



# ACTIVITY REPORT

2017

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rreuse 

# ABOUT US

RREUSE is an independent non-profit organisation representing social enterprises active in the field of re-use, repair and recycling. In 2017 RREUSE federated 29 members across 24 European countries and the USA.

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## Our main vision

is for Europe to support the role of social enterprise in a circular economy, providing meaningful work opportunities to thousands of vulnerable members of our community through innovative economic, social and environmentally beneficial activities.

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## RREUSE's primary mission

is to help tackle poverty, social exclusion and a throwaway culture by promoting policies, best practices and partnerships that support the professionalism and development of social enterprises working in environmental services with high potential for local and inclusive job creation, notably re-use and repair.

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→ [www.rreuse.org](http://www.rreuse.org)



## The main activities of our members include:

Collection, sorting and redistribution of used textiles and clothing

Collection, repair and re-use of electronics, furniture and other bulky waste

Re-use of other household items such as bric-a-brac, books, toys and paint

Operating charity and second hand shops

Collection and recycling of paper, cardboard, wood, plastics and metals

Home, community and cooperative composting

Awareness raising campaigns, international projects, exchange of best practice and business support

RREUSE members annually divert around 1 million tonnes of materials from landfill through re-use, repair and recycling, generating a combined turnover of 1,500,000,000 EUR. These activities enable the 1,000 social enterprises federated by RREUSE's wider network to fulfil their social mission, which for the most part, is the provision of work opportunities, training and support services for disadvantaged individuals. Approximately 140,000 employees, volunteers and trainees are engaged in the activities of RREUSE's members.

→ [www.rreuse.org](http://www.rreuse.org)





# OUR NETWORK

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## MEMBER HIGHLIGHTS 2017

### Belgian region sets re-use target for electricals

In 2017 the southern Belgian region of Wallonia introduced a separate target for the re-use of waste electrical items following a pioneering move by Spain in 2015. RREUSE, together with its Brussels and Walloon member RESSOURCES, welcomed the new rules which require 2 % of waste electric and electronic equipment (WEEE) to be 'prepared for re-use' annually from January 2020. The re-use and repair of unwanted yet re-useable electrical appliances are key activities for many social enterprises in Europe and such targets will help further develop the sector. The initiative coincided with the publication of a study by a consultancy on behalf of the European Commission on the feasibility of setting separate preparing for re-use targets for WEEE at EU level. In the report countries with national targets were acknowledged to be more likely to increase preparing for re-use rates and promote access to discarded yet re-useable goods for re-use operators as required by the WEEE Directive.

### Austrian social enterprises develop a business model for re-use of building materials

For the first time in Austria the re-use of building components from a large-scale demolition site was demonstrated as part of the BauKarussell project. A consortium of social enterprises, building designers and an ecological consultancy combined different perspectives and expertise with the aim to develop a service package for the dismantling of large buildings for re-use. The pilot started in Vienna with the dismantling of a former bottling plant of a major international beverage producer, primarily involving workers distanced from the labour market. The demolition focused on manual dismantling, allowing for the re-use of building components and high-value recycling. The activities resulted in a turnover of 100,000 EUR and prevented 450,000 kg of waste, corresponding to nearly 1 % of the total demolition mass.



© RepaNet / BauKarussell



© Rediscovery Centre / WISER Life

### Education centre in Dublin puts circular economy talks into practice

In May 2017 a renovated 1960s boiler house in Dublin became a unique place to cluster organisations, including social enterprises, that deliver green services and initiatives in re-use, repair and upcycling. Originally destined for demolition, the industrial building was instead renovated through the European backed project WISER LIFE, demonstrating how to use waste as resources and keep energy and materials in circulation. The project was spearheaded by the Rediscovery Centre, a social enterprise based in Dublin involved in the re-use of clothes, paint, bikes and furniture. The Rediscovery Centre, member of the Community Re-Use Network Ireland, was named Green NGO of the Year and received the Green Construction Award for the boiler house together with Dublin City Council.

## MEMBERSHIP AND NETWORKING

### In 2017 RREUSE was delighted to welcome two new members to its network:

#### Emmaüs Europe

The federation of all Emmaüs structures in Europe brings together 309 groups from 17 European countries and represents one of the four continental regions of the Emmaüs movement. Thanks to their membership RREUSE now has wider representation in seven additional countries including Germany,



Portugal, Denmark, Romania, Switzerland, Albania and Ukraine. Emmaüs communities respond to the needs of the most vulnerable groups of society by providing housing, jobs and fighting social injustice. Collection and sale of second-hand goods brings them economic means to sustain their social mission.

#### Cooperativa Sociale Insieme



The social cooperative Insieme was set up in Vicenza, Italy in 1979 and has since created over 1000 jobs for disadvantaged and marginalised people. Insieme manages 2 re-use centres and 10 recycling centres, including the largest in the province as well as 4 re-use shops.



Every year, RREUSE hosts three network meetings bringing together representatives of social enterprises to discuss new experiences, understand better the development of the social economy in different countries as well as discover new re-use and recycling initiatives across Europe. In 2017 our meetings took place in Brussels, Zagreb and Charleroi.

#### **Highlights of these of meetings included:**

- Site visit and roundtable discussion hosted by Sofie Liege, a social enterprise re-use facility working with household appliances. The Belgian producer scheme for waste electricals, Recupel, joined the meeting and presented its cooperation with preparing for re-use operators from the social economy in Belgium such as Sofie, a member of [RESSOURCES](#).
- A [conference](#) on the role of textile re-use and recycling in a circular economy organised by the social cooperative Humana Nova in Zagreb. The event, focusing on policy and practice concerning the management of used textiles in Central and Eastern Europe, brought together over 40 participants from the region including European re-use operators and representatives of national and local governments to exchange ideas on how to sort out the textile waste problem.

## COMMUNICATION

### Event: 1<sup>st</sup> International Conference on the Role of Social Enterprise in a Circular Economy

In November 2017 over one hundred participants from thirteen European countries met in Charleroi, Belgium, to discuss the role of social enterprise in a circular economy. The conference organised by RREUSE demonstrated the key social and environmental impact of re-use and explored different forms of collaboration between social enterprise, public authorities and the private sector. The event coincided with the launch of a new European circular economy stakeholder platform as well as the ongoing implementation of the European Commission's circular economy package, where final touches to updated EU waste laws were being applied by the EU Parliament and member states.



### Campaign: 170 re-use centres across Europe show what impact can be made by re-use in one week

countries weighed all donated goods collected and sold in their shops. The event was part of RREUSE's annual Reuse More Throw Less campaign held within the framework of the European Week for Waste Reduction. The goal was for RREUSE to show their collective impact on waste reduction and support for citizens to buy green and social. In 2017, the participating re-use centres collected 1,271 tonnes of used goods, sold 398 tonnes as second-hand and welcomed 8,101 customers.



### RREUSE launches YouTube channel: Library of re-use stories



A video is worth a thousand reports. If you have a few spare minutes, do not hesitate to browse our new YouTube channel that gathers around 70 videos from the social enterprise and re-use world. As with every good library, there are some amazing stories waiting to be discovered – just follow the red YouTube sign on our website.

### Newsletter

Our public newsletter is published periodically informing readers about major policy developments and best practices from the RREUSE network. If you would like to receive concise and neatly packaged information about what's new in re-use, visit our website and sign-up. Reading this report online? [Sign-up here!](#)

→ [www.rreuse.org](http://www.rreuse.org)

Let's keep in touch!  
RREUSE is on  
Facebook, Twitter,  
LinkedIn and  
YouTube

# SHAPING EUROPEAN POLICY

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## CIRCULAR ECONOMY

← In 2017, the RREUSE secretariat in Brussels actively advocated for stronger policies supporting the social enterprise re-use, repair and recycling sector at European level.

Following the publication of the European Commission's Circular Economy package in 2015 which included proposed updates to key EU waste laws, RREUSE continued advising and urging EU policy makers, national governments and stakeholders to:

- Boost re-use of unwanted goods and divert them from going directly to recycling, landfill and incineration
- Make repair cheaper and easier
- Support the specific role of social enterprise in a circular economy through measures including procurement and taxation.





## Boosting the profile of re-use in the Waste Framework Directive

In early 2017 the European Parliament voted an ambitious position on the revision of the European Waste Framework Directive, including a separate preparing for re-use target and support for the role of social enterprise in waste management, fully in line with the position of RREUSE. In December 2017 MEPs and member state negotiators finally reached a provisional deal on the text of the new directive. Whilst lower in ambition compared to the European Parliament's original negotiating position, RREUSE welcomed the initial agreement but recognised that member states will need to take further steps to ensure re-use is prioritised further in national initiatives, including through formal targets.

Since the publication of the EU Commission's Circular Economy Package, RREUSE has continued to press for clarifications and improvements to the EU Commission's proposals via the European Parliament and national governments. Specifically, RREUSE strongly advocated for separate targets for preparing for re-use. A separate target would improve access for preparing for re-use operators to mountains of discarded goods which are currently being directly recycled, landfilled or incinerated.

Once the Directive is published RREUSE will be working with its members on supporting sound transposition and implementation of the new law in 2018 and beyond.

## Making our products easier to repair through the Ecodesign Directive

RREUSE continued to assist the European Commission in its work on setting repair-friendly criteria in EU regulations that govern the eco-design of products entering the EU market. RREUSE did so in collaboration with ECOS, IFIXIT, the Coolproducts campaign, the EEB and TopTen. In December 2017, the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) published proposals concerning design requirements for washing machines and dishwashers related to their ease of repair. These are product categories that many social enterprises from the RREUSE network have expertise in repairing. RREUSE welcomed the JRC's proposals which contained favourable clauses supporting access to spare parts and repair manuals for independent repair operators, key points RREUSE has been promoting over a number of years. These proposals will now be under scrutiny by member states and other stakeholders prior to being made into binding regulation later in 2018.



## Contributing and monitoring the development of EU standards in the field of waste electricals and electronics

In cooperation with ECOS, a European NGO representing environmental interests in standardisation, RREUSE was heavily involved in the creation of standards in the field of treatment, collection and logistics, and preparing for re-use of waste electronics (WEEE). The creation of these standards has been mandated by the WEEE Directive and could have a major impact on re-use operators in the future, including those run as social enterprises. In 2017 a European standard for the collection and logistics of waste electronics was finalised, in the form of a so-called 'Technical Specification'.

This specification is meant to help implement the WEEE Directive, in particular to ensure that collection and transport of WEEE is done under 'optimal conditions for preparing for re-use, recycling, and confinement of hazardous substances'. However, RREUSE and ECOS called for early revision of the document to address major shortcomings that both organisations felt insufficiently support preparing for re-use activities in addition to having less stringent provisions than legislation in certain member states.



## RREUSE selected to join EU expert platforms on the circular economy and raw materials

RREUSE was selected by the EU institutions to have a prominent role in two major EU stakeholder platforms bringing together representatives from industry, public services, academia and NGOs. The first is the coordination group of the newly formed [Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform](#), a joint initiative of the European Commission and the European Economic and Social Committee. The platform was created to help implement the circular economy through sharing good practices and creating links across sectors. RREUSE is also one of four civil society representatives in the High-Level Steering Group of the [European Innovation Partnership on Raw Materials](#). The role of this platform is to help the EU respond to challenges such as ensuring the sustainable supply of raw materials to the European economy.



**Waste electrical goods need to be handled with care, or they can't be re-used**



#WEEELove



## TAXATION TO BOOST RE-USE & REPAIR

In Europe 77% of citizens would be willing to have their goods repaired but hardly ever do because it is too expensive for them to do so.<sup>1</sup> Re-use and repair activities need to be made cheaper in order for Europe to keep the value of products and prevent wasting resources.

The Commission's Circular Economy Action Plan encourages the use of economic instruments to help ensure the extension of a product lifespans through re-use and repair,

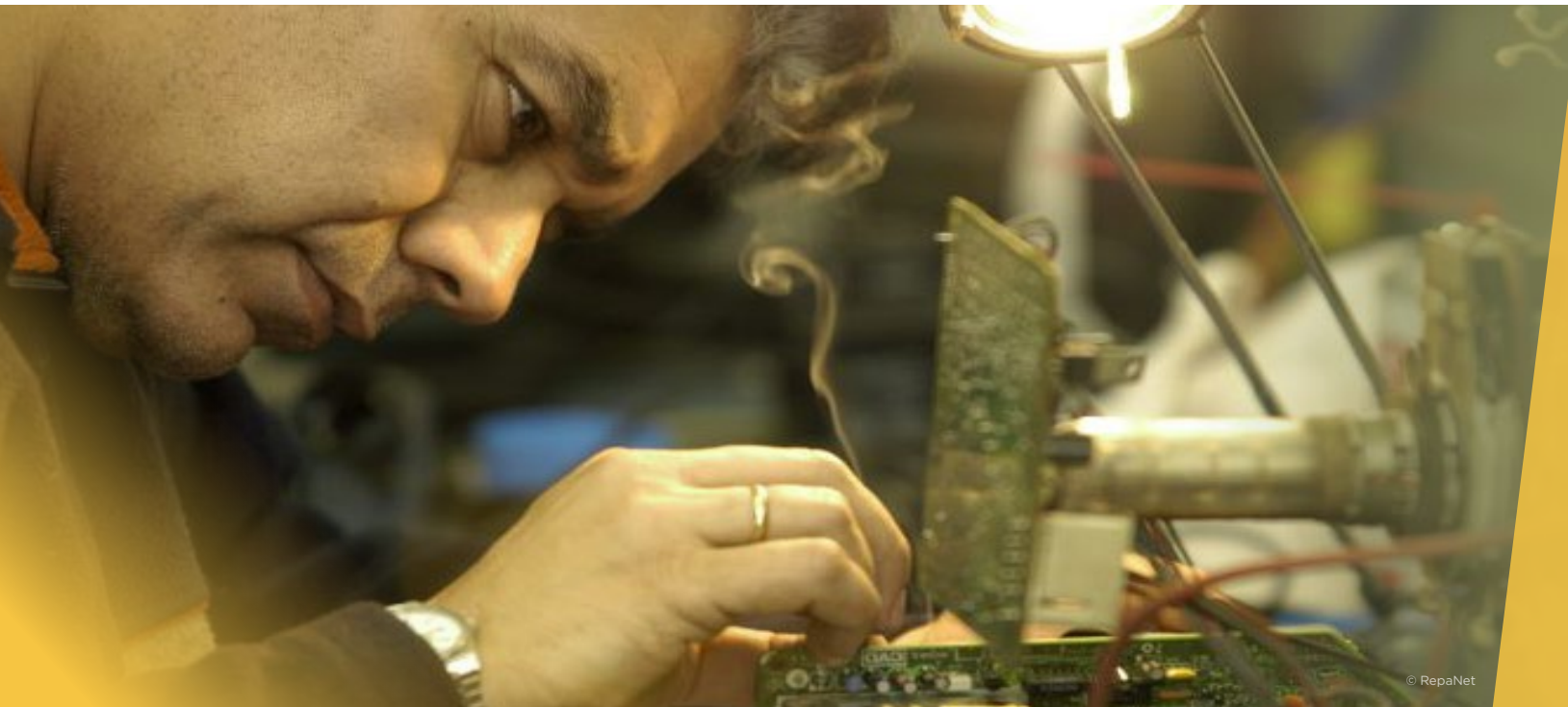
acknowledging that these activities are labour intensive and thus contribute to the EU's jobs and social agenda. One such instrument is the use of Value Added Tax (VAT).

Based on examples from around Europe and experience of social enterprises RREUSE published policy recommendations on how differentiated VAT can make repair cheaper and boost jobs in re-use & repair activities.

The briefing also touched on other fiscal related measures and incentives that could be used to encourage citizens to donate used goods to charitable organisations as well as having their things repaired, rather than throwing them away or replacing as soon as they break down.

The briefing was submitted as a part of the RREUSE response to a European Commission Consultation on possible reform of the VAT Directive.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Eurobarometer 388 - <sup>2</sup> European Commission (2016) EU Action Plan on VAT rates



Reading this report online?

→ Download our position paper on Reduced taxation to support re-use and repair here



# PROJECTS

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## **SURFACE** **Smart Re-use Parks** **in Central Europe**

SURFACE (Interreg Central Europe) will identify and establish re-use oriented services in pilot regions and make them into 'Smart Re-use Parks' that will be integrated into local waste prevention and management strategies. Concrete pilot activities will be carried out in Austria, Italy, Germany, Poland and Hungary. The Slovenian, Croatian and Czech partners will deliver feasibility studies and policy recommendations. SURFACE supports mutual learning, innovation and spreading of know-how to more regions in Europe.



## **ReWEEE** **Better handling of waste** **electricals in Greece**

The ReWEEE project (Life+) aims to prevent the creation of waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE). In order to achieve this objective, two WEEE sorting and re-use centres will operate in Greece for the first time, specifically in the wider areas of Athens and Thessaloniki. The core activity of these centres is the collection, storage and sorting of WEEE depending on their condition and then their preparation for reuse or treatment.



## **BIOHEC-LIFE** **Used cooking oil and** **social enterprise**

The BIOHEC-LIFE project aims to produce competitively-priced advanced biofuels derived from used cooking oils using an innovative process developed by French social enterprise GECCO. The new technological process provides locally-produced biofuel to a number of public transport fleets in France. The economic, social and environmental model of the production chain will be assessed in the city of Lille and Nord-Pas-de-Calais-Picardie region, and replicated in further French and European territories. The project is led by GECCO, an enterprise active in the collection and recycling of used cooking oil. In 2017 RREUSE co-organised the opening conference in Brussels on the potential of bio-waste for a circular Europe.



## **RENEW2020** **Youth training in creative** **waste management**

The RENEW2020 project (Erasmus+) promotes and supports the development of specific and professional skills of youth in the green economy and up-cycling sector. It creates a strategic partnership between European organizations with specific expertise in the field of youth training, auto-entrepreneurship, design creativity and waste management.



# MEMBERS & SECRETARIAT

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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## SECRETARIAT

Michal Len **Director**

Mathieu Rama **Policy Officer**

Jana Žůrková **Network Coordination and Communications Officer**

Paolo Ferraresi **Financial and Development Manager**



## MEMBERS

Austria	RepaNet
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Croatia	Humana Nova
Finland	Tramel
France	Emmaüs France Envie
Greece	Ecological Recycling Society Klimax Plus
Hungary	Humusz Szövetség
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Spain	AERESS
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United States of America	donateNYC
pan-European networks	Emmaüs Europe

## BECOME A MEMBER OF RREUSE!

More information on  
→ [www.rreuse.org](http://www.rreuse.org)

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# 2017 FINANCIAL REPORT

<b>EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>EUR</b>
Consultants	4,012.87
Office costs	23,076.20
Travel-Subsistence	12,794.79
Conference-seminars	5,661.11
Staff	114,184.18
Depreciation	234.26
Interests/Bank charges	338.27
Total	160,301.68
Exceptional charges	3,924.52
<b>TOTAL Expenditure</b>	<b>164,226.20</b>
<b>INCOME</b>	<b>EUR</b>
Conference Fees	7,791.01
Membership fees	57,500.00
European Commission	64,366.39
Other private contributions	21,650.00
Other income	4,356.23
Total	155,663.63
Exceptional income	110.34
<b>TOTAL Income</b>	<b>155,773.97</b>
<b>END OF YEAR RESULT 2017</b>	<b>-8,452.23</b>



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RREUSE is a member of ECOS



You can view our entry on the European Commission Transparency Register.

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