



Science centres voice public concerns about waste to EU

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BRUSSELS, BELGIUM –European citizens are directly influencing the European Union research agenda for the first time through a ground-breaking consultation series financed by the European Commission and conducted by science centres and museums in 27 EU member states.

The Views, Opinions and Ideas of Citizens in Europe on Science (VOICES) EU funded project is a year-long, Europe-wide, citizen consultation which has brought 1000 citizens together to explore the concept of waste as a resource. The results of the consultation are being used by the European Commission to shape Europe's priorities on research into how urban waste is managed.

“VOICES shows that science centres and museums are places where people can come together and tackle crucial issues facing society,” says Marzia Mazzonetto, Senior Project Manager of Ecsite, coordinator of the project. “By weaving our consultation results into their research agenda, the EU is ensuring that citizens are being heard.”

European citizens prioritize the need for 100 per cent recyclable or biodegradable packaging, new technologies to make household recycling easier and waste incineration to produce energy, according to VOICES focus groups. Citizens also came up with innovative ideas – such as “smart bins” for recycling – and proposed new directions for European research into waste management.

“The European Commission is always looking for ways to bring Europe closer to its citizens and to make research and innovation outcomes meet society's needs and expectations better,” says Gilles Laroche, Head of Unit “Ethics and Gender” at the European Commission's DG Research and Innovation. “Science centres and museums are unique interfaces connecting researchers and policymakers with the general public. The pilot initiative VOICES, gave a unique, unprecedented opportunity to European citizens to contribute to the definition of research priorities in Horizon 2020.”

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About Ecsite

Ecsite is the European network of science centres and museums, linking science communication professionals in more than 300 institutions in 50 countries. Founded over 20 years ago, Ecsite connects member institutions through projects and activities and facilitates the exchange of ideas and best practice on current issues. www.ecsite.eu

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