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Il progetto RECREATE è co-finanziato dall'Unione europea nell'ambito del Programma Interreg VI-A Italia-Slovenia.
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About the RECREATE project - "Improving the circular economy model for the collection and recovery of fibre-reinforced composites containing waste"

The RECREATE project takes up the challenge of the Programme Area to move towards a circular economy by proposing a circular economy model for fibre reinforced composite (FRC) materials that can improve the environmental sustainability of the Programme Area by reducing the amount of waste produced and improving the management of FRC waste present in the Programme Area.

The project takes advantage of some of the strategic results of the Retracking project by proposing a recycling methodology that allows the introduction of new products made from recycled FRC material into the economic system. The circular economy model will be tested by two entities belonging to the value chain: a public authority and a company using FRC.

For the first time, municipal FRC waste, which is currently the most difficult to manage, will be included in the circular economy model. An Italian municipality and a Slovenian private company will acquire recycled FRC products, demonstrating the possibility of applying the circular model to public and private entities and defining the way forward for its extension to the Italy-Slovenia programme area. The partnership consists of 1 lead partner and 5 project partners from the eligible cross-border area of the Italy-Slovenia programme. They represent public and private entities working together with their competences and expertise (practical application of circular economy models in different sectors, technology transfer, public administration, productive sector of large enterprises and SMEs, ESG sustainability) to achieve the objectives of the project.

The project carries out three main activities: 1) project coordination; 2) collection of FRC waste, which requires the participation of the municipality's citizens and the private company's operational staff. For this action, the partners will produce Guidelines for the proper identification, treatment, handling and preparation of FRC waste identified in the programme area, which can be used by additional waste management companies. Rules will be defined for the cross-border transport/export of FRC waste (from the Slovenian company to the Italian company in charge of the recycling process). The municipal service providers will be trained. Companies in the manufacturing and small business sectors will benefit from capacity building activities on economic circularity, green transition and zero waste policies. They will be involved in a one-day study visit to Italy to transfer best practices on the reuse of FRC material in the industrial sector and its interoperability with

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the urban sector. A public campaign will be launched to raise citizens' awareness on recycling, reuse and collection of FRC waste. This campaign will address a number of relevant topics dealing with the correct collection of waste at municipal level and the practical applicability of the circular economy model. 3) The production of FRC requires that the waste will be recycled

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The protocols for obtaining FRC products will be developed by public authorities and companies in the programme area in accordance with Italian and Slovenian legislation. The main actions will be accompanied by communication activities, dissemination events, demonstration and participatory events with citizens and public and private bodies.

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1. Intermediate event "Recycling composite materials: cross-border waste disposal problems and solutions"

1.1 Brief overview of the event

In the framework of the Recreate project, which advocates a transition to a circular economy by improving the circular economy model in the handling of fibre-reinforced composite (FRC) materials for a more resilient and greener Europe, the Chamber of Craft and Small Business of Slovenia (OZS), together with project partner Slovenian Regional Economic Union (SDGZ-URES), organised an event. The event took place on 18 February 2025 at the premises of the Regional Chamber of Craft and Small Business of Nova Gorica, starting at 9.00 am. The event was held with the aim of disseminating the results of the project regarding waste management practices from the FRC. The aim of the event was to inform the participants about the project and the activities of the project partners and to give a practical example of waste export, which highlighted the real challenges and solutions in the cross-border transport of waste. Part of the event was dedicated to an overview of the legislative barriers and issues in waste management, presenting the key challenges and possible solutions in this area. The event was aimed at companies in the manufacturing sector dealing with composite materials, waste management professionals and companies, and trade associations supporting companies in sustainable waste management. It was held in Slovenian and Italian.

1.2 Brief presentation of the Recreate project and activities of the project partners

The event was opened by the Italian partner, the Slovenian Regional Economic Union (SDGZ-URES), who presented the project and its objectives, main activities and the new technology for recycling fibre-reinforced composites. The Recreate project is committed to the transition towards a circular economy by improving the circular economy model for the management of fibre-reinforced composite (FRC) materials, which can improve the environmental sustainability of the programme area by reducing the amount of waste produced and improving the management of FRC waste present in the programme area. The project aims to develop innovative methods for the recovery of waste containing fibre-reinforced composites and to integrate these methods into existing waste management systems.

The partner continued with a presentation of its activities and those of the lead partner, followed by presentations by the project partners Gees Recycling S.r.l., the Municipality of Spinea and Technol, Portorož d.o.o.

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1.3 Experience with waste export - a practical example from the RECREATE project

The Slovenian project partner Technol, Portorož d.o.o., a company for the production and engineering of composite products made of glass and cured polyester resin, which manufactures products using various technologies (machine winding, injection moulding, vacuum infusion, manual lamination), presented its experience in waste export on the basis of a practical example. The company produces various types of sand filters, tanks, oil separators, sludge sedimentation tanks and more. The production process itself generates waste composite laminate, which is collected in containers and then ground to produce a ground waste material: a glass-plastic composite - cured polyester resin. The aim in the Recreate project is to turn this waste material into a panel product produced by Gees Recycling.

In the process of cross-border transport of Technol's waste materials, various obstacles were encountered in obtaining documentation and permits, which were presented at the event.

The company obtained an informal analysis, which concluded that the waste was non-hazardous and could only be sent across national borders by annex, without prior written notification. Technol therefore drew up an annex and a contract with the project partner

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Gees Recycling, obtaining their permit to recycle the waste. To determine the hazardous nature of the waste, a sample of the waste was also sent to a laboratory in Italy, where it was confirmed that the waste was not hazardous. The project partner Technol contacted the Inspectorate of Environment and Energy of the Republic of Slovenia (IRSOE) for the permit, where questions arose regarding the classification and hazard of the waste. The company contacted the IRSOE again, explaining in more detail what the waste was and attaching an analysis from an Italian laboratory, but was told that their waste could not be classified on the Green List, and that it had to be declared in writing in advance, and that the analysis and sampling had to be carried out by an accredited Slovenian laboratory. In February 2025, the company began sampling the waste material at the company site and sent it for analysis to an accredited laboratory in Slovenia, where it is awaiting the results of the analysis in order to proceed with the procedures. The company is currently arranging the documentation for the transport of the waste across the national border in Italy. These bureaucratic difficulties are creating a big problem for the project, causing major delays and not allowing the closing of the circular route.

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1.4 Legislative barriers, issues and possible solutions in the field of waste

The event programme continued with an experienced speaker Katarina Železnik Logar who presented the legislative barriers, issues and possible solutions in the field of waste, with a focus on FRC fibre-reinforced composite materials. The lecturer comes from the Institute for Occupational Safety and Environmental Protection Maribor, one of the oldest and largest institutions in the field of safety in Slovenia, where research, development, expert opinions and measurements, testing and inspection of equipment and technologies, analysis of environmental impact factors and protection of facilities against fire or explosion are carried out.

The event provided a thorough presentation of the national legislation on waste, which regulates the protection of the environment from pollution and environmental risks, lays down the basic principles of environmental protection, environmental protection measures, environmental monitoring and general conditions for the use of natural resources.

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An important new feature of national legislation is the waste hierarchy, which prioritises waste prevention and preparing waste for re-use over recycling and other recovery operations and waste disposal, and rules on waste generation and management.

In addition to the various topics covered, the lecture also covered waste management, procedures for transboundary shipments of waste, waste classification and the most common infringements addressed, including shipments made without proper documentation, mixtures of waste declared as "green" waste, recovery facilities without proper permits or without permits to process a certain type of waste, exceeding the quantities of waste set out in the consents and non-compliance with the conditions set out in the consents.

The speaker stressed the need to be aware that administrative procedures restrict the circulation of waste between EU Member States, which slows down the transition to a circular economy at EU level.



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1.5 Discussion and supplementary questions

After the lecture, some of the participants shared their experiences and sought solutions to their problems. In particular, the focus was on the difficulties that Technol has had in obtaining the relevant documentation for cross-border waste shipments. An interesting debate developed among them, with various questions that the expert tried to answer.

At the end of the event, the Chamber of Craft and Small Business of Slovenia invited all participants to a one-day study visit to learn about best practices in the reuse of FRC material in the industrial sector and its interoperability with the urban sector. The study visit will take place on 8 April in Italy, where participants will be able to see the different stages of the process: collection (through a multimedia report by the Municipality of Spinea and a presentation by the waste management company Veritas), recycling and production at the Gees recycling partner.



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Conclusion

The mid-term event ended after 11:00 with 25 participants from both Slovenia and Italy. The event was interesting and successful because by organising them, we promote a circular economy in which materials are recycled and reused, thus reducing the impact of waste on the environment. In particular, we hope that the discussion with the authorities on the logistical and administrative difficulties encountered will help not only in streamlining the problems the project is facing in completing the circularity cycle and complying with the GANTT, but also in facilitating these kinds of cross-border processes in general.

A press release was also prepared at the time of the event, containing key information about the event, a description of the Recreate project, a brief summary of the event's content, speakers and target audience. The press release was written in both languages, Italian and Slovenian, accompanied by the event agenda and sent to all key actors and project partners for dissemination.

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