

News

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Ukraine Conference of the State Government of North Rhine-Westphalia (Germany) with Dnipropetrovsk Oblast (Ukraine)

Connective Cities organized an expert forum on the topic of disposal and recycling of construction waste

Since the Russian aggression in Ukraine, relations between Germany and Ukraine have intensified. On 18 November 2024, the state of North Rhine-Westphalia organised a conference on cooperation with Ukraine in cooperation with the city of Cologne. The aim of the conference was to network North Rhine-Westphalian and Ukrainian stakeholders from state and local government, business, civil society and academia. The focus was on the question of how horizontal cooperation can contribute to strengthening Ukraine's resilience, reconstruction and EU integration. The regional partnership between North Rhine-Westphalia and the Dnipropetrovsk Oblast was a particular focus.

With 300 German and 100 Ukrainian guests, the conference was a success. It was officially opened by the Minister President of North Rhine-Westphalia, Hendrik Wüst, and the Mayor of Cologne, Henriette Reker.



The panellists of the forum (from left to right): Monika Lichtinghagen-Wirths, Bergischer Abfallwirtschaftsverband, Gabi Schock, Council of European Municipalities and Regions, Bart Gruyaert, Neo-Eco Ukraine, Andrii Soronchinsky, Poltava Military Oblast Administration, Yana Naumenko, Dnipropetrovsk Regional State Administration | Photo: Ralph Sondermann



Participants in the Waste Management Expert Forum | Photo Ralph Sondermann

Connective Cities organised an expert forum on the topic of disposal and recycling of construction waste. Key issues at the workshop included the aspects of (interim) storage of construction waste, the handling of hazardous substances in construction waste and the modalities of reusing construction waste.

Ms Monika Lichtinghagen-Wirths, Managing Director of the Bergischer Abfallwirtschaftsverband, emphasised the importance of mineral waste, which accounts for 67% of waste in Germany. The :metabolon research project with the Technical University of Cologne is researching new recycling recipes.

Gabi Schock, Chair of the Committee of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions, pointed out that construction waste often does not have the same priority as water supply, emergency aid or hygiene in the event of a disaster, e.g. a bomb attack. How can crisis-proof waste management concepts be developed?

Bart Gruyaert, project manager at Neo-Eco Ukraine, a French organisation that carries out concrete projects in the field of disposal and recycling of construction waste in Ukraine, described a good practice from one of their projects in which veterans are involved in the dismantling of affected buildings. Yana Naumenko, Head of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in the administration of Dnipropetrovsk Oblast, emphasised the importance of the topic: 'In Ukraine, the quantities of construction waste are enormous and international cooperation for the exchange of experience and expert advice makes sense. There is a great demand for training courses on the handling and recycling of construction waste.'

Andrii Soronchinsky, Head of the Department for Economic Development, Trade and Investment in the Poltava Oblast, mentioned the benefits of cooperation with the Bergischer Abfallverband as part of the utility platform project with GIZ.

The discussions in the workshop revealed that:

- a critical amount of foreign bodies in recycled concrete (such as asbestos, plastics, but also textiles) is tolerable. The main thing is that the pollutants are bound in the solid material,
- it is necessary to start now with pilot projects in Ukraine and to adjust, optimise and possibly scale up later,
- it is important to consider the entire process of disposal, interim storage and recycling of construction waste as well as the organisation of pre-disaster (bombing) assistance
- partnerships between (municipal) companies, municipalities and civil society organisations are highly relevant.



(l.r.) Monika Lichtinghagen-Wirths, Bergischer Abfallwirtschaftsverband, Gabi Schock, Council of European Municipalities and Regions, Bart Gruyaert, Neo-Eco Ukraine | Photo: Ralph Sondermann

You can find more information about the event [on the website of our project partner "Utility Platform"](#).

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