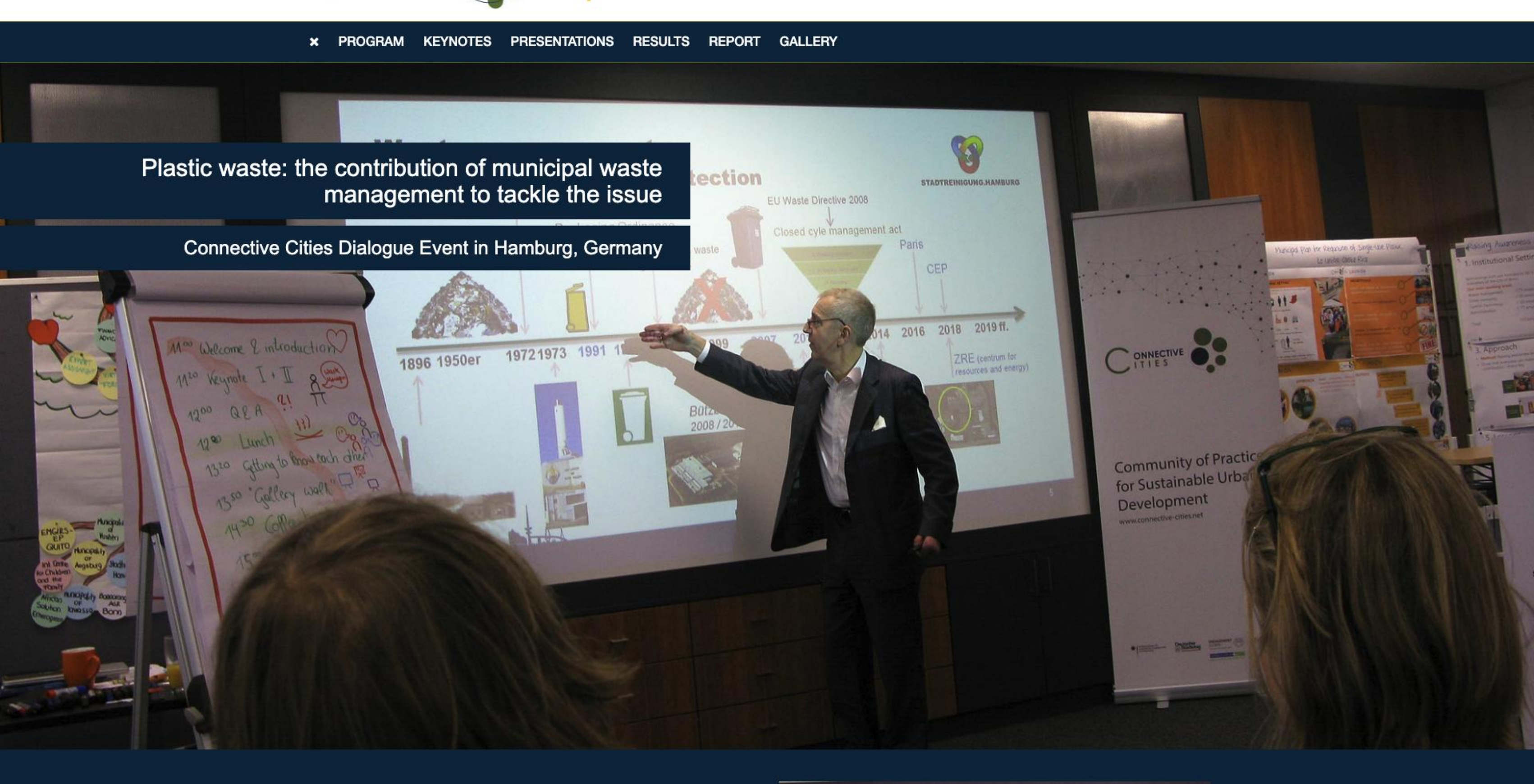

Plastic waste: the contribution of municipal waste management to tackle the issue

Connective Cities Dialogue Event in Hamburg, Germany

Overview

Almost 40 local practitioners from 13 cities, 9 countries and 4 continents intensively exchanged their experiences on the topic of "plastic waste" and jointly developed solutions and project ideas. They followed the invitation of Connective Cities and the City of Hamburg to a dialogue event on "Plastic Waste - The Contribution of Municipal Waste Management Systems to Tackle the Issue", which took place from 3 to 5 December 2019 in Hamburg.

Increasing amounts of plastic waste pose challenges for local authorities around the world. Only small quantities can be recycled by type to create closed cycles. But even recycling into lower types of plastic can alleviate landfills and generate income for vulnerable groups. However, avoiding plastic waste is the best option. Therefore, plastic waste is first and foremost a social challenge: changing the behaviour of consumers and producers is crucial.

Based on an exchange of experiences on good practices and projects in the cities implementation challenges were identified and finally eight project ideas were developed for eight cities, which could lead to an improvement of the respective strategies and implementation plans.

The event concluded with three parallel excursions to a waste incineration plant, a sorting station and a waste collection point in Hamburg.

Program

From two opening lectures on plastic waste, participants presented ongoing or planned projects in 13 of their cities, focusing on the following topics:

1. Sustainable separated household waste collection systems
2. Sustainable use of plastics
3. Avoiding plastic packaging

A number of key challenges have been identified, including the creation of recycling cycles of a single variety, systems for separating waste at the household level, the initiation of behavioural changes among producers and consumers, and the involvement or formal organisation of informal waste collectors.

The final step was to transform some of the identified challenges and solutions into project ideas and support them with concrete action plans.

In addition, volunteers from Precious Plastic Hamburg demonstrated how plastic can be recycled with simple tools, some creativity and knowledge.

Event Program

Keynotes

The Contribution of Municipal Waste Management
Prof. Dr.-Ing. Rüdiger Siechau, Stadtreinigung Hamburg

Plastic Waste: The Contribution of Municipal Waste Management Systems: An International Perspective
Anja Schwetje, German Environment Agency - Umweltbundesamt

Presentations

Working Group I: Sustainable separated household waste collection system

Sustainable Separated Household Waste Collection System
Hamburg, Germany

Implementation of the Waste Separation System at Source
Mitrovica, Kosovo

Free of Garbage Guide for Recyclable Waste - Recovery of Recyclable Waste with Social Inclusion
Quito, Ecuador

Sustainable Separation Household Waste collection System
Irbid, Jordan

100% Plastic - Development of the Plastic Waste Collection and Recycling System
Hawassa, Ethiopia

Reforming The Yellow Bin
Augsburg, Germany

Avoiding Bio-Plastics and Single-use Plastics in Industrial Composting Plants
Hamburg, Germany

Implementing of the Waste Separation System at Source
Vushtrri, Kosovo

Working Group II: Sustainable use of plastic

Climate-friendly Integrated Solid Waste Management
Himara, Albania

Post-Consumer Plastic Waste Recycling System
Kandy, Sri Lanka

Recycling of Plastic for Production of Construction Materials
Mogadishu, Somalia

The Recyclability of Post-Consumer Plastic Packaging Waste in German Cities: Challenges and Opportunities
University of Hamburg, Germany

Working Group III: Avoiding plastic packaging

Municipal Plan for Reduction of Single-use Plastic
La Unión, Costa Rica

Raising Awarness for Avoiding Plastic Waste
Bonn, Germany

Extended Producer Responsibility in Tunisia
University of Rostock, Germany

Results

The expertise of the participants was as diverse as the cities they represented: Hamburg, Rostock, Bonn and Augsburg in Germany, Vushtrri and Mitrovica in Kosovo, Himara (Albania), Irbid (Jordan), Kandy (Sri Lanka), Hawassa (Ethiopia), Mogadishu (Somalia), La Unión (Costa Rica) and Quito (Ecuador).

Despite major differences at the technical level, the exchange of experiences and ideas between countries and between continents also worked on this topic. For example, Kandy benefited from the experience of German cities in automating their sorting facilities. Quito, Irbid, Mitrovica and Hawassa shared their approaches to integrating informal waste collectors. Similarly, Mogadishu, Quito, Irbid and Hawassa exchanged ideas on household collection systems and the establishment of recycling centres; and the initiation of behavioural change among producers and consumers to avoid waste generation was an important topic for La Unión, Rostock and Augsburg.

At the end of the conference, eight concrete project ideas were developed which have great potential for implementation. The spectrum ranged from the establishment of an umbrella organisation for waste collectors in Mitrovica, the establishment of a recycling centre in Himara, the economically sustainable organisation of the collection of recyclable waste in Vushtrri, the automation of the recycling plant in Kandy, the development of a communication strategy for the recycling project in Quito, the establishment of waste separation at household level in Hawassa, the certification of sustainable shops in La Unión, to action planning for greater quality and competition in waste collection in Mogadishu.

The event concluded with three parallel excursions to a waste incineration plant, a sorting station and a waste collection point in Hamburg.

Report

Avoiding, Collecting and Recycling Plastic Waste – The Contribution of Municipal Waste Management Systems

The documentation describes in detail the format of the dialogue event, the good practices and results of the working groups as well as the planned further steps to implement the developed project ideas.

Further information:

Prevention of plastic waste in production and consumption by multi-actor partnerships
A study of the PREVENT Waste Alliance and the Wuppertal Institut für Klima, Umwelt, Energie gGmbH, published in May 2020

Gallery

Categories: Connective Cities | Municipal services | Solid waste management and recycling | Power supply

Regions: Africa | Ethiopia | Hawassa | Somalia | Mogadishu | Asia | Sri Lanka | Kandy | Germany | Augsburg | Bonn | Hamburg | Rostock | Central, Eastern and South Eastern Europe | Albania | Himara | Kosovo | Motrivica | Latin America | Costa Rica | La Unión | Ecuador | Quito | Middle East | Jordan | Irbid

Location

Related events

Related Good Practices