



# Newsletter #4 July 2021

Dear Reader,

Welcome to the third edition of Newsletter series of the OptiWaMag!

The Interreg Europe programme, financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), is designed to support policy-learning among the relevant policy organizations with a view to improving the performance of regional development policies and programmes. Interreg Europe programme has approved the OptiWaMag interregional cooperation project for supporting to protect the environment and promote the resource efficiency.

In the following pages, you will find an editorial describing the overall context and objectives of the project as well as information on the latest developments and upcoming events. The OptiWaMag Newsletters are published in every six months. Through our project website and this periodic newsletter, we will keep you informed about our progress and key outcomes.

### The OptiWaMag project team



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**PROJECT AT A GLANCE**

OptiWaMag involves 6 EU regions with a shared ambition to accelerate the scaling up of waste management innovation that can support active and innovative environment and resource efficiency and secure the triple win of economic growth, more sustainable ecosystem services and improved well-being of Europe's citizens.

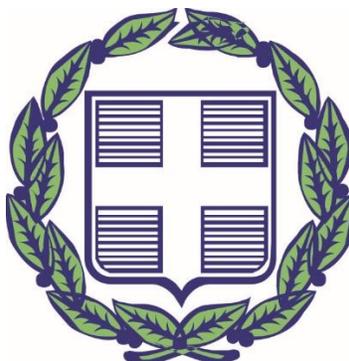
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## 5th Interregional Meeting

Host: Region of  
Thessaly

Due to the outbreak of the Corona virus disease (COVID-19), the meeting was held online. Project OptiWaMag concludes diagnosis of waste management systems and starts a new phase of work.

The OptiWaMag project seeks innovation in urban waste management policies. Six European entities from Portugal, Sweden, Latvia, Greece, Hungary and Italy constitute an interregional and inter-institutional collaborative partnership for the exchange of experiences and good practices, co-learning and knowledge transfer. During the first day of the event, took place the session of interregional mutual learning and



REGION OF THESSALY

exchange of good practices with the participation of project partners and involved stakeholders of the project's Regions. A broad range of actions and practices that support innovation in waste management both in urban spaces and in households were presented to decision makers and practitioners of the involved local communities. Likewise, the panelists had an opportunity to share their experiences and expertise for the improvement of waste management policies, resource efficiency and sustainable development.

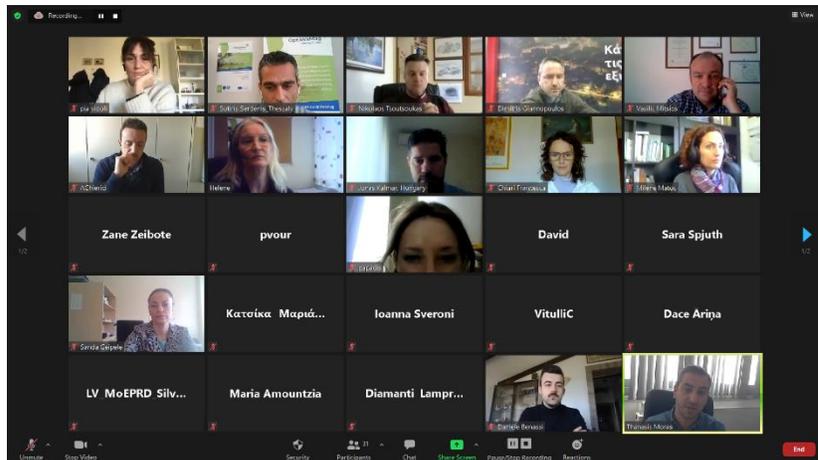
During the first part of the session, Region of

Thessaly presented the state of play on waste management on regional and national level, focusing on the objectives of the new National Waste Management Plan which aims to reduce landfill at 10% and increase recycling to 60% in 2030. Following, the three (3) Solid Waste Management Associations (SWMA) of Thessaly, namely PADYTH S.A, FoDSA of Larissa and SYDISA, provided detailed information about their current and planned activities mentioning the importance of the upcoming Mechanical Biological Treatment plants for waste and biowaste are expected to optimize waste management process in Thessaly. In addition, the SWMA highlighted good practices on home composting and pesticide packaging recycling programmes that have

been successfully implemented in the Region.

The second part of the interregional mutual learning session included the presentation of good practices on waste management in the Regions of the OptiWaMag project. In particular, the Municipality of Casalgrande from Italy, showcased practices of door-to-door household waste collection systems, initiatives on home composting, solutions on reduction of single use plastic bottles, on vegetable oils collection systems and the operation of a reuse center for the promotion of circular economy.

Following, the Lead Partner, County Administrative Board of Östergötland from Sweeden, presented a successful action of food waste recycling from households through separate bag collection



and the operation of recycling centers that enable the collection of mostly bulky waste for reuse.

The Development Organization from Hungary introduced to the participants investments of selective solid waste management systems in the Region and the development of a waste sorting plant with optical sorting machine that facilitates recycling and minimizes the landfilled waste.

The Municipality of Lousada from Portugal presented the good practice of an EcoCentre

that by providing financial incentives to the participating households has improved the municipal sorting rate and an initiative that has been implemented in a rural area of Northern Portugal for the promotion of domestic and community composting and waste sorting/ recycling.

Finally, the Riga Technical University (RTU) from Latvia demonstrated a practical example of “Pay As You Throw – PAYT” principle by the implementation of waste weighting and collection of biowaste and unsorted waste systems. In addition, RTU presented the good practice of deep containers for waste collection and automatic control of waste

producer and activities for the education and raise awareness of the citizens in terms of waste sorting and recycling along with the innovative solutions for the involvement of people on waste prevention and environmental protection.

The session ended with a discussion among the participants on the experience and practical knowledge gained from the elaboration of the above practices with a special focus on transferring opportunities based on the needs and perspectives of the participating Regions.

The agenda of the second day of the Interregional Meeting included the monitoring of the financial and physical object of the OptiW aMag project and the coordination of the partnership for the following two Semesters of the Phase 1 activities and particularly for the

preparation of the Regional Action Plans.

In addition, during the second day, the Expert Task Force (ETF) and Steering Group meetings took place setting the work plan and the deadlines of the upcoming activities.



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## Partners evaluated the first period



The internal survey was initiated by the Lead Partner, it had 7 questions regarding the process, and expectations. The results showed that participants were satisfied with the project evolution and also with the internal processes: the respondents found Optiwamag tools (survey, spider diagram, workshops, partner meetings) helpful regarding their individual learning - avg 4.1 out of 5 points. It turned out, that the stakeholder workshops

and the partners meeting were the most popular instruments. Also the best features of the OptiWaMag project are partners' cooperation and the in-depth understanding of the

## Extra semester voted by partners

The Optiwamag Steering Group decided to formally extend the project by

waste management sector. Also the majority of the participants already identified the exact topic - within waste management - they will move forward with to improve the policy document.

The most mentioned obstacles, which are slowing down the evolution of the project are the Covid 19 situation and lack of stakeholders' availability.

In summary, the result of the evaluation showed that the participants appreciating the project and they highlight the interpersonal communications, especially the stakeholder workshops and partner meetings as popular tool in the project.

adding one semester (6 months). This extension means that more time will be allocated to Phase 1.

The extension will apply to the whole partnership, the new project end date will be

The objective of Optiwamag is to offer innovative proposals to optimize the management policies of urban solid waste and in households, through the development of regional action plans to improve their efficiency.

31/07/2023, including the phase 2. Although the project is on track with the timings and responsibilities, the extension will allow the project partners to complete the final results.

## Project Partners

Six partners from Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Portugal and Sweden are working on the OptiWaMag project

The partnership is led by the County Administrative Board of Östergötland from Sweden.

1) County Administrative Board of Östergötland



2) Development Organization



3) Municipality of Lousada



4) Riga Technical University



5) Municipality of Casalgrande



6) Region of Thessaly



### CONTACT DETAILS

**Lead partner:**

County Administrative Board of Östergötland (SWE)

**Contact person:**

Helene Rask

**Email:**

[helene.rask@lansstyrelsen.se](mailto:helene.rask@lansstyrelsen.se)

**Telephone:** +46 102235452

**Next OptiWaMag event:** The 6th Interregional Meeting will be in Latvia. The event will cover a review of the waste management system and a progress assessment in Latvia.

**For more information about the waste management project, visit our website:**

<https://www.interregeurope.eu/optiwamag>

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