of 2,000-2,500 m<sup>2</sup> for indoor spaces and 3,000-3,500 m<sup>2</sup> for the needs of open spaces. The centres will include a parking lot, reception area, exchange area, warehouse, repair point, and second-hand shop.

### **KRWMC – Lithuania**

KRWMC's Action Plan focused on optimizing the utilization of the remaining funds from the Lithuanian multi-fund OP for 2014-2020. Specifically, their attention was on Measure No. 05.2.1-APVA-R-008, which pertains to the development of municipal waste management infrastructure.

Despite the Klaipėda Region's strong focus on municipal waste incineration, the shift toward waste sorting, repair, and re-use is underway.

To combat waste, KRWMC is actively engaging regional communities. They aim to boost food waste sorting and reduction through integrated re-use measures in Klaipeda County. This initiative draws inspiration from successful models such as the Holistic Waste Management Program in the Municipality of Aglantzia (Cyprus) and the Ki? – Ti & Mi initiative in Hungary (both identified as regional best practices in the framework of the 2LIFES project). The former introduced a variable waste collection fee, allowing citizens to pay less by reducing waste generation. The latter educates people on buying groceries and local food without disposable packaging at local farmer's markets.

Additionally, the Action Plan seeks to establish and promote a public participation network with a focus on food waste sorting, reduction, and re-use of bags and packaging in Klaipeda County. This approach is influenced by the effective practices of Ludoteca "Riù" in the Marche Region, Italy.