

PRESS RELEASE

GLASS RECYCLING AND SEPARATE WASTE COLLECTION: KEY DRIVERS TOWARDS A CIRCULAR ECONOMY

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A report published today by the Association of Cities and Regions for Recycling and Sustainable Resource Management (ACR+) for the European Container Glass Federation (FEVE) ⁽¹⁾ says separated waste collection schemes should be widely supported if we are to build a circular economy for glass packaging. It stated that Europe needs to use its resources much more sparingly by recycling more, meaning we need higher collection rates and higher quality of collected glass. The report concludes that only glass bottles and jars collected separately will result in both a higher quantity and quality of post consumer glass (cullet) availability that can save resources to make new packaging.

Glass stands out as one of the best examples of the **closed loop production model** because it is one of the most effectively recycled materials in Europe (67% on average). This is not only because of its natural characteristics - it is 100% and infinitely recyclable - but also because of well established separate collection schemes. More can be done however and the study highlights some good practices. More recycled glass brings major benefits for the environment because when recycled glass is used, fewer raw materials are extracted, less waste is generated, less energy is used and less CO₂ is emitted ⁽²⁾.

“Last year, more than 25bn bottles and jars were collected in Europe, while almost 100% of the glass collected is used, the vast majority of it well over 80% is actually recycled in a bottle-to-bottle production system supporting a circular economy,” observes Adeline Farrelly, FEVE Secretary General. *“The better the quality of the glass collected the more we can recycle in a bottle to bottle system. This type of glass recycling is not only a local industry but also brings major economic and environmental benefits. We strongly support the findings of this timely study which underpins the importance given to recycling in the EU’s waste hierarchy.”*

Based on a comprehensive assessment of European municipalities’ collection schemes, the ACR+ study identifies eight schemes including bottle banks with colour separation, as key drivers to glass recycling growth.

In separate collection systems the processed material is of better quality to meet the specifications necessary for the bottle-to-bottle production and is cost competitive in relation to the use of virgin raw materials. Other systems, like co-mingled collections can be either too

costly or provide glass only suitable for low-grade applications (e.g. as aggregate). These applications are literally a waste – because the material is lost forever from the circular economy.

“We need a more integrated approach with all the stakeholders along the chain, including citizens, and make more sustainable waste collection decisions in the future,” states Olivier De Clercq, Secretary General of ACR+. “We think it’s important for local authorities and collection organizations to know more about what happens to materials once they are collected. Clear technical guidelines and ad hoc support for proper glass collection would make recycling easier and even better performing.”

The study also recommends more and clearer communication to citizens about the benefits of glass collection and recycling in a *bottle-to-bottle* system, and the role they can play. Municipalities can work on this aspect too, as can industry. The European container glass manufacturers – through FEVE – support “Friends of Glass” – a self-fed European consumer community of more than 30,000 people promoting the consumer right to choose food and drinks in glass packaging. A number of tools are available on www.friendsofglass.com to increase consumer awareness about glass recycling and the environment.

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- (1) The study “**Good practices in collection and closed-loop glass recycling in Europe**” and its synopsis are available on [http://www.acrplus.org/glass recycling report](http://www.acrplus.org/glass_recycling_report) and www.feve.org
 - (2) Please visit www.feve.org for more information

STUDY FACT SHEET

The Association of Cities and Regions for Recycling and sustainable Resource management (ACR+) on behalf of the European Container Glass Federation (FEVE) conducted a study on “Good Practices in collection and closed-loop glass recycling in Europe”.

Objectives

To identify good practices in selective collection and closed-loop recycling of glass packaging waste from Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) across European regional and local authorities.

Methodology

The kind of collection scheme as well as the quantity and quality of post-consumer glass collected in a closed-loop recycling system were amongst the most important assessment criteria to define good practices. Eight case studies were selected for the purpose of this study:

Intradel, Liège Province (**Belgium**), Municipality of Graz (**Austria**), LIPOR, Greater Porto Intermunicipal Waste Company (**Portugal**), Municipality of Maastricht (**Netherlands**), Municipality of Lippe (**Germany**), Canton of Geneva (**Switzerland**), City of Grand Besançon (**France**), Municipality of Odense (**Denmark**).

Results

The research demonstrates single stream glass collection provides a high quantity and quality of recycled glass for recycling. In the study, the post consumer glass selectively collected varies from case to case: 13 kg/inhabitant/ year (in Porto) to 47 kg/inhabitant/year (in the Canton of Geneva), underlying the differences not only in performance but also in glass packaging use as well as the existence of deposit schemes competing with municipal collection.

Conclusions

Separate collection schemes and glass recycling are key drivers in a circular glass “*bottle-to-bottle*” production. Where it is in place, the separated collection scheme may need further optimization. Where other systems are in place, separated collection should be supported and given preference. The following factors are considered as key for effective collection and recycling:

- Accessibility and high number of bottle banks (e.g. Maastricht)
- Cleanliness and maintenance of bottle banks (e.g. Intradel)
- Clear and Simple communications to residents (e.g. Graz)
- Frequent rate of collection to avoid over filling of bottle banks (e.g. Canton of Geneva)
- Separate glass collection by colour type (e.g. Lippe)
- Glass bottle banks placed/located in ‘popular’ central areas (e.g. Porto)
- Higher quality directly dependent from better handling at collection source (e.g. Odense)
- Local and Regional Authorities (LRAs) to introduce advanced systems: underground street bottle banks (e.g. Intradel)

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About FEVE

FEVE is the association of European manufacturers of glass containers and machine-made glass tableware. The members of FEVE produce over 20 million tonnes of glass per year. The association has some 60 corporate members belonging to approximately 20 independent corporate groups. Manufacturing plants are located across 23 European States and include global blue chip and major companies working for the world’s biggest consumer brands. See more on www.feve.org

About the container glass Industry

The European container glass industry provides a wide range of glass packaging products for food and beverages as well as flacons for perfumery, cosmetics and pharmacy to their European and world-wide customers. With its 160 manufacturing plants distributed all over Europe, it is an important contributor to Europe's real economy and provides direct employment to about 50,000 people, while creating a large number of job opportunities along the total supply chain. See more on www.feve.org. E-mail: secretariat@feve.org

About ACR+

The **Association of Cities and Regions for Recycling and sustainable Resource management (ACR+)**, established in 1994, is an international network of members who share the common aim of **promoting the sustainable consumption of resources and management of waste through prevention at the source, reuse and recycling**. It currently has nearly **100 members**, mainly local and regional authorities as well as national networks of local authorities representing around 1100 municipalities. ACR+ also welcomes other key players in the sustainable resource-product-waste management field, such as NGOs, academic institutions or private organizations, as partner members. See more on: www.acrplus.org E-mail: info@acrplus.org

About Glass

Glass is made from natural, sustainable raw materials, abundant in nature such as sand, soda ash and limestone. It is the preferred packaging for consumer health and for the environment. It is chemically inert, 100% and infinitely recyclable, refillable, and reusable. As primary packaging, glass containers ensure the preservation, safe delivery and attractive presentation of a vast array of consumer products, supplied to European and world markets. Whether used for drinks, food, cosmetics, perfumes or pharmaceuticals, glass plays a vital role in supporting European trade and commerce.

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