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WP12. CITIZENS VOTING

D12.2 TRANSNATIONAL REPORT

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1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of this report

This transnational report is Deliverable 12.2 of the Eco Champions project. Its purpose is to set out transnational recommendations on civic engagement in waste management that can be communicated to relevant stakeholders at local, national and European level. In line with the objectives of Work Package 12, the recommendations aim to promote environmental awareness, to recognise and encourage sustainable practices, and to foster a sense of responsibility and community involvement in addressing waste-related challenges.

The recommendations are grounded in evidence. Six partner organisations ran the same participatory exercise in their own territories, covering six territories across five countries, and each reported its national results. Those results are the evidence base for this document. The detailed analysis of the voting campaign has been submitted separately as a deliverable in its own right; the present report summarises the national results only to the extent needed to support the recommendations, and concentrates on what should be done in response to them.

1.2 The participatory exercise

The exercise invited residents to vote online on a set of waste-management recommendations and to describe the difficulties they meet in daily practice. Voting took place through online questionnaires, promoted by each partner through its own networks, social media channels and community campaigns. The structure of the questionnaire was common to all partners, while the promotion was adapted to each local context.

In addition to the vote, participants answered questions on four themes: waste sorting habits, the main challenges they face, their evaluation of municipal services, and their communication and awareness needs. Most questionnaires also included open comment fields. The observations reported in the national sections below draw on those comments.

1.3 Participation

A total of **1,067 citizens** took part across six territories in five countries. Belgium is represented by two partners, one covering Brussels and Wallonia and one covering Flanders. Contributions ranged from 61 to 220 responses per partner.

Country	Partner organisation	Participants
Belgium (Brussels–Wallonia)	Connect Brussels	220
Belgium (Flanders)	Bond Beter Leefmilieu Vlaanderen	61
Greece	Cohesion Network 2gether	203
Italy	CRHACK LAB Foligno 4D	175
Kosovo	The Balkan Forum	204
Spain	Asociación La Bien Paga	204
Total		1,067

1.4 Scope and limitations

The results should be read with care. Participants were self-selected: they chose to respond to an open online invitation. The samples are therefore not statistically representative of the general population, and the exact percentages should not be treated as population estimates. The national questionnaires also differed in the level of detail recorded, so figures are not always directly comparable between territories.

The territories also reported in different depth. What gives the findings their weight is their consistency: six independent exercises, conducted in six different regulatory and infrastructural settings, produced a strikingly similar set of priorities. The findings indicate direction and order of priority rather than precise magnitude.

1.5 Structure and accessibility

Section 2 summarises the national results, in alphabetical order, and gives the five most voted recommendations in each territory. Section 3 sets out ten transnational recommendations drawn from the convergence of the national ones, and forms the core of this report. Section 4 offers concluding remarks.

The report applies plain-language principles throughout: short sentences, one main idea per sentence, consistent headings and a defined vocabulary. Each transnational recommendation is introduced by a pictogram, so that its subject can be recognised without reading the full text. Every pictogram carries alternative text, so that it is also available to readers using screen-reading software.

2. National Results

This section presents the national results in condensed form. The full analysis of the voting campaign is available in the dedicated deliverable. The tables below give the headline findings and the five most voted recommendations in each territory, followed by a short note on what distinguishes each national picture.

2.1 Participation and headline findings

Country or region	Participants	Sort often or always	Most cited barrier
Belgium (Brussels–Wallonia)	220	77.7%	Insufficient municipal services (38.2%)
Belgium (Flanders)	61	100%	Other (38.3%)
Greece	203	56.6%	Lack of municipal services (44.3%)
Italy	175	76.6%	Insufficient municipal services (33.7%)
Kosovo	204	Limited and inconsistent	Insufficient municipal services
Spain	204	Well established	Unclear sorting rules (55%)

2.2 The five most voted recommendations in each territory

Country or region	Recommendations, in order of votes received
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Belgium (Brussels–Wallonia)	1. Rapid-response teams against illegal dumping (37.7%). 2. Better coordination between the 19 Brussels municipalities (35.5%). 3. More mobile and local collection points (33.2%). 4. Multilingual communication on sorting rules (31.4%). 5. Expanded food-waste collection through the orange-bag system (30.9%).
Belgium (Flanders)	1. Deposit-return machines for plastic bottles and cans, with digital rewards (75.4%). 2. Stricter controls and fines for illegal dumping (55.7%). 3. A pay-as-you-throw system, so that those who recycle better pay less (54.1%). 4. Cooperation with supermarkets to reduce non-recyclable packaging (47.5%). 5. Reuse promoted through municipal reuse centres (32.8%).
Greece	1. Permanent environmental education in schools (45.8%). 2. A pay-as-you-throw system (37.4%). 3. Mandatory organic waste collection in all municipalities (34.5%). 4. Tax incentives for home composting (32.5%). 5. Smart collection systems with fill-level sensors (30.5%).
Italy	1. One-page sorting rules in plain language with simple visual guides (43.4%). 2. Accessible information in multiple languages and easy-to-read formats (38.9%). 3. Community recycling ambassadors (34.9%). 4. Co-design of local sorting rules through participatory workshops (34.3%). 5. Practical household tools such as kitchen caddies and bin sets (26.9%).
Kosovo	1. Waste separation at source at national level (56.9%). 2. Recycling stations in neighbourhoods (50.5%). 3. Collection services extended to all rural areas (41.2%). 4. Environmental education in schools (38.2%). 5. Reduction of organic waste through composting, and financial incentives for recycling (37.7% each, tied).
Spain	1. Separate collection streams for textiles, cooking oil and batteries (61.8%). 2. Waste education in schools and adult learning programmes (54.4%). 3. Kerbside organics collection in dense neighbourhoods (48.5%). 4. Continuous awareness campaigns on correct separation (48.5%). 5. Reuse promoted through municipal reuse centres (40.2%).

2.3 What distinguishes each territory

Belgium — Brussels and Wallonia (Connect Brussels). This is the only territory where coordination between municipalities is itself a voted priority: citizens ask explicitly for the 19 Brussels municipalities to align their services, and for multilingual information. Civic engagement was exceptionally strong, with 97.3% of respondents supporting the petition and its proposed actions.

Belgium — Flanders (Bond Beter Leefmilieu Vlaanderen). Flanders is the territory whose priorities have moved furthest beyond building the system. Its citizens voted for deposit-return machines (75.4%), the strongest single result anywhere in the consortium, and for stricter enforcement against illegal dumping (55.7%) and a pay-as-you-throw system (54.1%). The Flanders exercise recorded the voted recommendations only, so it does not appear in the table of reported barriers above.

Greece (Cohesion Network 2gether). Greece is the only territory in which economic instruments rank so highly, with pay-as-you-throw and tax incentives occupying two of the top four places. It also records the clearest deficit of trust: several respondents doubt that the materials they sort are in fact recycled, a barrier the national report treats as significant in its own right.

Italy (CRHACK LAB Foligno 4D). Italy is the territory where accessible information is the explicit first priority. The two highest-ranked recommendations both concern the form in which information is delivered: plain language, visual guides, multiple languages and easy-to-read formats. Incentive-based

proposals were supported, but ranked below information, education, participation and practical assistance.

Kosovo (The Balkan Forum). In Kosovo, 56.9% backed national separation at source, the highest level of support recorded for any recommendation there. The agenda here is foundational rather than incremental, concerned with establishing the system rather than refining it. Territorial equity is also a first-order issue, with the extension of collection to rural areas ranking third.

Spain (Asociación La Bien Paga). Spain records the strongest mandate of any territory with full survey data, at 61.8%, and is the only territory to place adult learning alongside school education. It is also one of two territories to identify supermarkets as partners, with 35.3% supporting cooperation with retailers to reduce non-recyclable packaging.

3. Transnational Recommendations

The ten recommendations below were derived by comparing the six sets of national results. A priority was retained only where at least three territories provided evidence for it. Each recommendation is introduced by a pictogram and then explains what it means and what is being asked for, the evidence supporting it, and the measures through which it can be implemented.

The recommendations are grouped by theme. Recommendations 1 to 4 concern rules and services, 5 and 6 concern education and communication, 7 to 9 concern governance, and 10 concerns prevention and reuse. The numbers identify each recommendation; they do not rank them. No recommendation is more important or more urgent than another, and each territory should decide its own order of action according to its starting point and its competences. The recommendations are addressed to municipal and regional authorities in the first instance, and to national and European authorities where harmonisation or funding is required.



Recommendation 1. Make sorting rules simple, visual and consistent

What we are asking for. We are asking authorities to make it obvious what goes where. Sorting rules should be published as a single page in plain language, illustrated with pictograms, and be the same across neighbouring municipalities.

Evidence. Unclear rules are among the three principal barriers in every territory that recorded them: 55% in Spain, 32.0% in Italy, 25.0% in Brussels and Wallonia and 21.7% in Greece, and they are widely reported in Kosovo. Italy's first priority is developing one-page rules in plain language with simple visual guides (43.4%); the fourth priority in Brussels and Wallonia is multilingual communication (31.4%).

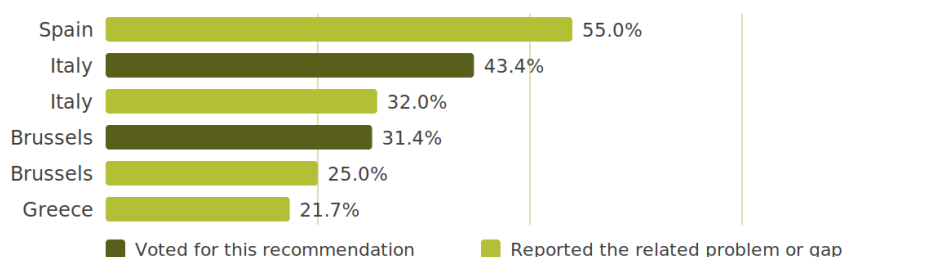


Figure 1. Evidence for Recommendation 1, by country. Bars show the percentage of respondents; the scale runs from 0% to 100%. Kosovo: unclear rules widely reported; no percentage recorded.

Actions. Publish a single-page sorting guide per municipality in plain language. Use a consistent set of pictograms across bins, guides, websites and mobile applications. Provide easy-to-read and multilingual versions as standard. Distribute the guide by post as well as online, so that it reaches households without digital access.



Recommendation 2. Close the collection infrastructure gap

What we are asking for. We are asking authorities to provide enough containers, close enough to homes, emptied often enough. Where fixed infrastructure cannot be installed, mobile collection points should take its place.

Evidence. Insufficient municipal services are the single most cited barrier in Greece (44.3%), Brussels and Wallonia (38.2%) and Italy (33.7%), and are prominent in Kosovo. More recycling bins and public collection points are the improvements most requested in Brussels and Wallonia (48.2%) and the second most requested in Italy (41.1%); neighbourhood recycling stations rank second in Kosovo (50.5%).

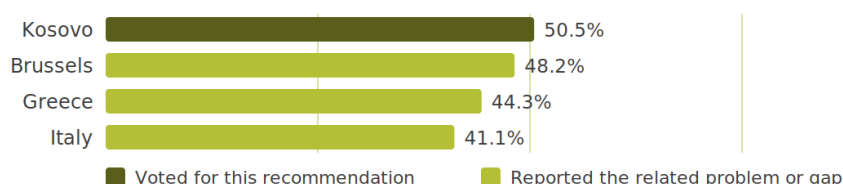


Figure 2. Evidence for Recommendation 2, by country. Bars show the percentage of respondents; the scale runs from 0% to 100%. Kosovo's figure is a voted recommendation for neighbourhood recycling stations.

Actions. Increase the density of collection points, prioritising areas of dense housing. Introduce mobile and local collection points where fixed infrastructure is not feasible. Address overflowing containers, including through fill-level sensors as proposed in Greece. Correct design faults that allow rain to contaminate collected paper.



Recommendation 3. Expand specialised collection streams

What we are asking for. We are asking authorities to collect separately the materials that households cannot place in ordinary bins: organic waste, electronic waste, bulky items, textiles, cooking oil, batteries and hazardous household waste.

Evidence. Electronic waste is judged insufficiently served in Spain (51.5%), Italy (38.3%), Brussels and Wallonia (29.1%) and Kosovo. Bulky-waste services are among the top requests in Brussels and Wallonia (37.3%) and Italy (36.0%). Organic waste appears in four of the five voted lists: mandatory collection in Greece (34.5%), kerbside collection in Spain (48.5%), the orange-bag system in Brussels and Wallonia (30.9%) and composting in Kosovo (37.7%). Spain's leading recommendation concerns textiles, cooking oil and batteries (61.8%); Italy reports the absence of convenient containers for used

cooking oil. Flanders records the strongest single result in the consortium: 75.4% voted for deposit-return machines for plastic bottles and cans.

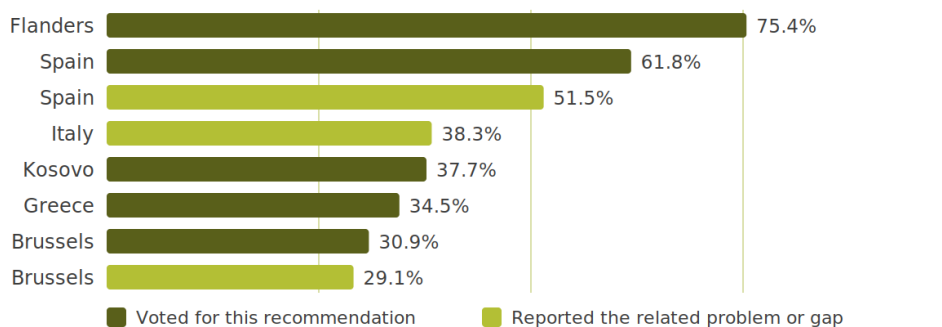


Figure 3. Evidence for Recommendation 3, by country. Bars show the percentage of respondents; the scale runs from 0% to 100%.

Actions. Establish a common minimum set of separate streams across the consortium's territories: organic waste, electronic waste, bulky waste, textiles, cooking oil, batteries and hazardous household waste. Provide dedicated receptacles together with promotion, since evidence from Spain indicates that containers alone are not sufficient. Develop take-back arrangements with retailers: deposit-return machines for bottles and cans, voted first in Flanders (75.4%) and proposed in Greece, and cooperation with supermarkets to reduce non-recyclable packaging, supported in Spain (35.3%) and voted fourth in Flanders (47.5%).



Recommendation 4. Adapt services to housing types and to the territory

What we are asking for. We are asking authorities to design services around how people actually live. Small flats need compact equipment; rural areas need guaranteed coverage; residents without a car need collection points within walking distance.

Evidence. Lack of space or equipment at home is a leading barrier in Brussels and Wallonia (29.5%), Italy (29.1%), Spain (29%) and Greece (20.2%), and is prominent in Kosovo. The Brussels report links this to dense urban housing. Kosovo ranks rural coverage third (41.2%); Italy reports reduced door-to-door services in rural areas; Spain identifies distance and car dependence as obstacles.

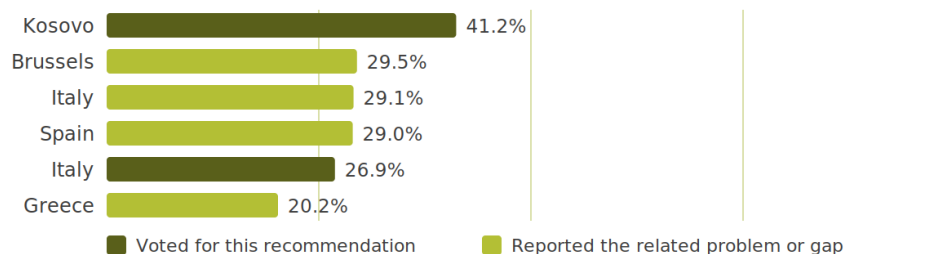


Figure 4. Evidence for Recommendation 4, by country. Bars show the percentage of respondents; the scale runs from 0% to 100%.

Kosovo: lack of space reported; the figure shown is the vote on rural coverage.

Actions. Distribute practical household equipment such as kitchen caddies and compact bin sets, as voted in Italy (26.9%). Define minimum service standards for rural and peripheral areas. Assess the accessibility of collection points for residents without a car before siting them.



Recommendation 5. Embed environmental education in schools and adult learning

What we are asking for. We are asking authorities to make waste a permanent part of learning, in school curricula and in adult education, covering prevention and reuse and not only sorting.

Evidence. Environmental education is the first priority in Greece (45.8%), the second in Spain (54.4%) and the fourth in Kosovo (38.2%). The Italian report also calls for stronger environmental education, although it did not enter the voted top five there. Limited awareness of prevention and reuse is a leading local problem in Italy (45.7%) and Spain (58.8%).

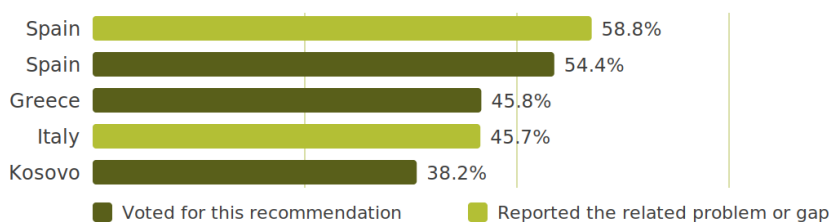


Figure 5. Evidence for Recommendation 5, by country. Bars show the percentage of respondents; the scale runs from 0% to 100%.

Actions. Integrate waste management permanently into school curricula rather than through occasional projects. Extend provision to adult learning programmes, as proposed in Spain. Cover prevention, reuse and special-waste disposal, not sorting alone. Provide teaching materials that municipalities and schools can use without additional development work.



Recommendation 6. Replace occasional campaigns with continuous, multi-channel communication

What we are asking for. We are asking authorities to replace occasional campaigns with a continuous communication plan that uses digital and non-digital channels together and reaches groups that current campaigns miss.

Evidence. Information and awareness campaigns are the service most often judged missing in Italy (42.3%) and Spain (58.8%), and the fourth most requested improvement in Brussels and Wallonia (34.5%); Kosovo reports current campaigns as insufficient. In Spain, continuous awareness campaigns were also voted into the top five (48.5%). Italy asks specifically for offline information for older people; Kosovo for local influencers and social media; Brussels and Wallonia for both digital and community-based channels.

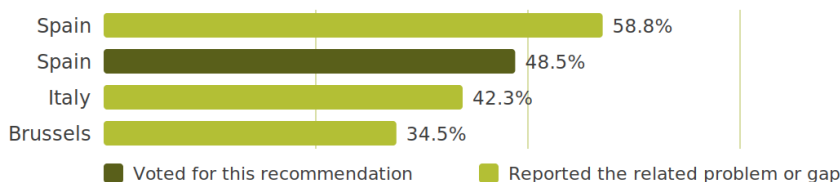


Figure 6. Evidence for Recommendation 6, by country. Bars show the percentage of respondents; the scale runs from 0% to 100%.
Kosovo: campaigns reported as insufficient; no percentage recorded.

Actions. Adopt an annual communication plan with a fixed calendar rather than isolated campaigns. Combine digital and non-digital channels systematically. Address specific audiences, including older residents, newly arrived residents and households with limited digital access. Measure reach and adjust, so that campaigns are evaluated on results rather than on activity.



Recommendation 7. Give citizens a permanent role in decisions

What we are asking for. We are asking authorities to involve residents in designing the service, through co-design workshops, community ambassadors and simple reporting tools, and to report back on what changed as a result.

Evidence. Civic participation is described as highly important in all five territories that reported survey findings. In Brussels and Wallonia, 97.3% of respondents supported the petition. Italy voted for participatory co-design of sorting rules (34.3%) and community recycling ambassadors (34.9%). In Spain, 48.5% called for wider awareness campaigns as a means of encouraging public participation. Greece asks for municipal reporting applications and public recognition for well-performing apartment buildings. Kosovo reports that citizens want to be included in decision-making.

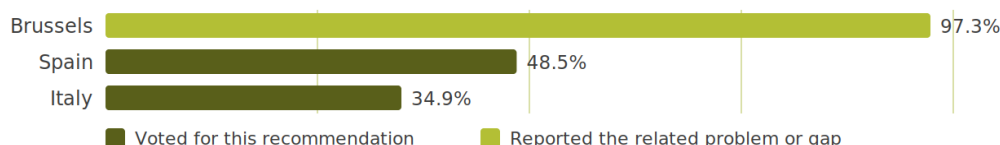


Figure 7. Evidence for Recommendation 7, by country. Bars show the percentage of respondents; the scale runs from 0% to 100%. Greece and Kosovo report participation as a priority; no percentage recorded.

Actions. Co-design local sorting rules with residents through participatory workshops. Establish community recycling ambassadors as a recognised, supported role. Provide simple reporting tools through which residents can flag overflowing bins and illegal dumping. Report back publicly on how citizen input has changed decisions, since participation without visible consequence erodes the willingness to participate again.



Recommendation 8. Harmonise rules across administrative boundaries

What we are asking for. We are asking authorities to align sorting categories, container colours and terminology across administrative boundaries, so that rules do not change when residents move between municipalities.

Evidence. The second priority in Brussels and Wallonia is coordination between the 19 Brussels municipalities (35.5%). Italian respondents report confusion caused by differing sorting systems between municipalities. Kosovo's leading recommendation is separation at source at national level (56.9%). Greek respondents propose standardised national infographics.

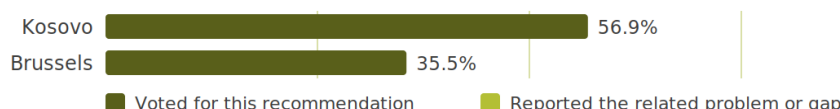


Figure 8. Evidence for Recommendation 8, by country. Bars show the percentage of respondents; the scale runs from 0% to 100%. Italy and Greece report the same need; no percentage recorded.

Actions. Harmonise sorting categories, container colours and terminology at regional or national level. Adopt a national infographic standard that municipalities apply locally. Where competences are shared, establish a standing coordination mechanism rather than relying on ad hoc cooperation.



Recommendation 9. Combine incentives, enforcement and public accountability

What we are asking for. We are asking authorities to reward households that sort well, to respond quickly to illegal dumping, and to publish what happens to collected material so that citizens can verify that their effort has an effect.

Evidence. Greece votes for pay-as-you-throw (37.4%) and tax incentives for home composting (32.5%); Kosovo for financial incentives for recycling (37.7%), tied in fifth place; Flanders for stricter controls and fines for illegal dumping (55.7%) and for a pay-as-you-throw system (54.1%). Illegal dumping is a leading concern in Italy (42.3%), Greece (31.0%) and Brussels and Wallonia (25.9%), whose first priority is rapid-response teams to address it (37.7%). Greek respondents express sustained doubt that sorted material is genuinely recycled.

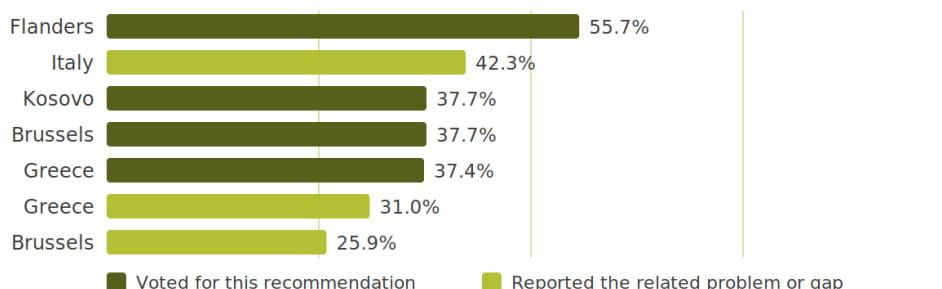


Figure 9. Evidence for Recommendation 9, by country. Bars show the percentage of respondents; the scale runs from 0% to 100%.

Actions. Introduce economic instruments that reward sorting effort, calibrated so that they do not penalise households with limited space. Provide rapid response to illegal dumping, coupled with prevention. Publish the destination and the recycling rate of collected materials, together with neighbourhood-level performance reports. Transparency of this kind is the direct response to the scepticism recorded in Greece and is a precondition for the acceptance of incentive schemes elsewhere.



Recommendation 10. Promote reuse and waste prevention

What we are asking for. We are asking authorities to help residents keep products in use instead of discarding them, by supporting repair and reuse facilities and by making prevention as visible in public communication as sorting already is.

Evidence. Municipal reuse centres were voted into the top five in two territories: Spain, at 40.2%, and Flanders, at 32.8%. Limited awareness of reuse and waste prevention is reported as a leading local problem in Spain (58.8%) and Italy (45.7%), and in Brussels and Wallonia limited awareness of reuse and special-waste disposal is reported by 19.5%. The Greek report identifies a knowledge gap on the

reuse of products, without recording a percentage. Reuse is therefore the one theme supported across the consortium that no other recommendation covers.

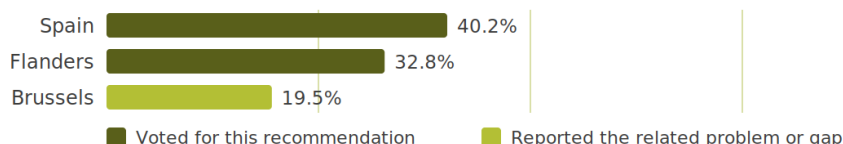


Figure 10. Evidence for Recommendation 10, by country. Bars show the percentage of respondents; the scale runs from 0% to 100%. Greece reports a knowledge gap on reuse; no percentage recorded.

Actions. Establish or support municipal reuse centres, as voted in Spain and Flanders, and give them a permanent place in the waste service rather than treating them as pilot projects. Support repair initiatives such as repair cafes and tool libraries. Cover prevention and reuse explicitly in the education and communication measures set out in Recommendations 5 and 6, since the awareness gap reported in four territories is the barrier most often identified. Work with retailers to reduce packaging at source, as supported in Spain (35.3%) and voted in Flanders (47.5%).

4. Concluding Remarks

Within the ECO CHAMPIONS Project, six partner organisations conducted this exercise independently, in six territories across five countries that differ in regulatory framework, infrastructure and administrative capacity. The degree of convergence between their results is the most significant outcome of the work.

Willingness is not the limiting factor. In four of the five territories that measured it, a clear majority of respondents already sort their household waste often or always: 77.7% in Brussels and Wallonia, 76.6% in Italy, 56.6% in Greece and a well-established habit in Spain. Where sorting is weaker, as in Kosovo, the national report attributes this to a lack of infrastructure and unclear guidance rather than indifference. Wherever the question was asked, citizens identify the constraint as lying with the service rather than with themselves.

The territories are at different stages, but moving in the same direction. Kosovo is building foundations, and its priorities concern establishing national separation at source and basic territorial coverage. Brussels and Wallonia, Italy and Spain are refining systems that already function, and their priorities concern coordination, accessible information and specialised streams. Greece combines an infrastructure deficit with a deficit of trust. Flanders, whose voted priorities move on to incentives, enforcement and reuse, is further along the same path. The recommendations therefore differ in sequence rather than in substance.

Three requests recur across the consortium. Citizens ask for **rules that are clear and consistent; for collection services that match the way they actually live; and for education and communication that are continuous rather than occasional.** None of these is technologically demanding, and all three lie substantially within the competence of local authorities. Their cost is modest in relation to the behavioural change they would support.

Citizens ask for a role, not only for a service. Participation levels were high across the consortium, and in Brussels and Wallonia 97.3% of respondents endorsed the petition. Italian citizens voted for the co-design of local sorting rules and for community recycling ambassadors. Kosovar respondents stated that they want to be included in decision-making. Citizens do not describe themselves as passive users

of a service: they ask to take part in designing it, and they are prepared to act when institutions provide the conditions to do so.

How these findings should be read. The figures indicate priorities and direction, not precise magnitudes. The strength of the conclusion lies in the convergence between six independent exercises, not in the accuracy of any single percentage.

Next steps. Each partner will present this report to the relevant municipal and national authorities in its territory. The transnational recommendations in Section 3 are intended as a basis for dialogue with those authorities and as a reference against which future progress can be assessed.