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Press Release

To be released immediately

13 November 2019

International collaboration to achieve smarter waste regulation and pollution crime enforcement

From 12 to 13 November 2019, Brussels has been buzzing with words such as waste regulation, pollution crime, enforcement as the Belgian capital welcomed the conference ‘Smarter waste regulation and pollution crime enforcement’. One of the highlights of this event was the final conference of the LIFE SMART Waste project.

Brussels, Belgium – Over 200 delegates representing six continents, 52 countries and a range of international bodies attended the [LIFE SMART Waste](#) project’s final conference on 12-13 November 2019. To deliver this event, the project had joined forces with the INTERPOL Environmental Security Programme (ENS) and the INTERPOL Pollution Crime Working Group which will hold its 24th Meeting on 14 November 2019.

Tools, techniques, and approaches to understand and reduce waste crime are the key themes guiding discussions of the conference. Participants shared lessons learned from current projects and enforcement activities and explored innovative solutions such as remote sensing tools, joint intervention guidelines for enforcement agencies, and approaches to prevent illegal practices through financial and behavioural analysis. As such, this conference offered a platform to facilitate the advancement of regional and international cooperation in the field of waste regulation and enforcement.

Being a partner of the LIFE SMART Waste project, ACR+ contributed to the event by leading a workshop on COLLECTORS Horizon 2020 project. During the workshop, representatives of environmental agencies and organisation dealing with the collection, decontamination, and recycling of household waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE) discussed how to tackle WEEE scavenging.

“It makes no doubt that local and regional authorities have a key role to play in ensuring regulatory compliance. They have the possibility to set up environmental police but can also implement prevention actions to raise public awareness, and collect reliable data regarding waste management on their territory. This is why it was important for us, as a network representing public authorities, to be a partner of the LIFE SMART Waste project”, explained Francoise Bonnet, ACR+ Secretary General. “It was also the opportunity for us to highlight the necessity of collaboration between public authorities – among other environmental agencies, enforcement bodies and prosecutors – to collect reliable data on waste production and management. ACR+ has been working for already 25 years to improve the exchange of information and good practices amongst its members and beyond: LIFE SMART Waste is a

perfect example of how European projects can help relevant actors to collect and share data on material flows, providing also tools to make waste reduction policies more efficient”, she added.

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The LIFE SMART Waste project aims to develop and demonstrate innovative ways of understanding, tackling and reducing waste-related crime. The project (LIFE13 ENV-UK-000549) has received funding from the LIFE Programme of the European Union and is led by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency working in partnership with three co-beneficiaries: Natural Resources Wales; ACR+ (Association of Cities and Regions for Recycling and sustainable Resource management); and Brussels Environment. The project was initiated during 2014 in acknowledgement that waste crime is a serious and persistent issue that threatens our ambitions of a circular economy in Europe. Waste criminals are elusive and persistently profit at the expense of our environment, economies and communities, and LIFE SMART Waste project beneficiaries recognised that there are significant gaps in our collective understanding of the causes, dynamics and triggers for criminal activity in challenging waste streams. The project's premise is that closing these gaps offers opportunities to identify and develop practical indicators, deterrents and remedies for such criminal behaviour. The project is scheduled to run until May 2020.

The Association of Cities and Regions for sustainable Resource management (ACR+) is an international network of cities and regions sharing the aim of promoting sustainable resource management and accelerating the transition towards a circular economy on their territories and beyond. The network, gathering around 90 members, is open to other key players in the field of material resource management such as NGOs, academic institutions, consultancies or private organisations. Members' needs and priorities define the network's activities, which include facilitating the exchange of experiences between members, sharing technical and policy information and livening up the network. To strengthen the knowledge and capacities of the network and push for innovation in the field of material resource management, ACR+ is also involved in several projects at European level and in the Mediterranean region, in cooperation with its members.

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