# WE4GREEN EBOOK

LOCAL GREEN DEALS:
OUR MUNICIPALITIES FOR THE
GREEN TRANSITION PROJECT

(REF N. 101138490 - CERV-2023-CITIZENS-TOWN-NT)



#### **WE4GREEN EBOOK**

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## Co-funded by



edited by Gabriella Bigatti WE4GREEN Project Manager



with the valuable support of the teams from Suwalki City (PL), Jelgava Local Municipality (LV), Platres Community Council (CY), La Palma del Condado Municipality (ES), Ottiglio, Sala Monferrato, Camagna Monferrato, Rosignano Monferrato, Ozzano Monferrato and Cella Monte Municipalities (IT)



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## **Chapter 1**

# WE4GREEN PROJECT: the objectives, the planned activities, the results



## "WE 4 GREEN-LOCAL GREEN DEALS: OUR MUNICIPALITIES FOR THE GREEN TRANSITION" project (Ref N. 101138490 - CERV-2023-CITIZENS-TOWN-NT)

Project number:	101138490
Project name:	LOCAL GREEN DEALS: OUR MUNICIPALITIES FOR THE GREEN TRANSITION
Project acronym:	WE 4 GREEN
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The **WE4GREEN PROJECT**, co-financed by the European Commission under the program and the Call CERV 2021-2027 *CERV-2023-CITIZENS-TOWN-NT*, was officially launched on December 1st, 2023, and successfully concluded after 24 months of implementation. The initiative embodied the motto inspired by UNESCO: "Reconcile humanity with nature: Protect the environment through science, local knowledge and values of respect for Biodiversity." The project unfolded across five unique European ecosystems – UNESCO Biosphere Reserves, Natura2000 sites and UNESCO World Heritage areas – where it piloted activities that blended local traditions with cutting-edge green solutions.

#### **Institutional Context**

The European Commission provided financial and institutional backing, recognizing WE4GREEN as a flagship project for citizen engagement in the European Green Deal. The Commission's support enabled a transnational partnership of ten municipalities from Italy, Cyprus, Spain, Poland and Latvia to pursue the ambitious goal of creating *Local Green Deals*. These Local Green Deals acted as tailor-made action plans at municipal level to accelerate sustainable transitions, linking EU policies to community-driven strategies.

#### **Objectives**

"WE4GREEN - Local Green Deals: our municipalities for the green transition" project aimed to:

- o Bring citizens together to discuss local climate and energy actions
- o Promote civic participation, solidarity, and intercultural understanding
- o Strengthen European identity through town networks and joint initiatives
- o Foster new knowledge about fragile ecosystems, biodiversity, and sustainable living
- o Pilot green practices and embed eco-friendly behaviours in everyday community life.

The expected impact went far beyond awareness-raising: it equipped local administrations and citizens with tools to co-create and implement climate-resilient policies while reinforcing a shared European belonging.

#### Partnership and territories Involved

The partnership included:

- Italy: Municipalities of Ottiglio (Lead Partner), Camagna Monferrato, Rosignano Monferrato, Sala Monferrato, Ozzano Monferrato and Cella Monte (placed in the UNESCO World Heritage site Vineyard Landscapes of Piedmont)
- Cyprus: Platres Community Council (Troodos Mountain UNESCO World Heritage site)
- Poland: Suwałki Municipality (located in Natura 2000 Areas)
- **Spain**: Municipality of La Palma del Condado (Andalusian rural landscape and Doñana National Park)
- Latvia: Jelgava Local Municipality (Zemgale Planning region).

Together, these ten municipalities represented ecosystems ranging from vineyards, mountains, forests and rural plains to urban-rural interfaces. Their cooperation ensured a balance between heritage protection, biodiversity conservation, and community-driven innovation.

Short name	Legal name	Coun try	PIC
COMUNE OTTIGLIO	COMUNE DI OTTIGLIO	IT	883830342
CAMAGNA	COMUNE DI CAMAGNA MONFERRATO	IT	882225768
ROSIGNANO	COMUNE DI ROSIGNANO MONFERRATO	IT	889137309
CELLA MONTE	COMUNE DI CELLA MONTE	IT	882206950
PLATRON	KOINOTIKO SYMVOULIO PLATRON	CY	939538994
OZZANO	COMUNE DI OZZANO MONFERRATO	IT	882217426
SALA	COMUNE DI SALA MONFERRATO	IT	882143221
SUWALKI	SUWALKI MIASTO NA PRAWACH POWIATU	PL	939303284
JELGAVAS NOVADA	JELGAVAS NOVADA PASVALDIBA	LV	929071336
ALPDC	AYUNTAMIENTO DE LA PALMA DELCONDADO	ES	938532522

#### **Activities and Approach**

WE4GREEN combined international exchanges, educational actions and experimental pilots. Citizens, mayors, municipal staff, citizens and experts actively engaged in debates, trainings and site visits. The activities:

- Built civic participation and strengthened trust in EU democratic processes
- o Promoted eco-friendly practices (e.g., use of km0 food, sustainable mobility, zero-waste events)
- o Created occasions, events, training modules on biodiversity, circular economy and climate change for citizens and communities
- o Enhanced intercultural dialogue through festivals, conferences and online events
- o Tested local green transition strategies adapted to fragile ecosystems.

Each country designed its own strategy to develop a Local Green Deal, integrating energy, mobility, waste, and biodiversity measures into municipal policies.

#### Work Packages (WPs) and Deliverables

The project was organized into 5+1 Work Packages:

#### WP1: Event 1 – Training Meeting in Cyprus (CY)

Focused on climate change, EU Green Deal strategy and local governance capacity-building. *Deliverable D1.1*: Training event report and study visits.

#### WP2: Event 2 – Workshop and Green Visits in Monferrato (Italy)

Explored sustainable agriculture, rural ecosystems and cultural heritage conservation.

Deliverable D2.1: Documentation of workshops, eco-tour itineraries and best practice collection.

#### WP3: Event 3 – WE4GREEN Online European Conference (Latvia)

Gathered all partners and stakeholders in a digital environment to exchange on UN Agenda 2030, EU Green Deal and local best practices.

Deliverable D3.1: Conference proceedings, including transnational best practices.

#### WP4: Event 4 – Citizens' Engagement Seminars in Spain (ES)

Encouraged broad civic participation and intergenerational dialogue on sustainable lifestyles, biodiversity and forest ecosystems.

Deliverable D4.1: Report on citizen engagement events and applied actions.

#### WP5: Event 5 – WE4GREEN Online European Conference (Poland)

Focused on Local Green Deals, applied green cases by local communities, environmental resilience. *Deliverable D5.1*: Presentation of local action plans, good practices, achievements for integrating biodiversity and regenerative agriculture into Local Green Deals.

#### WP0: Management, Evaluation, Dissemination (transversal activity)

Ensured quality control, financial management and visibility.

Deliverables: interim report, mid-term review, final report, websites and social, news, open-access outputs.

Work Package No	Work Package name	Lead Beneficiary
WP1	EVENT 1 – Training Meeting in Cyprus on Greentransition, climate changes and EU Green Deal	PLATRON
WP2	EVENT 2 – Workshop and Green visits in Monferrato	Comune Ottiglio
WP3	EVENT 3 – WE4GREEN online European Conference	JELGAVAS NOVADA
WP4	EVENT 4 – Citizens' engagement and greentransition – seminars in Spain	ALPDC
WP5	EVENT 5 – WE4GREEN online EuropeanConference	SUWALKI

#### Main results

By the project end in November 2025, WE4GREEN had reached more than 10.000 citizens across five countries. Municipalities established practical Local Green Deals, each tailored to their ecosystem and socio-cultural context.

Key results included:

- Sensibilisation on CO2 emissions reduction and actions in pilot communities through energysaving actions
- Strengthened civic networks, with citizens participating in dozens of workshops and events.
- Actions and policy recommendations adopted by municipal councils for long-term sustainability and sustainable agriculture
- New educational and training activities on green topics, integrated into schools and VET providers, training over 500 students
- Dissemination outputs reaching EU policymakers, NGOs, media and academic institutions.

The project reinforced the idea that local action, rooted in heritage and biodiversity, can effectively advance the European Green Deal.

#### **Communication and Dissemination Strategy**

A crucial component of WE4GREEN was its multi-level and multi-country communication and dissemination strategy. The project was disseminated at local, regional, national and EU levels by exploiting the network of contacts of each partner as well as by establishing new contacts with stakeholders and beneficiaries.

A participatory approach was adopted to ensure that at every level the appropriate audiences were involved.

<u>Primary targets (direct beneficiaries):</u> citizens, volunteers, municipalities, associations for environment and sustainability in the 5 involved territories. These groups were actively engaged through workshops, conferences, cultural satellite events and awareness campaigns that directly supported the creation of Local Green Deals.

<u>Secondary targets (indirect beneficiaries):</u> public authorities, health agencies, civil society, non-profit organizations, families, teachers and schools, NGOs for climate change and environmental protection, SMEs, opinion-makers, media. These audiences were reached through tailored communication actions such as policy briefs, media outreach, educational packages, and public events. This ensured a wide societal impact, strengthened the project's legitimacy, and enhanced its policy uptake.

Through breaking news, press releases, social media campaigns and this ebook launching, WE4GREEN achieved consistent visibility across Europe. Its effective communication strategy created synergies among different levels of governance and sectors, guaranteeing that the project results reached beyond the partnership and became part of a wider European dialogue on sustainability and citizen engagement.

WE4GREEN left a legacy of empowered municipalities, active citizens and resilient ecosystems. It demonstrated how transnational collaboration, supported by the European Commission, could bridge the gap between EU strategies and local realities. By fostering inclusiveness, knowledge exchange and solidarity, the project not only contributed to climate neutrality goals but also strengthened European democratic life. Its Local Green Deals remain as living frameworks guiding municipalities in their ongoing green transitions, ensuring that communities continue to reconcile humanity with nature.



### **Chapter 2**

#### WE4GREEN PROJECT: 5 Events & Deliverables



By Gabriella Bigatti

### ₩WE 4 GREEN-LOCAL GREEN DEALS: OUR MUNICIPALITIES FOR THE GREEN TRANSITION

The project (Ref N. 101138490 - CERV-2023-CITIZENS-TOWN-NT) started on December 2023, had a duration of 24 months.

As already established, members of the partnership are: Suwalki City (PL), Jelgava Local Municipality (LV), Platres Community Council (CY), La Palma del Condado Municipality (ES), Ottiglio (Applicant) and the neighbouring Municipalities from Italy (Sala Monferrato, Camagna Monferrato, Rosignano Monferrato, Ozzano Monferrato and Cella Monte).

The project endorses the creation of actions and relationships between the 10 Municipalities from the 5 different countries, strengthens mutual understanding, developing a sense of belonging to the European Union and European area. WE4GREEN took inspiration from the EU Green Deal, European growth strategy for a modern, resource-efficient and competitive economy - to create the first zero-carbon continent in the world by 2050.

The transnational project allowed the participating Municipalities and their citizens, to activate events, debates, meetings for the green topics, actions for fighting the climate change and the environmental sustainability, strengthening twinning bonds.

The Municipality of Ottiglio and all the partner municipalities took the opportunity to explore topics such as the green transition, the circular economy, applied renewable energies, sustainable waste management, from local perspectives.

#### **PROJECT WORKPLAN**

The workplan expected different Work-packages with five WPs dedicated to Events, visits or training: 3 main Events in situ & 2 Events online.

Each participating Municipality actively participated in every event and satellite activity.

For each major event, the preparation phase was undertaken: from setting the dates and agenda to identifying the topics, case studies and speakers. Presentations or training methods were then defined, along with the preparation of the project material. For both in-person and online activities, participants were identified, their involvement and preparatory training were developed, as well as the logistics and/or platforms to be used. Each event was also supervised by the Project Manager who accurately helped guide the actions on the ground during the 24 months.

Ottiglio and the other participating organisations worked hard for preparing any of the European events, as planned by the project.

The WE4GREEN Deliverables and the Events were implemented as follows:

Event n. 1° of the Cerv WE4GREEN Project Cyprus - 11-12-13 April 2024

#### The Event 1 was coordinated in situ by Platres Community Council.

Ottiglio Representants and the other partners' staffs from IT, LV, ES, PL were hosted in Platres – Troodos Mountain green area. Intensive training days, working on EU Green Deal and green transition issues, have been realized, and the foreign participants, together with the local ones, enjoyed the panoramic views of Platres, the green area of Troodos Mountains, the Geopark and the natural forest.

More in details, the first WE4GREEN training meeting, hosted by the Platres Community Council, opened with a welcome ceremony at the George Seferis Conference Room in the local Cultural Centre. Panayiotis Papadopoullos, President of the Platres Community Council, together with project coordinator Massimo Pasciuta, introduced the overall goals of the WE4GREEN initiative, presenting its commitment to the EU Green Deal and to building local action plans for the green transition.

Participants shared the perspectives of their Municipalities and introduced the European Green Deal vision of transforming the EU economy into a sustainable model. The evening concluded at the Kallithea Inn, a hotel known for its environmentally friendly practices, where guests experienced local green hospitality.

The second day was dedicated to local best cases and the potential of sustainable tourism in rural areas. In the morning, Panayiotis Papadopoullos presented concrete schemes and incentives for communities to "go green," supported by the Cyprus Energy Agency.

This was followed by an inspiring talk from Yioula Michaelidou Papakyriacou, Director of the Troodos Network of Thematic Centers, who highlighted the value of regenerative tourism through lavender cultivation, circular economy principles, and ecological products. A workshop on green skills further developed participants' capacities. In the afternoon, the group explored the "green heart" of Cyprus with a visit to Troodos National Park, part of the Natura 2000 network, where they also heard from the Director of the Troodos Regional Tourism Board about eco-friendly hiking and biking initiatives. The day ended in Kyperounda village, meeting artisans and entrepreneurs engaged in environmentally conscious practices.



The third and final day shifted the focus to green mobility and biodiversity. The training began with project management elements and then moved on to the presentation by Paris Nikolaou, from MaaSLab & Moby X Software Ltd, who explored the opportunities of sustainable mobility in rural contexts. Participants then walked through Platres to visit the local Green Mobility Hub and Recycling Hubs, where ongoing projects and funding opportunities were presented. After lunch at the Historic New Helvetia Hotel, surrounded by the Troodos Forest, the group gathered once more at the Cultural Centre for a laboratory on "Bee Hotels," learning about pollination, biodiversity and the role of bees in fostering a green culture across generations.

The event closed with a farewell dinner, where participants celebrated the shared experience and confirmed their next meeting in Monferrato, Italy, scheduled for October 2024.

Throughout the three days, the combination of training, debate and direct experience of Cypriot green landscapes and sustainable practices allowed participants to deepen their knowledge of the green transition and strengthen their commitment to spreading these approaches within their own communities.

# Event n. 2° of the Cerv WE4GREEN Project Monferrato / Italy - 5 – 6 – 7 October 2024

Ottiglio and Sala Monferrato, Camagna Monferrato, Rosignano Monferrato, Ozzano Monferrato and Cella Monte Municipalities (Italy), coordinated the **Event n. 2** held in **Italy**. With the approval of the European Commission, the Event has been held in Monferrato area – Piedmont, in the dates from 5 to 7 October 2024. The participants from Poland, Spain, Cyprus and Latvia arrived in situ in October 4th and 5th.

The second WE4GREEN event brought together 86 participants from five countries, combining international delegations from Cyprus, Poland, Latvia and Spain with a large group of Italian citizens and local representatives.

The programme began on 5 October at the Ecomuseum of Pietra da Cantoni in Cella Monte, a symbolic location that celebrates both cultural heritage and sustainability. After greetings from all Mayors of the hosting municipalities, the WE4GREEN project manager, Gabriella Bigatti, introduced the aims of the gathering. Delegations from each country presented their green territories, while Corrado Calvo of the Ecomuseo and Mariachiara Ghilardi from ASFODELO highlighted projects ranging from regenerative agriculture to sustainable food production and the reduction of pesticides. The day concluded with a convivial dinner in Sala Monferrato, allowing guests to discover local traditions and gastronomy.

On 6 October, the international and local participants immersed themselves in Ottiglio historic Rural Fair, the Fiera Bovina di Sant'Eusebio, where they experienced traditional agriculture, local products and examples of sustainable breeding practices. In the auditorium of Ottiglio, the highlight of the day followed: the <a href="Town Twinning Ceremony">Town Twinning Ceremony</a>, during which the ten municipalities of the WE4GREEN network signed a "Pact of Brotherhood," accompanied by national anthems and the European hymn.

This solemn moment was blessed by hundreds of citizens, and representants from Italian Parliament and regional Authorities, and celebrated afterwards with a joint lunch with typical tastes.

In the afternoon, attention shifted to Rosignano Monferrato for a Public Workshop on developing Local Green Deals. Experts and representatives, including Giovanna Quaglia, Panayiotis Papadopoullos, Yioula Michaelidou Papakyriacou, and several Italian and Polish speakers, discussed topics ranging from sustainable tourism to renewable energy, water management, waste policies and the EU Farm to Fork strategy from Massimo Pasciuta. The evening closed with a concert and a shared dinner, reinforcing the sense of cultural and civic unity.



The final day, 7 October, focused on sustainability practices at the local level. In Ozzano Monferrato, participants learned how a former cement factory, once highly polluting, has been transformed into a cultural and social hub, including a museum, healthcare centre and music academy. The seminar "Sustainability, Reuse and Recovery" underscored the importance of rethinking industrial heritage. The project team then held a management meeting to prepare the upcoming events and next steps.

In Camagna Monferrato, the delegation learnt about the local farm that produces renewable energy through circular economy processes involving photovoltaic systems and a biogas plant fuelled by pig slurry, a striking example of energy self-sufficiency. The visit ended with lunch and a walk through the UNESCO-listed hamlet, before farewells and departures.

Over three days, the Monferrato municipalities showcased how rural communities can actively contribute to the European Green Deal by combining tradition and innovation, protecting biodiversity, promoting circular economy initiatives, supporting renewable energy and fostering sustainable tourism. The event strengthened both the technical knowledge and the civic bonds of the WE4GREEN network, paving the way for the next stages of the project.

# **X**Event n. 3° of the Cerv WE4GREEN Project Online European Conference - 16 − 17 January 2025

The **third WE4GREEN** event was held online on 16 and 17 January 2025, coordinated by Jelgava Local Municipality in Latvia, with the active participation of all partners from Italy, Poland, Spain and Cyprus. Conceived as a **European Conference**, it gathered 247 participants, including local authorities, municipal staff, companies, schools, NGOs, and citizens, all connected through the Teams platform. The first day opened with words of welcome from moderator Āris Ādlers, followed by speeches from Uldis Ainārs, Chairman of Jelgava Local Municipality, and Ilvija Ašmane, an international project manager.

The focus quickly shifted to the UN Sustainable Development Goals and how municipalities can embed them into their policies. Agita Kaupuža, representing the Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments, offered insights on aligning local actions with Agenda 2030.



Latvian speakers such as Inga Grīnfelde and Sabīna Alta presented local case studies: the restoration of the Svēte River as a model for ecosystem services, and the transformation of Laflora Ltd.'s business model to integrate sustainability. From the partners' side, contributions included Italy's approach to waste and environmental legislation (presented by Alfredo Gualmini of the Carabinieri Corps), Cyprus's partnerships for sustainability (by Panayiotis Papadopoullos), and innovative solutions from Suwałki, Poland, shared by Dariusz Bogdan. The day concluded with debate and Q&A, underlining how local innovation feeds into global sustainability.

The second day continued with an emphasis on the European Green Deal and citizen engagement. Aiva Apša-Ķīšeniece from the Latvian Rural Forum spoke about the crucial role of rural communities in sustainable transitions, while Inese Kausa from the European Commission's DG Environment outlined priorities in circular economy, sustainable agriculture, water resilience and nature restoration, warning about the risks of inaction. Business perspectives were represented by Kaspars Fogelmanis of EcoLead Ltd., who illustrated how recycling industries can drive responsible growth. Latvian local cases followed: Vineta Kleinberga discussed public perceptions of climate change; Evija Ozola-Ozoliņa presented a digital reuse platform to reduce waste; and Kalnciems Secondary School showcased its eco-school initiatives and energy-efficient sports hall.

Contributions from partners reinforced the importance of education and youth: Paola Perotto from Istituto Leardi in Casale Monferrato shared her school's green education practices, while Karolina Chmielewska from Suwałki Youth City Council described youth-led eco-laboratories and anti-smog actions.

The conference closed with remarks from Project Manager Gabriella Bigatti, who underlined the need for continuing the common collaboration and the transfer of good practices. She highlighted the European dimension of WE4GREEN: each local practice gained more meaning when shared transnationally, showing that despite cultural and geographical differences, municipalities face common challenges and can benefit from common solutions.

Over two days, the online conference demonstrated the strength of collective action, showing how local authorities, businesses, schools and communities can integrate Agenda 2030 and the European Green Deal into everyday practices.

By combining expert insights, citizen engagement and youth initiatives, the event reinforced the idea that sustainable development is both a global challenge and a local responsibility, leaving participants with concrete examples and renewed motivation to act.

### Event n. 4° of the Cerv WE4GREEN Project Spain - 2 – 3 – 4 April 2025

The **fourth WE4GREEN event** unfolded in **La Palma del Condado**, Andalusia, from 2 to 4 April 2025, bringing together 83 participants from five countries. Hosted by the Municipality of La Palma del Condado, the gathering embodied the project commitment to linking European climate and sustainability policies with local realities, highlighting how small municipalities can become active agents of the green transition.



The opening ceremony, held at the Teatro España in Plaza de España, set the tone with a heartfelt welcome from Mayor Rocío Moreno Domínguez. Speaking both as a civic leader and a citizen, she emphasized the symbolic importance of hosting the event in a town rooted in agriculture and viticulture, now striving to become a model of ecological innovation. Her message underlined the need for European cooperation as a practical tool for advancing sustainability. The ceremony also featured presentations from all partner municipalities, creating a collective portrait of diverse green practices across Europe. An academic contribution from the Cátedra del Vino connected traditional winemaking with environmental preservation, showing how heritage and sustainability can reinforce each other. The evening concluded with a performance by the Municipal School of Dance and a welcome dinner, blending cultural identity with the shared commitment to the Green Deal.

On the second day, participants explored the UNESCO World Heritage Doñana Natural Park, guided by environmental experts. The visit revealed the park extraordinary biodiversity - from wetlands and marshes to dunes and coastlines - and offered a vivid illustration of how climate change is reshaping ecosystems. Delegates reflected on the dual vulnerability and resilience of these landscapes and their alignment with European biodiversity policies.

Back in La Palma, the group visited Bodega Garay, a pioneering organic winery, where owner Mario Garay explained how sustainable viticulture can thrive without pesticides or fertilizers, relying instead on composting, biodiversity protection and circular practices. The winery, also a hub for education and civic awareness, demonstrated how small enterprises can lead by example.

In the afternoon, the first public seminar on "Citizens' Engagement in the Green Transition" was held at the Town hall Auditorium. Spanish cases were presented by Bodega Garay and the Association of Friends of Wine, showing how local wine culture aligns with ecological principles. The international partners enriched the debate: Ottiglio Mayor, Massimo Pasciuta, warned of the growing threat of microplastics to health and food safety; Latvian Gunita Tolēna described her eco-school initiatives; Panayiotis Papadopoullos from Cyprus presented the "Our Regions for Climate" project in Troodos; and Jerzy Gałązka from Suwałki highlighted urban ecological education. The session balanced scientific insights, practical solutions and civic awareness, followed by an informal dinner that allowed further exchange.

The third day opened with a second public seminar, once again in the Salón de Actos, this time focused on health, energy and education. Professor Manuel Robledo addressed the connections between sustainable food practices and environmental responsibility. Contributions from partners included Dr. Giuseppe Bargero from Italy on the links between health, lifestyles and sustainability; Marcin Bonisławski from Poland on Suwałki path towards sustainable district heating; and Yioula Michaelidou Papakyriacou from Cyprus on the role of thematic centers as community hubs for the green transition. A lively debate followed, confirming the importance of multi-level dialogue. The event closed with a walking tour of La Palma historic centre, a farewell lunch at Nuevo Casino, and an internal project meeting led by coordinator Massimo Pasciuta, who summed up the progress achieved and the shared vision for the next stages of WE4GREEN.

Over three days, La Palma del Condado became a laboratory of ideas and practices where culture, nature, enterprise and civic participation intertwined. By combining site visits, academic contributions, citizen debates and international exchanges, Event 4 demonstrated how the European Green Deal can be translated into meaningful local action, showing that even small municipalities hold the keys to European sustainable future.

# \*Event n. 5° of the Cerv WE4GREEN Project Online European Conference - 15 – 16 October 2025

The **fifth and final WE4GREEN event** was held online on **15 and 16 October 2025**, hosted on the CISCO Webex platform under the coordination of **Suwałki City** (Poland). Over two mornings, Representatives from the five partner countries gathered virtually to exchange knowledge, showcase local best practices, and reflect on the outcomes of nearly two years of collaboration under the EU-funded initiative.

The conference was moderated by Emil Sieńko, WE4GREEN Referent and Chief Specialist at Suwałki City Hall, who opened both days with clarity and energy.

On the first morning, after the access and registration, Sieńko offered a general overview of the event, setting the tone for the discussions. The Vice-Mayor of Suwałki, Marcin Bonisławski, delivered the official welcome speech, underlining the city's commitment to sustainability and its role within the European partnership. His remarks were complemented by the expected intervention of a European Commission representative, who highlighted the importance of town networks in making the Green Deal a reality on the ground.

Next, Luminita Stanciulescu, Project Officer at the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA), offered the European Commission's perspective. She underlines the potential of the CERV program and congratulated the partnership for its tangible activities, and hopes that the partnership can continue to strengthen in the future.

Local Polish experiences then took centre stage. Jerzy Gałązka presented Suwałki Climate Change Adaptation Plan up to 2030, offering an example of forward-looking local governance. This was followed by Ilona Rżany, who shared the city's achievements in implementing renewable energy projects and outlined opportunities under the current EU funding perspective 2021–2027. After a short break, the spotlight turned to the international partners.

Khalil Abid (University of Turin, Italy) delivered a thought-provoking presentation titled "Farming in the Age of Microplastics Pollution, while Evija Ērkšķe from Latvian Zemgale Planning Region presented the BIOWIND project, which promotes community-based acceptance of wind energy.

From Italy, Guido Gabotto, President of Cosmo SpA, described waste management policies in Monferrato

The day closed with reflections from Ottiglio Mayor and project Coordinator, Massimo Pasciuta, who linked sustainability to public health and emerging diseases, before Sieńko summarised the discussions.



The second day began with the same inclusive atmosphere. After registration and introduction by the Moderator, the morning opened with a keynote by Gabriella Bigatti, WE4GREEN Project Manager, who presented the new WE4GREEN eBook, a synthesis of the partnership journey and an anthology of local "green deals" created across the five countries. This was followed by a set of local case studies: from Cyprus, Panayiotis Papadopoullos shared the Platres Local Green Deal strategies; from Poland, Marek Ratasiewicz of the Suwałki Youth City Council illustrated youth-led environmental initiatives; from Italy, architect Isabella Franzin presented the strategic landscape plan for Monferrato; from Spain, winemaker Mario Garay outlined how La Palma del Condado integrated sustainability into local governance; and from Italy again, Mario Redoglia reflected on climate change challenges in viticulture.

The exchanges were followed by closing remarks delivered by Sieńko, Bigatti and Pasciuta.

Together, they acknowledged the results of the project: stronger cooperation among municipalities, greater citizen involvement and a concrete set of local practices contributing to the European Green Deal.

The event ended with final greetings from municipalities and mayors/councillors, who reaffirmed their commitment to carry the lessons of WE4GREEN beyond the project official timeline and continue collaborating on sustainable futures.

The online format of this last Event not only made participation accessible across countries but also symbolically underlined the WE4GREEN message: sustainability and cooperation transcend borders, and the future of European green transition depends on shared responsibility at every level of society.

In the appendix there are the 5 EDS of the events.

The EDS Event Description Sheets are published in full here as an attachment. They contain the detailed contents of each WP and event, the daily reports and the topics discussed. All EDS have been approved by the European Commission.

### **Chapter 3**

# Local Green Deals: what acted and applied in Suwalki City as green strategy



By Ewelina Suchocka and Emil Sieńko

#### A - THE ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIONS AND EDUCATION FOR THE RESIDENTS OF SUWALKI

The main objectives of Suwalki City (PL) are clean air, acoustic comfort, and a clean environment. The major document in this field is the Climate Change Adaptation Plan of the Municipality of the City of Suwalki to 2030 (MPA), which was passed in October 2024 by Suwalki City Council.



#### Climate Change Adaptation Plan of the Municipality of Suwalki to 2030

Climate change is affecting the city of Suwalki. Increasing phenomena such as heat, drought, heavy rainfall, strong wind, and storms are increasingly affecting the city and its residents and may pose a threat to the proper functioning of the City of Suwalki. Increased temperature and changes in the nature of precipitation significantly affect hydrological systems and water resources, and extreme meteorological and hydrological phenomena adversely affect the health and living conditions of the city's residents, infrastructure and nature in the city.

The City of Suwalki, taking into account observed and forecasted threats, has developed the Climate Change Adaptation Plan of the Municipality of the City of Suwalki to 2030 (MPA).

The aim of the MPA is to improve the quality of life and safety of residents and the effective functioning of the city in climate change conditions. This objective will be implemented through actions aimed at reducing the effects of climate threats on the health and living conditions of the city's residents and users, using the function of urban greenery to mitigate the effects of climate change, ensuring the efficient functioning of infrastructure in the conditions of climate change, improving the functioning of public utility facilities and municipal buildings in the conditions of a changing climate, including adaptation to climate change in the city's development policy, and raising residents' awareness of adaptation.

The MPA is a strategic document and is the basis for making decisions by the city authorities that will take into account the threats resulting from climate change. The MPA indicates adaptation actions leading to reducing the negative consequences of climate change in the city.

## List of actions which are taken by Suwalki City in the field of environment protection and green education:

- Municipal educational actions like "Suwalczaki segregate!" The Suwalki City has launched a new
  educational and information campaign about the need to segregate waste, but also to raise
  awareness of the benefits of doing so. Firstly, it is taking care of our environment, but also lower
  fees for waste collection.
  - Link to spot: https://youtu.be/Boc0AZ4iACA?si=\_fslptTy5Er4PCHi
- Schools, kindergartens activities related to education and initiatives supporting urban greenery at educational institutions.
- Support for non-governmental organizations undertaking educational activities among residents.
- Support for residents for the maintenance of birds and pollinators in the city.
- Be partner of worldwide green actions e.g. "Earth Day", "Clean Up the World" "European Mobility Week", "European Car-Free Day in Suwalki".
- Supporting low-emission transport solutions in Suwalki (replacement of the bus fleet in Suwalki with gas and electric buses, changes related to the project of rebuilding the city's transportation system (e.g. green bus stops).
- Suwalki has one of the highest bike path length indicators in Poland (and we have public city bike -SUwer).
- Implementation of technological solutions (like Surface water quality sensors "WATERLY" and air sensors AIRLY system).

Link to the City Hall of Suwałki website: https://en.um.suwalki.pl/

#### **B-USE OF ENERGY FROM RENEWABLE SOURCES (RES) BY PWIK SUWAŁKI**



Przedsiębiorstwo Wodociągów i Kanalizacji Sp. z o.o. (PWiK) is the municipal Waterworks and Sewerage Company. The 1'st September 1960 can be dated as the beginning of the history of waterworks in Suwalki. On December 1, 1962, upon the construction and launch of the waterworks station, the waterworks and sewage team was transformed into the Waterworks and Sewage Plant.



Today, the length of the municipal water supply network in Suwalki is more than 260 km (with connections) and almost 350 km of sewerage network and storm drainage system together. PWiK runs a water treatment plant, which was built in 2005 (50% co-financing of the European Union), sewage treatment plant and 23 deep wells.

PWiK's annual demand for electricity is ca. 6,200 MWh and includes:

- 1) Sewage treatment plant ca. 4 300 MWh
- 2) Water treatment station ca. 1 800 MWh
- 3) Other facilities ca. 100 MWh.

Currently, <u>renewable energy sources</u> (RES) cover approximately 34% of a company's energy demand RES sources in PWiK:

- 2 electric generators with total power of 360 kW, using biogas produced in the sewage sludge fermentation process they cover approximately 43% electricity demand of the sewage treatment plant; additionally, heat is produced and used to maintain a constant temperature in the fermentation chambers and to heat the treatment plant facilities
- 3 photovoltaic installations with a total capacity apx 220 kWp, the production of which covers approximately 12% of the energy demand for water treatment station and for the office facility
- 2 photovoltaic installations with a total capacity of 100 kWp, installed in 2024, which will cover approximately 2.5% of the demand for the sewage treatment plant

#### What next?

- In 2024, a contract was signed for the commissioning of 2 new cogeneration units with a total capacity of 422 kW. Estimated cost: EUR 1 million. These new units will start operating in the second quarter of 2025.
- Use of thermal energy sources from extracted deep water to heat buildings at a water treatment station using a 125kW heat pump
- Construction of additional photovoltaic installations with a capacity of approximately 870 kWp along with energy storage facilities.

Link to PWiK website: https://www.pwik.suwalki.pl/

#### C - THE PATH TO SUSTAINABLE AND GREEN ENERGY IN SUWAŁKI'S DISTRICT HEATING



Przedsiębiorstwo Energetyki Cieplnej w Suwałkach Sp. z o.o. (PEC) is the municipal heating company. The history of company dates back to 1976, and since then it is responsible for heat generation and heat distribution in Suwalki City.

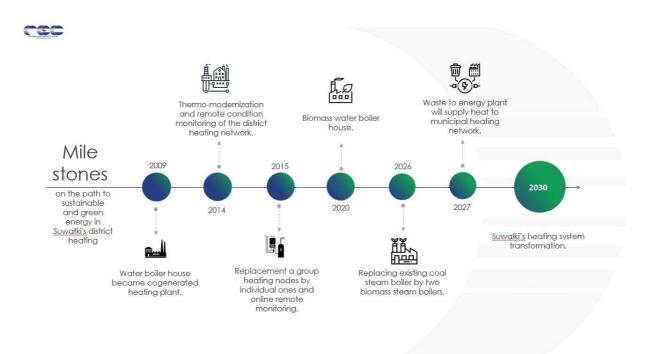
Over the first years, PEC was also present in other 15 cities of north - east of Poland. Today as a result of organizational changes, all its activities focus on city of Suwalki.



Total length of district heating network is 103 km of pipes (pre-installed pipes network - 82,5 km and pipes in prefabricated concrete ducts - 20,5 km). Annual heat lost is only approx.  $10 \pm 1 \%$ .

Number of heating nodes is 1206 pcs (ownership of customer - 178 pcs. ownership of PEC - 1028 pcs.). The gross of it is heating nodes with online remote monitoring (750 pcs.)

The path to sustainable and green energy in Suwalki's district heating is a long way with many mile stones. On the scheme you can see main of them:



In 2009 the first big step which begin the changing process was made – it was transformation from water boiler house to cogenerated heating plant.

Secondly, between 2014 and 2024, nearly 7,000 m of district heating network (diameters from DN200 to DN600) were thermally upgraded. Moreover, since 2015 to 2024, 15 group nodes were decommissioned, and in their place 64 individual nodes were built. Additional since 2015 to 2024, 15 group nodes were decommissioned, and in their place 64 individual nodes were built. In 2015 PEC has launched a remote monitoring system for heat nodes and have connected 750 units to our system over the years.

The next major step forward was made in 2020 - the biomass water boiler plant has started to operate in the heating system. Heat from renewable energy sources is almost 50% over the year. It is fully automated and high efficiency.

#### What next?

A new chapter in heat and power generation - replacing existing coal steam boiler by two biomass steam boilers. Construction works started in 2024 and are planned to be finish in January 2027.

Moreover, we assume that in 2027 Waste to Energy Plant will provide near 10% of heat consumed by the customers.

The year of 2030 Transformation of district heating in Suwalki will gives us at total:

- Heat from biomass up to 82%
- Heat from Waste to Energy Plant 10%
- Power generation from renewable sources 100%

PEC plans also next investment of heat and power accumulation, low temperature district heating network, all-in production and heat distribution management.

Link to PEC website: https://pec.suwalki.pl/

### **Chapter 4**

# Local Green Deals: what acted and applied in Jelgava Local Municipality as green strategy



By Anita Skutane

The **Jelgava Local Municipality** (LV) has been implementing and supporting sustainability initiatives at the local level for years. It coordinated the WE4GREEN third event - an online Conference in January 2025 - where it was possible to present the many initiatives addressing climate change, sustainability, and land protection.

Three of these successful cases and projects follow:

#### A - SUSTAINABILITY FOR RECYCLING COMPANIES - A DRIVER OF RESPONSIBLE GROWTH

**EcoLead** – company recycling lead-acid batteries – is the only company in Latvia in this business. With: 43 employees, 10-million-euro investment, high-quality air quality monitoring, strict environmental monitoring.

*Vision:* to become the leading lead battery recycling plant in the Baltic Sea region countries. EcoLead produces lead ingots by recycling all used lead-acid batteries in Latvia in an environmentally and health-friendly manner.



Their recycling and manufacturing processes comply with all regulations of the Republic of Latvia and the standards and environmental requirements set by the European Union with technologies able to clean all the liquids. In the future they plan to produce products with higher added value.

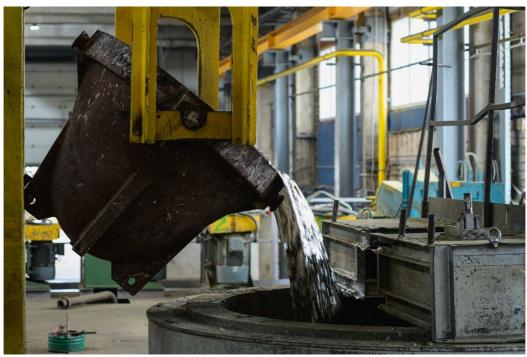
Company is ISO certified: ISO 14001:2015/ ISO 50001:2018/ ISO 45001:2018/ ISO 9001:2015. ISO certificates confirm compliance with international standards, as well as a modern and environmentally friendly battery recycling process.

As EcoLead is lead-acid batteries recycling company from Latvia, they are a powerful driver of responsible growth. The manufacturing facility in Latvia is a key participant in the circular economy and the European Green Deal, which emphasizes recycling waste as close to its source as possible. Lead-acid batteries are products that are well recycled, possible to recycle by 95 – 98%. By recycling the lead-acid batteries, the company helps to conserve valuable resources and a closed-loop system where lead and other materials are used in new batteries and products. Regarding reduction of carbon footprint, recycling process of lead batteries requires significantly less energy than its extracting.

Circular economy model in lead battery recycling can help setting stable price for manufacturers and investments in green technologies. The growth of recycling industry also creates jobs – collection, sorting, transportation, processing etc., as there are many other companies involved in this cycle. Times ago lead-acid batteries were not properly recycled, but destroyed in the forests, garages, not in a safe way, now collection and recycling processes are very strict, no pollution is possible. Recycling contributes to reduction of the volume of virgin materials used and the pollution, reduction of consumption of natural resources, reduction of CO<sup>2</sup> emissions as recycling is done close to collection points.

In the next three years, it is planned to process up to 15,000 tons of batteries per year, producing 8,700 tons of lead and lead alloy ingots.

#### By Kaspars Fogelmanis, CEO of EcoLead



Photos: Ingus Bajārs

# B - RETURN OF INSPIRATION. FROM CONVENTIONAL TO REGENERATIVE: EXPERIENCE OF LAFLORA LTD

Peat sector is an example where external influences – environmental, financial, regulatory – play a great role. They force industry players reconsider the business model where they have been working so far. **LAFLORA Ltd** has started to recognize these risks approximately 10 years ago.

The Company works in the sector from 1995 and is the biggest Latvian peat extractor. LAFLORA produces peat substrate and products for horticulture and forestry (food production, cultivation of ornamental plants). The Company owns the land they extract in area of 1626 ha whereas 96% of peat bogs in Latvia are owned by state. 90% of substrates are exported (~ 100 countries) as market in Latvia is small. Number of employees in 2023 – 296, turnover in 2023 – 28.6 million EUR, taxes paid in 2023 – 4.3 million EUR.

Vision of LAFLORA is as follows: LAFLORA articulates the guiding principles of its activities for the most efficient use of the private owned peat bog as land capital in the interests of the owner, nation and state.

#### The question is – is the Green Deal possible without peat?

Latvia is the largest exporter of peat products in the world for 4 years already. There are some alternatives for the material, but they do not meet all the needs of the agricultural sector. The company can decide what to do with the land after peat extraction – it can be used for denaturalization, agriculture, forestry, water bodies, recreation. One thing the company started to do for some time already – to monitor the wind in peatbog and there it is as good as by the seaside.

Therefore, LAFLORA started to work on environmental impact assessment to build the wind park. The way wasn't smooth and only last year the contract was signed and the building process started, first with roads. The process will be finished in 2026. There will be 16 wind turbines erected. Total amount 108 MW, energy will be sold to the market, but also inside line will be developed for the company's needs – greenhouses, data centers and other circular economy factories.

The Company started to plan their business model change and become more sustainable in 2015 even before the Green Deal (2018) so they were ready to fit with the goal to balance and compensate emissions in extraction and production of peat in synergy with renewable energies, natural capital restoration and technical solutions. LAFLORA works closely with universities and all the data are science based in research.



The second step after wind park is the green industrial area with greenhouses for vegetables, forest plants and mushrooms. Material for growing is their own peat.

The final aim is to bring a new life to the peat bog by return of natural capital in Natural zone of the bog which is 760 ha large by restoring vegetation, doing natural restoration and wetland construction; another is return of social capital in Combined zone with land restoration, planting of paludi-cultures and CO2 capturing; third is the return of financial capital in Economic zone, including sustainable agriculture, forestry and aquaculture, infrastructure fitting in landscape, AER resources and fourth return is return of inspiration for region, community, people working in the company and their families, and Latvia.





Visualizations: LAFLORA, Ltd

By Sabīna Alta, Development Director of LAFLORA

#### C - KALNCIEMS SECONDARY SCHOOL - OUR ECO SHOOL

In 1835, a private school was opened at the Kalnciems-Klīve manor, in the Ūdri house. In 1839, the first Kalnciems parish school building was inaugurated. During the First World War, both schools burned

down. In 1924, classes began in the new six-year primary school building. Today its **Kalnciems Secondary School** with 267 pupils.

#### Eco school

Eco-School is a program, which encourages young people to engage in their environment by allowing them the opportunity to actively protect it. Through this programme, young people experience a sense of achievement at being able to have a say in the environmental management policies of their schools, ultimately steering them towards certification and the prestige which comes with being awarded a Green Flag. The school has been involved in this program for 12 years. It includes all students, teachers and school staff. During the school year, there are various activities taking place. The school has an eco-student council. The council thinks of activities, events and how to engage students to be environmentally friendly. As an Eco-school, we participate in various campaigns, for example World Food Day, when we collected suggestions for what to do with food leftovers, students also found various recipes. The Day without cars - we use public transport as much as possible. In February we usually participate in Warm Sweater Day, when the heating temperature in school building is reduced by 2 degrees Celsius. At any time of the year, we use the surrounding nature for outdoor activities and outdoor education. We participate in various flash actions and Eco action days. One of the activities is Different Shoes Day, when we think about tolerance towards others, about equality. One example of Eco action day: We need a clean forest. Our older students went to the nearby forest to collect the garbage left there.

#### **Eco forums**

The Eco-Schools Forum is an event where students and teachers from schools across Latvia come together to learn about protecting the environment. At the beginning of the forum, students are divided into groups to better understand the challenges different schools face in becoming eco-friendlier and more sustainable. Participants create green project ideas for their schools and share them with others. The forum also includes fun activities like dancing and adventures in nature.



During the forum, students enjoy healthy meals that are also good for the planet, encouraging responsible care for the environment. At the end of the Eco-Forum, students present their ideas. After the forum, students put their ideas into action in their schools, helping to create a greener planet.

#### **G-steam program**

This year our school started to participate in the project "Green STEAM Ecosystems". Innovations in education and a creative approach to the learning process - these are the keywords that describe the

project. The goal of this project is to promote students' interest in: science, technology, engineering, art, and mathematics. Students also develop critical thinking, communication, creativity and cooperation skills during the learning process. Students also learn how to change their daily habits, how to look for "green" solutions to everyday problems.



#### Sports hall

Between 2011 and 2013, one of the most modern and energy-efficient sports halls was built in Valgunde near Kalnciems Secondary School. The goal of building this hall was to reduce carbon dioxide emissions. The building's design follows principles that help conserve heat energy, using advanced window technologies with thermal insulation in the frames and triple-glazed windows, as well as an efficient ventilation system with heat recovery.

The sports hall includes two volleyball courts, changing rooms and showers on the first floor, a gym on the second floor, and classrooms for theoretical lessons. The sport hall provides space for various professional-level sports activities.

By Gunita Tolēna, Deputy Headteacher for Education, English teacher and the students







## **Chapter 5**

# Local Green Deals: what acted and applied in La Palma del Condado Municipality as green strategy



#### By Rocio Maestre

In **La Palma del Condado**, a Municipality located in the Condado region of Huelva (Spain), commitment to the environment is no longer a wish but a tangible reality.

Through various local initiatives, the town has managed to integrate into its development a green strategy based on sustainability, environmental preservation and the promotion of good agricultural practices. One of the most outstanding examples of this strategy is the progressive transition from a conventional agricultural model to one focused on organic farming, especially visible in the cultivation of vineyards.

#### Organic vs. conventional vineyard: a decision with impact

The cultivation of the vine is one of the signs of identity of La Palma del Condado. Its history is linked to wine, land and a family tradition that has adapted to changing times. In this context, the organic vineyard emerges as a responsible and sustainable alternative to conventional exploitation.



Conventional vineyards, characterized by the intensive use of chemical products such as herbicides, artificial fertilizers and systemic phytosanitary products, have shown long-term harmful consequences on the soil, biodiversity and water resources. On the contrary, organic vineyards propose a return to traditional agriculture, but with a scientific and conscious view of the ecological balance.

#### Our organic vineyard cultivation

One of the fundamental pillars of this practice is the total elimination of the use of herbicides. Instead, brush cutters are used to maintain the vegetation cover and plowing is used sparingly. This technique preserves soil structure, avoids soil compaction and promotes the presence of beneficial microorganisms.

The exclusive use of organic fertilizers is another key aspect. Pruning and harvest residues are used, reincorporating them into the soil as part of a natural recycling system. In addition, composted manure is added, enriching the substrate and increasing its capacity to retain water and nutrients.



As for vine protection, the use of systemic phytosanitary products is avoided. Instead, natural fungicides such as garlic preparations or horsetail extract are applied, which reinforce the plant's natural defenses without damaging the surrounding ecosystem. When a contact treatment is necessary, copper or sulfur are used, but always in a timely manner and in controlled doses.

#### **Ecological and social benefits of this model**

The adoption of organic viticulture has not only agronomic, but also social, cultural and environmental implications. One of the greatest achievements is the revitalization of the soil. Thanks to the absence of chemicals and the constant organic input, the soil recovers its life: microorganisms multiply, trophic chains are stabilized and biodiversity is enhanced.

In addition, being a rainfed agriculture, intensive irrigation is not used, which is a significant relief for the water reserves of the environment, especially relevant in the basin of influence of the Doñana National Park. This practice actively contributes to the fight against desertification and the maintenance of natural water cycles.

Organic vineyards also prevent soil erosion. The vegetation cover and the absence of heavy machinery allow the soil structure to remain stable, minimizing the dragging of nutrients and sediments.

We talked about **Bodegas Garay**, what do we do in our winery, how to get a natural wine?

The ecological transition is not limited to the field; it also extends to winemaking.

The **La Palma del Condado winery** has embraced a natural production philosophy that seeks to respect the character of the fruit without altering its essence.

The choice of the harvest date is a crucial step. The optimum ripening point of the grapes is studied so that it is not necessary to add acidity or make artificial corrections to the must. This care ensures that the raw material retains its natural balance.

In the fermentation process, indigenous yeasts, native to the environment, are used. These yeasts are those that naturally inhabit the grape skins and the winery environment, which allows a slower fermentation but also richer in nuances. To ensure the safety of the process, the temperature is controlled manually, keeping it in ideal ranges for the development of microorganisms.



One of the firmest decisions has been the total elimination of sulfites and additives. Under the premise of "zero is zero", the wine is produced without any external additives. This makes the wine a living product, in constant evolution, which reflects the soul of the territory and the artisan work.

#### Local impact of the green strategy

The impact of these good practices is not only agricultural or oenological, but also community-based. La Palma del Condado's green strategy has succeeded in raising awareness among the local population, especially the younger generations, about the importance of environmental care. Through workshops, ecological fairs and guided visits to the vineyard, a collective awareness oriented towards sustainability has been fostered.

The City Council has played a key role in promoting these initiatives, financially supporting the transition of farmers to ecological models and facilitating marketing platforms for local products. This institutional backing has been fundamental for the consolidation of the model.



Likewise, the organic vineyard has become a tourist attraction, giving rise to a new line of economic development based on sustainable wine tourism. The wineries offer immersive experiences that include tours of the countryside, natural wine tastings and educational activities on organic agriculture.

#### **Challenges and future prospects**

Despite the successes achieved, the road to a full green transition is not without its challenges. Among the main challenges are the initial cost of adaptation, the lack of specialized training in some cases and the need to create efficient distribution networks that value organic products in the market.



Nevertheless, the balance is positive. The good practices implemented so far show that it is possible to produce in a sustainable way, without compromising quality or profitability. Moreover, the growing consumer interest in responsible products reinforces the viability of this strategy.

#### **Conclusion: A replicable model**

The experience of La Palma del Condado is an inspiring example of how a community can transform its relationship with the natural environment. The combination of winemaking tradition, ecological innovation and institutional commitment has enabled the development of a respectful, efficient and profitable agricultural model.

The green strategy applied in the municipality not only improves the health of the environment, but also strengthens the social fabric, boosts rural employment and projects a modern and committed image of the territory. In short, you can be born with ecological passion, but you can also do it: and La Palma del Condado is good proof of this.

This chapter has been made with the collaboration and experience of Bodegas Garay.



### **Chapter 6**

# Local Green Deals: what acted and applied in Platres Community as green strategy



By Yioula Michaelidou Papakyriacou

#### LAVENDER AND THE GREEN TRANSITION IN PLATRES: A LOCAL BLOOM WITH EUROPEAN IMPACT

In the green heart of the **Troodos Mountains**, the **village of Platres** (Cyprus) has found a fragrant path toward sustainable growth, guided by the European Green Deal's principles and embodied by one remarkable flower: <u>lavender</u>.

What began as a traditional herb cultivated for its soothing properties has blossomed into a driver of local economic development, women's entrepreneurship, sustainable tourism, and community identity. At the heart of this transformation stands the Lavender Thematic Center, a flagship initiative that positions Platres not only as the lavender capital of Cyprus but also as a pioneer in rural revitalization through green innovation.

#### Lavender as Local Catalyst: Healing, Heritage and Entrepreneurship

Lavender, particularly the English variety Lavandula angustifolia, has been intertwined with Platres history for over a century. Originally introduced during the British colonial period, it was embraced by local women who quickly discovered its diverse uses - from insect repellent and decorative bouquets to skincare and religious offerings. Today, lavender's multifaceted applications have laid the foundation for a thriving microeconomy.

From artisanal soaps and essential oils to culinary delights like lavender dream and cocktails, the herb supports a vibrant ecosystem of small-scale producers.

Women in particular have benefited from this boom. Lavender's low water requirements and high market value make it ideal for small-scale, family-run businesses, many of which are owned and operated by local women.



By reviving traditional practices and pairing them with modern production techniques, these entrepreneurs not only generate income but also preserve and reinterpret cultural heritage.

Their work epitomizes the EU Green Deal's focus on circular economy models and green job creation at the local level.

#### The Lavender Thematic Center: Anchor of Green Tourism

The Lavender Thematic Center, housed in the Platres Cultural Center, serves as the epicenter of this lavender renaissance. Created by Troodos Network, and integrated into the WE4GREEN project, the center is more than a museum—it is an immersive experience. With live distillations, craft workshops, heritage storytelling, and lavender tastings, it offers visitors a multi-sensory introduction to the "Queen of Essential Oils. This year, 30 producers from across Cyprus will showcase their goods at the annual Lavender Festival in Platres, drawing crowds to the village square for a celebration of wellness, gastronomy, and sustainable living.

The Center also serves as a platform for environmental education and intergenerational knowledge transfer. Children learn through interactive games; adults engage in workshops that revive ancestral practices such as making lavender-scented cushions or artisanal cosmetics. These activities not only boost tourism but also build community resilience and pride.



#### **Branding Platres: from Historic Resort to Green Destination**

Platres' association with lavender has become central to its branding strategy. Once known primarily as a colonial-era mountain resort, the village is now reimagining itself as a model of eco-cultural tourism.

This rebranding aligns closely with the European Green Deal's mandate to empower municipalities to develop Local Green Deals - tailor-made strategies that integrate climate, culture, and commerce into local governance.

Lavender installations line the streets, with more than 2,500 new plants recently added along the Lavender Trail - a scenic route guiding visitors through the village's botanical, historical, and aromatic legacy. Tourism infrastructure is now infused with the lavender theme, from menus and spa treatments to street signage and souvenir shops.

These elements create a unified, authentic identity that sets Platres apart in a competitive tourism market.



#### WE4GREEN and the EU Green Deal: Local Actions, Global Vision

Platres' lavender initiative is deeply embedded in the broader framework of the WE4GREEN project, a multi-country collaboration funded by the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (CERV) program.

Through events, knowledge-sharing and citizen engagement, WE4GREEN helped participating municipalities - including Platres - develop and implement their own Local Green Deals.

The Cypriot action plans focused on decarbonization, sustainable business models, and community-led innovation. Platres' lavender model contributes directly to these goals by reducing dependency on mass tourism, promoting biodiversity through sustainable herb cultivation, and encouraging ecoconscious consumer behavior.

Platres examples underscores how even small communities can lead in implementing the Green Deal's objectives, transforming heritage into opportunity, tradition into innovation.

Lavender in Platres is far more than the herbal local product: it is a symbol of how green development can take root in culture, community and climate action.

Website: https://www.platresvillage.com/

## **Chapter 7**

# Local Green Deals: what acted and applied in Italian Municipalities in Monferrato as best practices













#### SUSTAINABILITY, HEALTH AND EMERGING AND RE-EMERGING DISEASES

By Calogero Massimo Pasciuta

Emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases (EIDs) represent a growing global public health challenge. Unlike diseases that remain localized, EIDs have the potential to spread rapidly across regions and even continents, fueled by human activity, environmental change, and globalization. The rise in these diseases is not random but closely linked to processes such as environmental degradation, climate change, intensive agriculture, and unsustainable economic practices. Understanding these connections is essential for developing effective prevention and mitigation strategies.

Sustainability, traditionally associated with natural resource management and environmental protection, now emerges as a critical paradigm in global public health. By integrating ecological, social, and health considerations, sustainability provides a proactive framework to reduce disease risk at its source rather than simply reacting to outbreaks after they occur.

#### The Emerging Threat of Infectious Diseases

Emerging infectious diseases are infections that have recently appeared within a population or whose incidence or geographic range is rapidly increasing. Re-emerging diseases, by contrast, are infections that were once major public health concerns, declined significantly, but are now resurfacing. Both categories are influenced by ecological and social factors.

Human-induced environmental changes—such as deforestation, urban expansion, and the encroachment into wildlife habitats—have amplified interactions between humans, domestic animals, and wildlife, creating conditions conducive to the emergence of pathogens. Likewise, climate change alters temperature and precipitation patterns, expanding the geographic range of disease vectors such as mosquitoes, ticks, and sandflies. Approximately 58% of infectious diseases are now considered sensitive to climate change, demonstrating the intimate link between environmental conditions and disease dynamics.

#### Zoonoses and Spillover: Mechanisms and Risks

A significant proportion of emerging infectious diseases are **zoonoses**, diseases that can be transmitted directly from animals to humans. Zoonotic pathogens may be viral, bacterial, parasitic, or fungal in origin. The transmission of zoonotic diseases can occur through direct contact with infected animals, consumption of contaminated food or water, or exposure to vectors such as mosquitoes and ticks.

**Spillover** refers specifically to the event in which a pathogen crosses species barriers, infecting a new host. Spillover events are influenced by ecological disruptions, such as habitat fragmentation, climate change, and intensive farming, which bring humans and wildlife into closer contact. Historical examples include the spillover of Ebola virus from bats to humans in Central Africa and the emergence of SARS-CoV-1 from civet cats in Asia.

These events are not isolated; they reflect systemic ecological pressures amplified by anthropogenic activity. Urbanization, increased mobility, and global trade facilitate the rapid dissemination of pathogens once a spillover occurs, highlighting the need for integrated surveillance and prevention strategies.

#### **Vectors and Environmental Drivers**

Vector-borne zoonoses exemplify the intersection of environmental sustainability and public health. Mosquitoes (e.g., *Aedes*, *Culex*, *Anopheles*), ticks, sandflies, and other arthropods are highly sensitive to environmental conditions. Rising temperatures, altered rainfall patterns, and habitat changes expand their range and reproductive potential, increasing disease transmission risk.

Unsustainable land-use practices, such as deforestation and intensive agriculture, further exacerbate these risks by creating breeding grounds for vectors and reducing natural predators. Similarly, monocultures and habitat fragmentation reduce biodiversity, weakening natural barriers that regulate pathogen transmission.

Intensive agriculture also contributes to zoonotic disease risk by increasing livestock densities, promoting close human-animal interactions, and facilitating the overuse of antibiotics, which accelerates antimicrobial resistance. This combination of factors creates a "perfect storm" for the emergence and amplification of infectious diseases.

#### The Role of Globalization and Human Mobility

Globalization intensifies the challenge of emerging infectious diseases. The movement of people, goods, and animals across borders accelerates the spread of pathogens, transforming local outbreaks into regional or global threats. International travel and trade, while economically and socially beneficial, act as conduits for rapid disease dissemination.

For example, the global spread of Zika virus in 2015–2016, transmitted primarily by *Aedes* mosquitoes, was facilitated by international travel and urban population density. Similarly, dengue, chikungunya, and West Nile virus have expanded into new regions previously unaffected due to changing climatic conditions and global mobility.

#### Sustainability as a Preventive Strategy

Addressing the root causes of emerging and re-emerging diseases requires a sustainability-oriented approach. Sustainability in this context is not merely environmental stewardship but a **prevention strategy** that mitigates long-term risks to public health. Key strategies include:

- 1. Ecosystem Conservation: Protecting natural habitats maintains biodiversity, which plays a critical role in regulating pathogen transmission. Healthy ecosystems buffer against spillover events by maintaining balanced host-pathogen dynamics.
- 2. Sustainable Agriculture: Practices such as crop rotation, agroecology, integrated pest management, and reduced chemical inputs decrease environmental degradation and limit opportunities for zoonotic transmission.
- 3. Climate Mitigation: Reducing greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to climate change limits vector proliferation and disease spread. Urban planning and water management strategies that reduce standing water can control mosquito breeding sites.
- 4. Biological Vector Control: Utilizing natural predators (e.g., fish, bats, frogs, copepods), essential oils, and microbial agents such as *Bacillus thuringiensis* allows vector control without harming ecosystems. Larvicidal, adulticidal, and sterilization interventions provide targeted control while preserving environmental integrity.
- 5. Public Awareness and Education: Educating communities about zoonotic risks, vector prevention, and sustainable practices enhances resilience and promotes behavioural changes that reduce disease risk.
- 6. One Health and Planetary Health Frameworks: Integrating human, animal, and environmental health fosters interdisciplinary collaboration. One Health emphasizes the interconnectedness of ecosystems, animal health, and human well-being, while Planetary Health underscores the broader impact of human activity on global health outcomes.

Several zoonotic and vector-borne diseases warrant close monitoring due to their epidemic potential: dengue, Zika, chikungunya, West Nile virus, yellow fever, Lyme disease, Q fever, SARS, Ebola, African swine fever, lumpy skin disease, bluetongue, leishmaniasis, and dirofilariasis. These diseases highlight the diverse vectors, hosts, and environmental conditions involved, underscoring the complexity of prevention.

By implementing sustainability-focused interventions—such as habitat conservation, vector control, climate mitigation, and responsible agricultural practices—the emergence and spread of these diseases can be significantly curtailed.

The growing burden of emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases illustrates the need for a paradigm shift in public health. Environmental sustainability, integrated with public health policy, agriculture, and ecosystem management, emerges as a *primary prevention strategy*. Conserving ecosystems, reducing emissions, regulating production, promoting biological vector control, and implementing One Health and Planetary Health frameworks collectively reduce the likelihood and severity of future epidemics.

Zoonoses and spillover events exemplify the interconnected nature of human, animal, and environmental health. Isolated interventions are insufficient; only a holistic, systems-based approach can effectively address the complex drivers of disease emergence. The integration of sustainability principles into health policy and practice offers a pathway toward resilient, equitable, and healthy societies in the face of a rapidly changing environment.

# <u>Environmental Sustainability as a Primary Strategy for Preventing Emerging Infectious Diseases:</u> <u>The Case of Monferrato, Piedmont</u>



#### **The One Health Approach**

The **One Health** approach is an integrated and unifying strategy that recognizes the interconnection between human, animal, and environmental health. It emphasizes the need for collaborative efforts across different disciplines and sectors to address health threats at the human–animal–environment interface. This approach is particularly relevant in the context of emerging infectious diseases, as it fosters a holistic understanding and comprehensive response to complex health challenges.

In the **Monferrato area** (Northern Italy), the implementation of One Health principles has been essential in addressing public health issues. Collaborative initiatives involving local health authorities, environmental agencies, and the agricultural sector have led to effective vector-borne disease surveillance and control measures. These efforts highlight the importance of an integrated approach to safeguarding public health.

#### **Environmental Sustainability as a Preventive Strategy**

Ecosystem Conservation

Protecting and preserving ecosystems is fundamental to preventing the emergence of infectious diseases. Healthy ecosystems regulate disease transmission by maintaining biodiversity and natural barriers against pathogens. In Monferrato, conservation efforts have focused on protecting natural habitats, promoting sustainable agriculture, and restoring degraded landscapes. These initiatives not only safeguard biodiversity but also reduce the risk of disease transmission.

Emission Reduction and Climate Mitigation

Reducing greenhouse gas emissions is crucial for mitigating climate change and its associated health risks. Strategies such as transitioning to renewable energy sources, improving energy efficiency, and promoting sustainable transport can reduce the incidence of climate-sensitive diseases. In Monferrato, local policies have been adopted to promote clean energy, reduce emissions, and increase climate resilience, thereby contributing to improved public health.

Land Use and Sustainable Agricultural Practices

Adopting sustainable land use and agricultural practices can minimize environmental degradation and reduce the risk of zoonotic diseases. Practices such as agroecology, organic farming, and integrated pest management enhance biodiversity, limit chemical use, and strengthen ecosystem services. In Monferrato, farmers have been encouraged to implement these practices through training and support programs, leading to more sustainable and health-friendly agricultural systems.

Public Awareness and Education

Educating communities on the connections between environmental sustainability and health is essential to fostering behavioural change and community engagement. In Monferrato, public health campaigns have focused on raising awareness about the importance of biodiversity, the impacts of climate change on health, and the benefits of sustainable practices. These efforts have resulted in greater community participation in conservation activities and stronger support for health-oriented policies.



#### One Health in Practice: The Monferrato Experience

Monferrato, an area characterized by intensive agricultural activity and diverse hilly ecosystems, has applied One Health principles through:

- entomological and veterinary surveillance programs
- zoonosis prevention plans
- territorial environmental sustainability policies.

These integrated interventions have helped reduce the risk of vector-borne and zoonotic diseases while strengthening environmental and social resilience.

#### **Technical Focus Areas**

#### 1. Ecosystem Conservation

Biodiversity loss is closely linked to the rise of emerging diseases. Intact ecosystems act as ecological buffers, reducing the probability of pathogen spillover.

In Monferrato, measures included:

- Renaturalization projects: reforestation of marginal areas, restoration of hedgerows, and protection of wetlands as habitats for natural vector predators
- Agro-environmental projects (Rural Development Program RDP/PSR) to incentivize pesticide reduction and the preservation of ecological buffer zones
- Biodiversity monitoring using Living Planet Index (LPI) indicators and studies on beneficial insect populations.

#### 2. Emission reduction and Climate mitigation

Local policies included:

- Municipal energy transition plans, with incentives for photovoltaic systems
- Pilot district heating systems using local biomass, alongside energy efficiency improvements in rural buildings
- Promotion of sustainable mobility, including integrated rural cycling networks.

#### 3. Land Use and sustainable agricultural practices

Intensive farming, with excessive use of pesticides and fertilizers, can damage soil health and contribute to antimicrobial resistance in environmental bacteria.

Experimental practices promoted in Monferrato included:

- Agroecology and crop rotations to reduce pest pressure
- Certified organic farming, expanding low-impact cultivated areas
- Experimental Integrated Pest Management (IPM) in line with EU Directive 2009/128/EC, aiming for a 50% reduction in pesticide use by 2030 (EU "Farm to Fork" strategy).

#### 4. Public awareness and education

Scientific communication to citizens was crucial in linking sustainability and health.

In Monferrato, activities included:

- Awareness campaigns on mosquito-borne diseases, with educational material distributed in schools and farms
- Training courses for farmers and veterinarians on sustainable management and biosecurity
- Citizen Science initiatives for reporting vector insects via regional apps.



#### **Local initiatives - Concrete examples**

- Regional Mosquito Control Program (Piedmont Region, Regional Law 24/10/1995 n. 75)
  Managed by IPLA S.p.A., including:
  - o larval and adult monitoring with ovi-traps and CO<sub>2</sub> traps

- o use of biological larvicides (Bacillus thuringiensis israelensis Bti)
- o household prevention campaigns ("Eliminate standing water").
- ASL Alessandria Prevention Department
  - Over 8.500 health inspections, including 590 in agricultural enterprises, for zoonosis control and food contamination risks
  - o Verification of farm hygiene, livestock waste management, and biosecurity plans.
- Veterinary Surveillance Casale Monferrato
  - Epidemiological monitoring of zoonotic diseases (Brucellosis, Salmonellosis, Leptospirosis)
  - Vaccination programs and digital tracking through regional information systems (VetInfo).

#### **Challenges and opportunities**

Despite significant progress in integrating environmental sustainability into disease prevention strategies, several challenges remain. These include limited resources, political barriers and the need for stronger interdisciplinary collaboration. However, the Monferrato experience demonstrates that with strong leadership, community engagement, and commitment to sustainability, such challenges can be overcome.

Opportunities exist to further strengthen the link between environmental sustainability and health. Expanding the One Health approach, enhancing surveillance systems, and promoting international collaboration can improve the effectiveness of disease prevention efforts. Moreover, integrating health considerations into environmental policies can create synergies benefiting both human and environmental health.

<u>Monferrato</u> exemplifies how environmental sustainability can serve as a <u>primary strategy</u> for preventing emerging infectious diseases. By integrating ecosystem conservation, emission reduction, sustainable land use, and public education, communities can mitigate health risks and increase resilience to future threats.

In the face of growing global health challenges, the experiences of Monferrato provide valuable insights into building sustainable and healthy communities.



Photos by Italian Municipalities



# COSMO S.P.A.: INTEGRATED WASTE MANAGEMENT IN THE MONFERRATO AREA

By Guido Gabotto

**COSMO S.p.A.** is a public, municipally owned company responsible for waste collection and disposal in the Monferrato area, located primarily in the Province of Alessandria, with one participating municipality in the Province of Asti. The leading city among its shareholders is Casale Monferrato, which also represents the largest urban center within the service area.

The company is jointly owned by **44 municipalities** and serves a total population of approximately **67.500 residents**. With a workforce of 140 employees and more than 80 collection vehicles operating six days per week, COSMO ensures consistent service across urban and rural zones. The company's model exemplifies how inter-municipal collaboration can achieve both operational efficiency and environmental responsibility within a local governance framework.

COSMO S.p.A. manages the **entire waste management chain**, from collection to treatment and final disposal. Its services include:

- Separate waste collection, ensuring high rates of material recovery
- Operation of two inter-municipal collection centres, where citizens can deliver various types of waste
- Management of a landfill for urban waste, which receives only residual materials after mechanical-biological treatment
- Facilities for sorting recyclable waste, particularly paper and plastic
- Manual and mechanical street cleaning services in Casale Monferrato.

This integrated approach enables COSMO to maintain control over the entire waste lifecycle, ensuring transparency, traceability, and continuous improvement in efficiency and environmental outcomes.

#### **Waste Collection Methods**

The Monferrato area, characterized by a mix of urban centers, rolling hills, and river plains, presents complex logistical challenges. The diversity of settlements has required the implementation of multiple collection systems tailored to local conditions.

#### Casale Monferrato:

- Historic center: proximity-based home collection through ecological islands.
- Urban neighbourhoods: full door-to-door collection.
- Outlying districts: door-to-door for unsorted and organic waste; roadside bins for paper, plastic, and glass.

#### Other municipalities (43 in total):

- Door-to-door collection for unsorted and organic waste, except for households practicing home composting.
- Roadside collection for recyclable materials (paper, plastic, and glass).

The Piemonte Region actively promotes home composting, allowing citizens to manage organic waste independently when possible, reducing the environmental and economic burden of transportation and treatment.

#### **Additional Waste Streams**

Beyond the standard categories, COSMO manages several specialized waste streams, ensuring environmental protection and regulatory compliance:

- Used clothes and textiles
- · Spent batteries and medicines
- Waste vegetable oil
- Small electronic waste
- · End-of-life tires
- Bulky waste (furniture, etc.)
- Car batteries, wood, metal, paints and garden waste

These materials are handled through the inter-municipal collection centers, which serve as local hubs for citizens to responsibly dispose of complex waste types.

#### **Waste Treatment Process**

All waste collected is transferred to COSMO's central facility in Casale Monferrato, where it undergoes a range of mechanical and biological treatments:

- Unsorted waste is mechanically sorted, with recoverable materials (e.g., metals) separated for recycling. The residual fraction is subjected to aerobic bio-stabilization before being safely landfilled.
- Plastics are manually sorted, with recoverable materials baled and sent to recycling consortia; non-recyclable residues go to landfill.
- Paper and glass are sent directly to national recovery consortia for material recycling.
- Organic waste is delivered to specialized plants that produce biomethane and high-quality compost, contributing to circular economy objectives.
- Bulky waste is separated by material type; recoverable components are sent for recycling, and residues for disposal.
- All other specialized waste streams are dispatched to appropriate recovery or disposal facilities.

Through this comprehensive system, COSMO ensures that only minimal amounts of waste end up in landfill, while the majority is recovered, reused, or transformed into new resources.

#### Strengths of the COSMO Model

The success of COSMO lies in its **public governance and community-centered mission**. Being a company owned by the municipalities it serves, COSMO maintains a direct relationship with local administrations and citizens, fostering trust and accountability.

Unlike private operators driven primarily by profit, COSMO's objective is to provide the best possible service at the lowest sustainable cost. This public service ethos has enabled the company to achieve one of the lowest per capita costs for waste management in the Piemonte Region, while still meeting environmental and regulatory standards.

The integrated nature of its operations - spanning from collection to disposal - also allows COSMO to optimize logistics, minimize inefficiencies, and reinvest savings into service improvements and innovation.

Despite its achievements, COSMO faces several structural and operational challenges:

- Large territory, low population density: Outside Casale Monferrato, many municipalities are small and dispersed, making collection routes long and costly. The company's 80+ trucks travel over one million kilometres per year to collect just under 30,000 tons of waste—a significant logistical and environmental effort.
- 2. Limited waste volumes: The relatively low quantities of each waste type prevent the adoption of advanced recycling technologies (such as optical sorting or solid recovered fuel production), which require economies of scale to be viable.
- 3. Balancing costs and circular economy goals: Meeting increasingly stringent EU and regional waste reduction targets without overburdening citizens financially remains a delicate balance.
- 4. Quality of separated waste: Contamination rates especially in plastics remain high, with over 40% non-plastic materials in some collection streams, reducing the efficiency of recycling processes.

#### **Future Targets and Regulatory Framework**

The Piemonte Region has set ambitious targets for waste reduction and recycling, reflecting EU circular economy objectives:

- 2024 results: 68.8% separate collection (above the 65% threshold); 158 kg/inhabitant of residual waste (below the 159 kg limit).
- 2025 targets: ≥70% separate collection and ≤126 kg/inhabitant residual waste.
- 2030 goals: 75% separate collection, ≤100 kg/inhabitant residual waste.
- 2035 goals: 82% separate collection, <90 kg/inhabitant residual waste, and less than 10% of total waste sent to landfill.

These targets require continuous improvement in collection efficiency, treatment technology, and public participation.



Photo by http://www.cosmocasale.it

#### **Strategic Actions and Future Projects**

To meet the upcoming challenges and regulatory thresholds, COSMO has launched several major initiatives:

- Revamping of the mechanical and biological treatment plant for unsorted waste (completion expected by June 2026), enhancing separation efficiency and reducing landfill quantities.
- New paper and plastic sorting facility (operational by April 2026) designed to improve the purity and market value of recyclable materials.
- New recovery plant for absorbent hygiene products (AHPs) under authorization—an innovative step toward recycling a previously difficult waste stream.
- Joint collection of metals and plastics, starting in mid-2026, will optimize logistics and further reduce unsorted waste by approximately 5%.
- Awareness and education campaigns, conducted in collaboration with municipalities, to improve the quality of separate collection and foster citizen engagement in the circular economy.

COSMO S.p.A. stands as a <u>model</u> of how publicly owned local utilities can efficiently manage the waste cycle while aligning with ambitious environmental goals. By combining operational expertise, public accountability, and community involvement, the company contributes to the broader transition toward a sustainable circular economy in Piemonte.

Its ongoing investments - in technology, infrastructure and citizen education - demonstrate a proactive response to both environmental and social responsibilities. While logistical and economic challenges persist, COSMO's transparent governance model, local roots, and environmental commitment position it as a resilient and forward-looking player in regional waste management.

The company's journey from traditional collection systems toward innovation and sustainability showcases the potential of small-scale, municipally owned enterprises to achieve results comparable to larger utilities - proving that environmental excellence and public service can go hand in hand.



#### **Our FACEBOOK PAGE**

## https://www.facebook.com/We4Green-Project

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# WE 4 GREEN-LOCAL GREEN DEALS: OUR MUNICIPALITIES FOR THE GREEN TRANSITION project (Ref N. 101138490 - CERV-2023-CITIZENS-TOWN-NT)

Website: https://www.comune.ottiglio.al.it/ (Lead Partner)

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/We4Green-Project

Contact: Gabriella Bigatti – Project Manager (info@econsulenza.com)

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This communication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

# **APPENDIX**

# **EVENT DESCRIPTION SHEET - 1**

PROJECT	
Project name and acronym:	[LOCAL GREEN DEALS: OUR MUNICIPALITIES FOR THE GREEN TRANSITION WE 4 GREEN]
Participant:	Ref N. 101138490 - CERV-2023-CITIZENS-TOWN-NT  [COMUNE DI OTTIGLIO] (OTTIGLIO - ITALY)
PIC number:	883830342

EVENT DESCRIPTION		
Event number:	Deliverable D1.1 – WE4GREEN EVENT	
Event name:	EVENT 1 – Training Meeting in Cyprus on Green transition, climate charand EU Green Deal (WP1)	
Туре:	[Network of Towns Event 1: training activities and study visits]	
In situ/online:	[in-situ	
Location:	[CYPRUS)], [PLATRES]	
Date(s):	[11 – 12 - 13- April 2024]	
Website(s) (if any):	Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/We4Green-Project	
Participants		
Female:	11	
Male:	15	
Non-binary:	0	
From country 1 [ITALY Ottiglio Municipality]:	2	
From country 1 [ITALY Cella Monte Municipality]:	1	
From country 1 [ITALY Camagna Monferrato Municipality]:	1	
From country 1 [ITALY Ozzano Monferrato Municipality]:	1	
From country 1 [ITALY Rosignano Monferrato Municipality]:	1	
From country 1 [ITALY Sala Monferrato Municipality]:	1	
From country 2 [POLAND Suwalki City Municipality]:	2	
From country 3 [LATVIA Jelgava Local Municipality]:	2	

From country 4 [Spain La Palma del Condado Municipality]:	2		
From country 5 [Cyprus Platres Community Council]:	13		
Total number of participants:	26	From total number of countries:	5

#### Description

Provide a short description of the event and its activities.

# WP1 - EVENT 1 – Training Meeting in Cyprus on Green transition, climate changes and EU Green Deal D1.1 – WE4GREEN EVENT 1

Place: Platres in Cyprus. Organized by Platres Community Council in situ.

Lead Beneficiary: KOINOTIKO SYMVOULIO PLATRON – Platres Community Council (PIC N 939538994)

Dates of the event: 11 - 12- 13- April 2024

Number of countries involved: 4 foreign countries (Italy, Poland, Latvia, Spain) + 1 in situ (Cyprus).

Number of individual direct participants: 26

Number of invited/international participants per country:

Tot. foreign participants: 13.

from IT = 7 (2 Ottiglio, 1 Cella Monte, 1 Rosignano, 1 Camagna, 1 Ozzano, 1 Sala Municipalities)

from LV = 2

from ES = 2

from PL = 2

Number of local participants from CY= 13.

#### Brief description of the Event 1:

The project has been approved by the European Commission under the call 2023 NETWORK OF TOWNS. The WE4GREEN activities will be carried out over 24 months: from December 1, 2023 until the end of November 2025.

Members of the partnership are: Poland - Suwalki City Municipality, Latvia - Jelgava Local Municipality, Cyprus - Platres Community Council, Spain - La Palma del Condado Municipality; Italy - Ottiglio, Camagna Monferrato, Rosignano Monferrato, Sala Monferrato, Ozzano Monferrato and Cella Monte Municipalities.

The project endorses the creation of relationships, collaborations, twinning and exchanges between the 10 Municipalities from the 5 different countries, strengthens mutual understanding, developing a sense of belonging to the European Union. WE4GREEN took inspiration from the EU Green Deal, Europe's growth strategy for a modern, resource-efficient and competitive economy. To create the first zero-carbon continent in the world by 2050.

The transnational project allows the 10 Municipalities and their citizens, to activate events, debates, meetings for the green topics, actions for fighting the climate change and the environmental sustainability.

The Municipality of Ottiglio (Lead Partner) and all the partner municipalities have the opportunity to explore topics such as the Green transition, the circular economy, applied renewable energies, sustainable waste management and the fight against climate change from local perspectives. The main project aim is to develop Local Green Deals - Local green pacts at any municipal level: a tailor-made local action plan to accelerate and expand the green transition of every single territory involved in the 5 European countries.

The workplan foresees **5** Work packages with five WPs dedicated to events, visits and training:3 events in situ & 2 online.

The 10 participating organisations worked hard for preparing the Event n. 1° of the WE4GREEN Project. With the approval of the European Commission, the 1st Training Event has been held in Cyprus in the dates of 11-12-13 April 2024, as arranged with the EU project Officer.

The participants from Italy, Poland, Spain and Latvia arrived in Cyprus in April 10 and/or April 11 early morning. They were hosted in Platres. The Event was organised by the PLATRES COMMUNITY COUNCIL. Intensive training days, working on EU Green Deal and green transition issues, have been realized, and

the foreign participants, together with the local beneficiaries, enjoyed the green beauties of Troodos Mountain and the Geopark.

The Event 1 agenda was realized as follows:

#### DAY 1 April 11, 2024

The participants from Italy, Poland, Spain and Latvia arrived in Platres (transfer by bus from Larnaca). The ten Municipalities Representants were welcomed at the Forest Park Hotel.

Then the WE4GREEN training EVENT 1, held at the headquarters of Platres Council, scheduled the Welcome Ceremony at the George Seferis Conference Room at the Cultural Centre (with a brunch).

Panayiotis Papadopoullos, President of the Platres Community Council, warmly welcomed the participants and presented the general overview of the project and of Event 1 program.

Massimo Pasciuta, Coordinator of WE4GREEN project, joined him in presenting the green purposes of the project.

Then the *DAY 1* activities, predicted in the agenda, were: the presentations of the project expected results, of the 5 involved territories of the 5 Countries (with slides and videos), a focus on the European Green Deal main topics ("*Transforming the EU Economy for a sustainable future*"), a debate with indepth information.

The day ended for the participants at the Kallithea Inn (green Hotel), tasting local delightful flavours.

#### DAY 2 April 12, 2024

The DAY 2 started with the training for the participants at the George Seferis Conference Room at the Cultural Centre. Presentation of Platres Community Council Projects & Best Practices for green transition, and their impact on the rural community. Among this: "Schemes & Incentives to go Green. R4C and the impact on rural communities in Cyprus, by Cyprus Energy Agency" by Panayiotis Papadopoullos.

Then the special presentation by Yioula Michaelidou Papakyriacou, Director of Troodos Network of Thematic Centers, on "Regenerative Green tourism. Lavender, Circular Economy & Ecological Products", and the "Green Skills- Capacity building workshop".

Later, the Study Visit in the Green Heart of Cyprus: the participants visited the "Troodos National Park – Natura 2000" Information Centre (at that point, lunch in Hotel in the National Park) and then a meeting with the Director of the Troodos Regional Tourism Board (with presentation about Hiking and Biking Trails, with slides and video).

The activities continued with the visit to Kyperounda Village, meeting some local artisans and entrepreneurs careful about green and sustainable aspects.

#### DAY 3 April 13, 2024

Meeting in early morning at the George Seferis Conference Room at the Cultural Centre. The training of *DAY* 3 has been addressed to the main project management aspects by the WE4GREEN Project Manager. Then the training focused on other Green cases, sharing best practices. Among these the presentation by Paris Nikolaou, Manager for MaaSLab & Moby X Software Ltd (on "Green Rural Mobilities").

After that, the delegates walked to the village, in Platres, on studying the Green Mobility Hub of Platres & Green Recycling Hubs, with presentation of past initiatives and funds obtained.

Then, lovely lunch at the Historic New Helvetia Hotel in the middle of the woods.

The next and final activity was dedicated to the Laboratory (again at the Cultural Centre) on Bubble Bee Hotels. Learning about Bees-Pollination & Solidarity Bees and on the impact of Bee Hotels in creating a green culture for all ages. Closing comments.

At the end of day, the final Dinner.

Saying goodbye, the participants agreed to meet each other in presence in Monferrato area (Italy) for the Event 2, fixed on 5-6-7 October 2024.

Return home of the delegates.

With the Event 1 the participants acquired competences on the project topics, and will be the speakers/energisers at the following events and the satellite actions at each Country level (transferability effect).

### LINKS

https://www.comune.ottiglio.al.it/

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/We4Green-Project

#### **PICTURES**



























# **EVENT DESCRIPTION SHEET - 2**

PROJECT	
Project name and acronym:	[LOCAL GREEN DEALS: OUR MUNICIPALITIES FOR THE GREEN TRANSITION - WE 4 GREEN ]
	Ref N. 101138490 - CERV-2023-CITIZENS-TOWN-NT
Participant:	[COMUNE DI OTTIGLIO] (OTTIGLIO - ITALY)
PIC number:	883830342

EVENT DESCRIPTION		
Event number:	Deliverable D2.1 – WE4GREEN EVENT	
Event name:	EVENT 2 – Workshop and Green visits in Monferrato (Italy) WP2	
Type:	[Network of Towns Event 2: Workshop and Green visits in Monferrato]	
In situ/online:	[in-situ	
Location:	[ITALY]], [Ottiglio, Cella Monte, Rosignano Monferrato, Ozzano Monferrato, Sala Monferrato, Camagna Monferrato – the 6 Italian partners of Monferrato area]	
Date(s):	[5 – 6 – 7 October 2024]	
Website(s) (if any):	https://www.comune.ottiglio.al.it/	
	Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/We4Green-Project	
Participants		
Female:	41	
Male:	45	
Non-binary:	0	
From country: POLAND Suwalki City Municipality	8	
From country: LATVIA  Jelgava Local Municipality	11	
From country: SPAIN La Palma del Condado Municipality	8	
From country: CYPRUS Platres Community Council	7	
From country: ITALY Ottiglio, Cella Monte, Rosignano Monferrato, Ozzano Monferrato, Sala Monferrato, Camagna Monferrato Municipalities	52	
Total number of participants:	86	From total number of countries: 5

#### Description

Provide a short description of the event and its activities.

#### WP2 - EVENT 2 – Workshop and Green visits in Monferrato in Italy.

#### D2.1 – WE4GREEN EVENT 2

Place: Ottiglio (Italy)

and all the 6 Italian involved municipalities & territories of Monferrato area: Cella Monte, Rosignano Monferrato, Ozzano Monferrato, Sala Monferrato, Camagna Monferrato – in situ.

<u>Lead Beneficiary</u>: **OTTIGLIO MUNICIPALITY** (IT) Dates of the event: **5 – 6 – 7 October 2024** 

Number of countries involved: 5 [4 foreign countries (Cyprus, Poland, Latvia, Spain) + 1 in situ (Italy)]
Number of individual direct participants: 34 foreign + 52 local participants = **86** 

• Number of invited/international participants: 34

From CY = 7 from LV = 11 from ES = 8 from PL = 8

Number of local participants from IT= 52.

#### Brief description of the Event 1:

The project has been approved by the European Commission under the call 2023 NETWORK OF TOWNS. The WE4GREEN activities will be carried out over 24 months: from December 1, 2023 until the end of November 2025.

Members of the partnership are from 5 different countries: Poland - Suwalki City Municipality, Latvia - Jelgava Local Municipality, Cyprus - Platres Community Council, Spain - La Palma del Condado Municipality; Italy - Ottiglio, Camagna Monferrato, Rosignano Monferrato, Sala Monferrato, Ozzano Monferrato and Cella Monte Municipalities.

WE4GREEN took inspiration from the Green Deal - the Europe's growth strategy for a modern, resourceefficient and competitive economy. To create the first zero-carbon continent in the world by 2050.

The transnational project allows the 10 Municipalities and their citizens, to activate events, debates, meetings for the green topics, actions for local Green Deals, fighting the climate change and promoting the environmental sustainability. The Municipality of Ottiglio (Lead Partner) and the other partner municipalities are exploring topics such as the Green transition, the circular economy, applied renewable energies, sustainable waste management and the fight against climate change, from their local perspectives. The main project aim is to develop Local Green Deals - Local green pacts at any municipal level: a tailor-made local action plan to accelerate and expand the green transition of every single territory involved in the 5 European countries.

The workplan foresees 5 Work packages with five WPs dedicated to Events, visits and training: 3 events in situ & 2 online. The 10 participating organizations worked hard for preparing the Event n.  $2^{\circ}$ , held in Italy. With the approval of the European Commission, the Event has been held in Monferrato area – Piedmont (ITALY) in the dates of 5 - 6 - 7 October 2024, as arranged with the EU project Officer.

The participants from Poland, Spain, Cyprus And Latvia arrived in northern Italy in october 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> mornings. cypriot delegation arrived in Monferrato on early october 4th. foreign delegates from Poland, Latvia And Spain Arrived Later In Bergamo-Orio al serio airport and at Milan linate airport.

All the foreign participants were hosted in B&B in Ottiglio and in the neighbouring villages (Rosignano Monferrato and Sala Monferrato). The Event was organised by the 6 Italian Municipalities: Ottiglio (Leader), Camagna Monferrato, Rosignano Monferrato, Sala Monferrato, Ozzano Monferrato and Cella Monte.

The 3 days were intensive and crowded with actives and the citizens' involvement. Thanks to the many meetings, conference, ceremonies and visits, the WE4GREEN EVENT 2 involve hundreds of direct persons and capture the attention of several citizens.

The Event 2 agenda was realized as follows:



#### DAY 1 - October 5th, 2024

The Event 2 opening was held in a context of cultural and territorial value in Monferrato: at the "Ecomuseum della pietra da cantoni" in Cella Monte (IT). The Partners, and above all, the Ecomuseo Foundation and the Municipality of Cella Monte organized in Palazzo Volta the project Welcome Ceremony.

On October 5, in early afternoon, after the Welcome coffee, the 34 participants from CY, LV, PL and ES and many Italians, were there for the Opening.

The event took place in Ecomuseo - Palazzo Volta Conference Hall — Piazza Vallino, Cella Monte, as follows:

#### WE4GREEN Welcome Ceremony

- Welcome speech by the IT Mayor of Cella Monte Municipality, Maurizio Deevasis
- Welcome speech by the Coordinator, Mayor of Ottiglio Municipality, Massimo Pasciuta
- Greetings from the Mayors from the IT Municipalities of Camagna Monferrato (Claudio Scagliotti),
   Sala Monferrato (Mario Melotti), Ozzano Monferrato (Flavia Colombano) and from Councilor of Rosignano Monferrato (Francesco Re)
- General overview of the project and presentation to the citizens of the Event 2 aims by WE4GREEN
   Project Manager, Gabriella Bigatti
- Partners Presentations of their green territories:
- Presentations from Suwalki City (PL) by Emil Sieńko
- Platres Community council (CY) by Panayiotis Papadopoullos
- Jelgava Municipality (LV) by Anita Skutane
- La Palma del Condado Municipality (ES) by Rocio Maestre Marquez
- Video presentation on Monferrato Unesco area by the 6 Italian municipalities
- Presentation of Local Cases for Sustainability and sustainable development:
  - Corrado Calvo, President Ecomuseo della pietra da Cantoni Foundation European and green projects from Ecomuseo
  - o Mariachiara Ghilardi, ASFODELO Coordinator Our European and sustainable projects
- Debate
- Closing comments.



The workshop was animated by several videos, pictures and slides.

In particular, Calvo's speech on the projects realised by the Ecomuseo, and the 24 local municipalities that are part of it, focused on presenting good implementation practices of cultural and sustainable tourism projects and events, linked to the rural identity of Monferrato. Slow tourism actions meet sustainable goals and distance tourism for the masses. Furthermore, the President presented the Erasmus+ KA2 "TERRA-Towards an open badge system as training Enablers to Reach Regenerative Agriculture" project, in progress, in which Ecomuseo is partner. A triennial green project for the Regenerative Agriculture that will see education and courses in many EU countries in the years, promoting soil health, biodiversity and climate resilience.

Ghilardi from ASFODELO association presented the "LOCOMOS Local change towards More sustainable Food Production" Project, cofinanced by Share Green Deal - EU Horizon 2020. It is a social experiment focused on finding practical solution for pesticide reduction in Monferrato, leaded by Asfodelo with Legambiente, Slow Food, C.I.A, Aspromiele and University of Torino. The piloting is addressed to check existing good practices for reducing the problems linked to pesticides, creating alternative actions in the rural area. Moreover, the speaker talked on the revaluation of abandoned lands and the related actions for revitalize the communities, the territory and the agro-ecological knowledge.

The welcome meeting saw many participants and the Ecomuseo Conference Hall was crowded. It finished at the end of the afternoon.

Then the transfer of the foreign delegates and the Italian participants to Sala Monferrato by bus and cars.

The WELCOME DINNER in Sala Monferrato, tasting local traditional food. Sala was the second village, seated in the UNESCO area that participants had the opportunity to see.

The day concluded with the overnight staying for the participants at the different B&B in Monferrato, enjoining the different rural locations in Ottiglio, Rosignano Monferrato and Sala Monferrato.

#### DAY 2 – October 6<sup>th</sup>, 2024 SUNDAY

The DAY 2 started with the appointment in Ottiglio at 9:00, for all the participants, for the WE4GREEN Opening of the second day, participating into the Rural Fair and the Fair ribbon-cutting ceremony, chaired by Massimo Pasciuta, Mayor of Ottiglio and Coordinator.

The Ribbon-cutting Ceremony was realized at the presence of several citizens, local administrators and all Delegations. Many Mayors and Councilors of Monferrato Municipalities were there to welcome the 10 WE4GREEN participating organisations: from Grazzano Badoglio, Altavilla Monferrato, Ponzano Monferrato, Moncalvo, Vignale, Olivola, Mombello, etc...

The OTTIGLIO RURAL FAIR, named "Storica Fiera Bovina di Sant'Eusebio", was the occasion for the direct participants to meet the local community and the citizens and to visit the market stalls and see the contest with prizes for the most sustainable cattle breedings. The participants visited the exhibition of food, herbs, typical and artisanal products, biological products, local animal exhibition, culinary competitions, show cooking. Cases for agricultural sustainable growing and cultivation were presented. Breeding represents a true heritage of Monferrato traditions. The Piedmonts cattle breed, native, bred without genetic manipulation, is the product of a culture that places the well-being of animals and their care at the center.

At 12:00: the **WE4GREEN TOWN TWINNING CEREMONY** at Auditorium "Don Gino Piccio" (ex chiesa sant'Eusebio) in Ottiglio, with the Signature of the Twinning Oath.

The Ceremony for the signing of the "Pact of Brotherhood" was between 10 European municipalities of: Suwalki (Poland), Platres (Cyprus), Jelgava (Latvia), La Palma del Contado (Spain) and the Italian municipalities of Ottiglio (Leader), Camagna Monferrato, Rosignano Monferrato, Sala Monferrato, Ozzano Monferrato and Cella Monte. Ms Bigatti, Project Manager, was the Master of Ceremony.

#### The signatories were:

CY – Platres Community Council - Panayiotis Papadopoullos (Platres Representative)

PL – Suwalki City - Renkiewicz Czesław (Mayor)

LV - Jelgava Municipality - Kaspars Sniedzītis (Deputy Executive Director, Delegate of the Mayor)

ES- La Palma del Condado Municipality - Rocio Maestre Marquez (Civil servant, Delegate of the Mayor)

IT - Comune di Ozzano Monferrato, Colombano Flavia (Mayor)

IT - Comune di Cella Monte, Maurizio Deevasis (Mayor)

IT - Comune di Rosignano Monferrato, Chiesa Cesare (Mayor)

IT - Comune di Sala Monferrato, Melotti Mario (Mayor)

IT- Comune di Camagna Monferrato, Scagliotti Claudio (Mayor)

IT - Comune di Ottiglio, Massimo Pasciuta (Mayor).

The two signatories from LV and ES were authorized by their respective mayors with official assignment and official letters of appointment. These two Letters are in the project records, saved in the protocol.

After each signature, the Musical Band of Rocchetta Tanaro - in charge of cheering the ceremony - played the appropriate national anthem. After the singing of the 5 national Hymns, the European anthem, Ode to Joy, was played: everyone standing to celebrate the Twinning pact.

The auditorium was filled with quite a lot of citizens and people who experienced the emotion of the 10 signatory municipalities. Several hundred people enjoyed the ceremony. At the end there was a special farewell. From the Honourable Enzo Amich, from the Camera dei Deputati (House of Representatives) of the Italian Parliament, who blessed the Brotherhood.

Many official pictures of the Ceremony and of the Signatories were taken.

The celebration continued with the Brotherhood lunch at the Fair, tasting local dishes, prepared by local Proloco.

Around 15:00 the participants were transferred to Rosignano Monferrato: cars and bus transfer from Ottiglio to Rosignano Monferrato for all delegations, reaching the Teatro IDEAL, Via Roma 48.

The WE4GREEN Public Workshop started at 16:00, after the registration of the participants.

The topics of discussion were: Green transition and EU Green Deal, thanks to the <u>Roundtable</u>: "Developing Local Green Deals at Municipal level", held at the presence of experts, academics, city councilors, citizens, journalists.

The Conference was opened by the Vice President of Consiglio Regionale del Piemonte (IT), Domenico Ravetti, who praised the aims of the project and of the Event 2 and underlined the importance of promoting the democratic values of the EU also through collaborations and twinning between different Countries. Speeches and presentations were coordinated by Gabriella Bigatti, WE4GREEN Project Manager, as Moderator.

This is the schedule of interventions:

 ITALY - Giovanna Quaglia, President "Associazione per il Patrimonio dei Paesaggi Vitivinicoli di Langhe-Roero e Monferrato", The sustainable tourism in Monferrato UNESCO area (who underlined the importance of sustainability measures in the Piedmont region that groups the three UNESCO areas for wine landscapes: Langhe, Roero and Monferrato)

- ITALY Massimo Pasciuta Ottiglio Mayor, Farm to Fork Strategy (The F2F strategy, by European Commission is a key part of the European Green Deal. It is a ten-year plan to guide the European agricultural transition towards a fair, healthy and environmentally friendly food system. Making European food systems "more sustainable". Among the strategic actions: reduce chemical pesticide use by 50% by 2030; reduce chemical fertilizer use by 20% by 2030; solve the antibiotic resistance problem; transform most of the agricultural land into organic farming).
- CYPRUS Panayiotis Papadopoullos and Yioula Michaelidou Papakyriacou, Referents from Platres Community Council, Green Troodos Cases (they presented the local promotion of renewable energy sourcing, the local cases for sustainable waste management, minimizing the amount of solid waste, and the acceleration for the adoption of low-or zero-carbon modes, especially for local movements electric vehicles, active travel and low carbon, mass-transit solutions. Then: the "Pilot plant for solar drying of apples" project, that enables drying apples in an environmentally friendly, closed industrial-type solar dryer using renewable energy sources and low carbon footprint).
- ITALY Cesare Chiesa Rosignano Monferrato Mayor, Good local practices in the waste sector (who presented the case of the asbestos emergency in Monferrato. A mineral once widely used in construction, later discovered to be very dangerous. Over the decades, asbestos has, in fact, caused thousands of victims in Monferrato, due to the deadly fibers it is made of. A local policy was activated at the end of the twentieth century, which banned its production and use, and started the recovery for the Casale Monferrato bordering zone for 49 municipalities).
- POLAND Łukasz Kurzyna President of the board, Waterworks and Sewerage Company in Suwałki, Development and Projects of Waterworks and Sewerage Company in Suwałki (who presented the local important use of energy from renewable sources RES. In particular the realisation of: 2 electric generators with total power of 360 kW, using biogas produced in the sewage sludge fermentation process they cover approximately 43% electricity demand of the sewage treatment plant; 3 photovoltaic installations with a total capacity apx 220 kWp, the production of which covers approximately 12% of the energy, demand for water treatment station and for the office facility; 2 photovoltaic installations with a total capacity of 100 kWp, installed in 2024, which will cover approximately 2.5% of the demand for the sewage treatment plant).
- ITALY Mario Melotti, Sala Monferrato Mayor, Local good practices for the renewable energy (who underlined the willingness of the local governments to activate CERs Renewable Energy Communities, aimed at self-production of energy from renewable sources and lower energy costs for the inhabitants and the companies. They are opportunities for the municipalities counting less than 5.000 inhabitants, thanks also to the existence of incentives. The excess of produced energy will be sold and the revenue can bring benefits and have social impact at territorial level).
- Closing speech by Marco Protopapa Councillor from Consiglio Regionale del Piemonte (in complimenting the aims of the conference, the speaker highlighted the work done by the Piedmont Region for the green transition and biodiversity protection regional policies in progress).

Final debate.

After the Closing comments, the beneficiaries left Rosignano and returned to Ottiglio.

Before the Dinner, the activities continued with an <u>Evening Concert</u> for celebrating the Brotherhood, held at Auditorium "Don Gino Piccio", offered by Ottiglio Municipality. The concert, open to citizens and general public, saw the participation of many people. Music is a means that unites and creates harmony between people.

Then the dinner, in situ, with traditional dishes.

#### DAY 3 – October 7th, 2024 Monday

Meeting in early morning in Ozzano Monferrato at the House of Arts – Casa delle Arti. The Opening of the third day started at 8:30. The involved Municipalities realized the **Seminar "Sustainability, reuse and recovery"** with presentation of implemented projects and works for sustainability such as for the former polluting and energy-intensive site: local Rossi cement factory (Polo Cementi Rossi spa). Nowadays a place for cultural and social activities: since 2018 the local Municipality has been transformed the place. For instance, a Museum (MICEM), a Health headquarter with healthcare facility, the Lizard Music Academy, have been realized and opened for the citizens. Presentations and video by Carla Capra.

After a question-answer space and an intensive, emotionally, moment dedicated to the gifts exchange, there was the: WE4GREEN Project Management meeting.

The technical discussion was coordinated by the WE4GREEN Project Manager that gave updates about monitoring, evaluation, communication and dissemination activities and the next steps to face. With the Jelgava representants and the La Palma del Condado representants, the PM and the participants

argued about the Event 3 (online, in January) and 4 (in situ, in spring) and the topics and issues to meet. Closing comments and assignment of tasks to anyone.

Before leaving Ozzano M.to, a short visit to the upper hamlet, with panoramic views of the surrounding green hills.

Then the participants have been accompanied to Camagna Monferrato. The lastest of the 6 UNESCO hamlets - World Heritage Site - to visit. The Welcoming in Camagna Monferrato was in Piazza Lenti.

Welcomed by the Mayor, Claudio Scagliotti, and many volunteers, those present heard about cases and local green practices.

In Camagna, in fact, there is a farm where pigs produce renewable energy. With the raising of almost 3000 pigs, the local Rota family has implemented a circular economy action. Since 2010, they equipped with a photovoltaic system to ensure self-sufficiency. Three years ago, they built a biogas plant, using pig slurry. The heat produced by cogeneration is used to heat the house and farms. Moreover, thanks to a small separation plant, the solid part is used to fertilize hectares of fields. A concrete example of circular economy. A Country Shop (Bottega di Camagna - Cooperativa Agricola), owned by local farmers, has been realized and opened in the hamlet, too, which sells only zero km products.

Then, a quick visit of the small hamlet and the dome of the Saint Eusebio Church, followed by lunch in the village.

At the end of the morning, the final Lunch.

Early afternoon: Final farewells and preparations for the transfers to the airports, Milano Malpensa and Bergamo Orio al Serio, for the foreign delegates.

Saying goodbye, the participants greet each other with the commitment to meeting all in occasion of the project Event 3, in January, that will be organized by the Latvian Municipality and participated by any Municipality.

Return home of the delegates.

In conclusion, we can say the 6 Italian Municipalities did their best to make delegates and citizens aware of what is being done at local level in terms of protecting rural areas and animals, promoting slow tourism, encouraging renewable energies' use, piloting green transition and circular economy, promoting health, healthy food and zero km products, fight against the use of asbestos.

#### LINKS

https://www.comune.ottiglio.al.it/

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/We4Green-Project

#### **PICTURES**



# October 5th, 2024











# October 6th, 2024













#### Afternoon:

















October 7th, 2024





# **EVENT DESCRIPTION SHEET - 3**

PROJECT	
Project name and acronym:	[LOCAL GREEN DEALS: OUR MUNICIPALITIES FOR THE GREEN TRANSITION - WE 4 GREEN ]  Ref N. 101138490 - CERV-2023-CITIZENS-TOWN-NT
Participant:	[COMUNE DI OTTIGLIO] (OTTIGLIO - ITALY)
PIC number:	883830342

EVENT DESCRIPTION		
Event number:	Deliverable D3.1 – WE4GREEN EVENT	
Event name:	EVENT 3 - WE4GREEN online European Conference (WP3)	
Туре:	[Network of Towns Event 3: online European Conference]	
In situ/online:	[online]	
Location:	[LATVIA], [online]	
Date(s):	[16 – 17 January 2025]	
Website(s) (if any):	https://www.comune.ottiglio.al.it/	
	Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/We4Green-Project	
Participants		
Female:	176	
Male:	71	
Non-binary:	0	
From country: LATVIA Jelgava Local Municipality	115	
From country: POLAND Suwalki City Municipality	18	
From country: SPAIN La Palma del Condado Municipality	16	
From country: CYPRUS Platres Community Council	10	
From country: ITALY Ottiglio Municipality	26	
From country: ITALY Cella Monte Municipality	10	
From country: ITALY Rosignano Monferrato Municipality	10	
From country: ITALY Ozzano Monferrato Municipality	13	
From country: ITALY Camagna Monferrato Municipality	19	
From country: ITALY Sala Monferrato Municipality	10	

5

#### **Description**

Provide a short description of the event and its activities.

Title: WP3 - EVENT 3 - WE4GREEN online EuropeanConference

247

#### D3.1 – WE4GREEN EVENT 3

Place: online

Lead Beneficiary: JELGAVAS NOVADA

Dates of the event: 16 and 17 January 2025

Number of countries involved: 5 foreign countries (Latvia, Cyprus, Poland, Italy, Spain).

Effective total number of individual direct Participants: (more than 202) = 247.

Number of invited/international participants per country:

from LV = 115 From IT = 88 From CY = 10 from ES = 16 from PL = 18

#### TARGET GROUPS:

Direct participants: stakeholders and companies for the sustainable environment, the green transition and the renewable energies, staffs of the Municipalities, City councilors, citizens, volunteers, public authorities, civil society, no-profit organizations, Universities and schools, youngsters, opinion-makers, media.

#### **DESCRIPTION OF THE EVENT**

#### Introduction

The project has been approved by the European Commission under the call 2023 NETWORK OF TOWNS. Project duration: from December 1, 2023 until the end of November 2025.

Members of the partnership are from 5 different countries: Poland - Suwalki City Municipality, Latvia - Jelgava Local Municipality, Cyprus - Platres Community Council, Spain - La Palma del Condado Municipality; Italy - Ottiglio, Camagna Monferrato, Rosignano Monferrato, Sala Monferrato, Ozzano Monferrato and Cella Monte Municipalities.

WE4GREEN took inspiration from the Green Deal - the Europe's growth strategy for a modern, resource-efficient and competitive economy. To create the first zero-carbon continent in the world by 2050.

The transnational project allows the 10 Municipalities and their citizens, to activate events, debates, meetings for the green topics, actions for local Green Deals, fighting the climate change and promoting the environmental sustainability. The Municipality of Ottiglio (Lead Partner) and the other partner municipalities are exploring topics such as the Green transition, the circular economy, applied renewable energies, sustainable waste management and the fight against climate change, from their local perspectives. The main project aim is to develop Local Green Deals - Local green pacts at any municipal level: a tailor-made local action plan to accelerate and expand the green transition of every single territory involved in the 5 European countries.

The workplan foresees <u>5 Work packages</u> with five WPs dedicated to Events, visits and training: 3 events in situ & 2 online.

The 10 participating organizations worked hard for preparing the **Event n. 3°**, held ONLINE. With the approval of the European Commission, the Event has been held in the middle of January 2025, in the dates of **16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> January 2025**.

The project event 3 was organised by Jelgava local Municipality (Latvia).

The other 9 partner municipalities fully participated into its organisation and realisation, also under the coordination of the municipality of Ottiglio (leader).

The event was an **online European Conference**, lasted 2 days combining **Part 1-day 1** and **Part 2-day 2**. The online workshop addressed to the priority: *Bringing citizens together to discuss local actions on the climate and the environment*. As planned into the Application Part

B and stated in the G.A.

The Event ensured the presence of the expected number of participants which never fell below 202 per day.

1

The **Event 3 agenda** was realized as follows, through the TEAMS platform organized by Jelgava Local Municipality.



## 16 January 2025 Online conference

9:30 - 12:30 CET

Online platform Link: <a href="https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting\_ZDQwNTUwMjYtMDcwMC00MWMzLTk1MDUtMjJiOWEzZTc3Yzgy%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%22b4789abb-4f35-4f1c-bc86-c749ab4b4474%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%22f52119c1-0eae-4f49-9dba-aaddaa375bc8%22%7d</a>

#### 17 January 2025 Online conference 9:30 – 12:30 CET

Online platform Link: <a href="https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting\_MmZhNTRhyzytzWixMS00MjY1LWiwNmEtOGUzZWQyOTgzOGIy%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%22b4789abb-4f35-4f1c-bc86-c749ab4b4474%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%22f52119c1-0eae-4f49-9dba-aaddaa375bc8%22%7d</a>

DAY 1 - 16th January 2025.



Day 1 agenda was held from 9.30 to 12:30 CET:

#### **Access and Registration**

Conference Moderator welcome: Āris Ādlers
Opening of the WE4GREEN 3<sup>rd</sup> EVENT - Introduction
General everyion of the Event by moderator Āris Ādlers

General overview of the Event by moderator Āris Ādlers

#### WE4GREEN Welcome Speeches

**Welcome speech** by the Chairman of **Jelgava Local Municipality**, Uldis Ainārs **Inspiring speech** by Ilvija Ašmane, expert, manager of international projects

#### Topics presentation

 Implementation of UN Sustainable Development Goals to Promote Municipal Development. Examples for Inspiration

Agita Kaupuža, Adviser to the Chairman on EU Issues; Head of Brussels Office of Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments

#### **Local Latvian Cases**

- The AGENDA 2030 GOALS and the local action embedding the green transition in the policies, institutions and regulatory frameworks of governments, cities and local authorities
- The Svēte River as a Model for Ecosystem Services: Triple Helix and Citizen Engagement for Sustainable Development Inga Grīnfelde, LBTU Asoc. prof. PhD. Mg.paed.
- Change of business model of Laflora Ltd according to sustainable development goals

Sabīna Alta, Laflora, Ltd.

#### Cases from the Partnership

- The AGENDA 2030 GOALS and the local action embedding the green transition in the policies, institutions and regulatory frameworks of governments, cities and local authorities
- Waste and environmental legislation adoption in Italy (GOAL 22)
   Alfredo Gualmini, Lieutenant Carabinieri Corps Ecological Operational Unit, Italy

- Partnerships for the Goals (GOAL 17) and the Cypriot case
  - Panayiotis Papadopoullos, Troodos Network, Cyprus
- Innovative solutions created in Suwałki for local governments in the field of wee4green. The power of local solutions influencing the sustainable development of the north-eastern Poland region

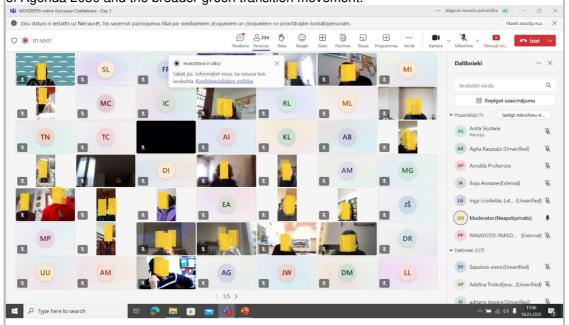
Dariusz Bogdan, President of the board, Science and Technology Park Poland-East in Suwałki, Poland

- Questions time.
- Debate.
- Closing comments.

The Conference was brought to life through a dynamic blend of elements that kept participants engaged and informed. A team of skilled presenters and the Moderator guided the sessions, ensuring that the discussions were both interactive and informative. The use of questions—posed to the audience throughout the event—encouraged active participation, sparking curiosity and fostering deeper engagement with the topics at hand.

In addition to the live discussions, several slides and videos were shown, offering real-life examples, case studies, and expert insights on sustainability and the green transition. These videos helped to visualize the impact of the UN Agenda 2030 goals, making the concepts more tangible for the participants. Alongside these, a collection of striking images and slides complemented the presentations, visually reinforcing key points and adding depth to the discussions.

The **1st day** of the WE4GREEN online European Conference unfolded with an engaging and insightful atmosphere, beginning with the smooth access and registration process for participants. As attendees settled in, **Āris Ādlers**, the conference Moderator, kicked off the event with an overview, setting the stage for the discussions to follow. With a focus on sustainability, the event's theme of "green" development was introduced, aligning with the goals of Agenda 2030 and the broader green transition movement.

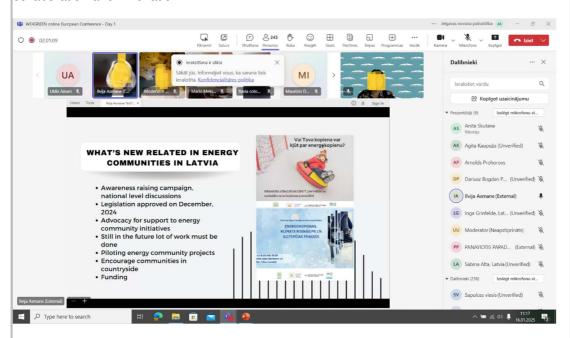


After the introduction, the conference began with its formal opening. Āris Ādlers welcomed the audience, emphasizing the significance of the event and its aim to bring together local and regional stakeholders, experts, and policymakers to share best practices and explore sustainable development solutions. This led into the keynote speeches, which highlighted both local and global efforts toward greener futures.

The first welcoming address was delivered by **Uldis Ainārs**, the Chairman of Jelgava Local Municipality. His speech underscored the vital role of local communities in shaping the success of global sustainability efforts, stressing the importance of local governments and municipalities in driving the Agenda 2030 goals. His words highlighted how the green transition must be embedded in all levels of governance, to foster real change: ..." The transition to a sustainable economy is the great challenge of our era. Sustainability is the new driver of growth, encompassing environmental, social, and governance aspects. It represents new development

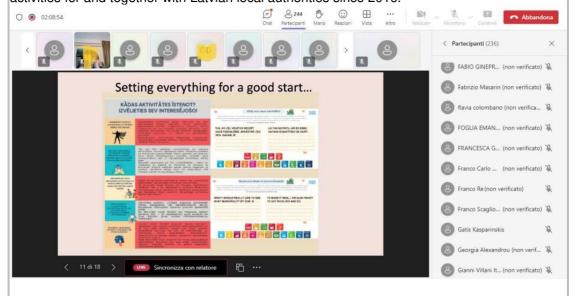
path for Latvia as well, which we have only recently begun to fully understand. Therefore, it is especially important for us to exchange knowledge, deepen our understanding, and seek for common opportunities to create more sustainable governance and business environment. So far, this project has given us the opportunity to learn from the experiences of other project partners, considering both environmental protection and societal interests, contributing to climate change mitigation...".

Next, **Ilvija Ašmane**, an expert and manager of international projects, gave an inspiring speech that further emphasized the need for localized efforts to align with international sustainability frameworks. Ašmane's remarks provided a deeper understanding of how individual municipalities can play a transformative role in the global push for sustainable development, offering not just practical solutions but also the drive to overcome challenges through collaboration and innovation.



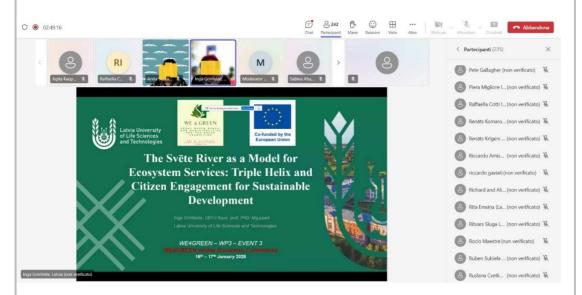
The next segment of the conference focused on the implementation of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly within municipal development. **Agita Kaupuža**, Adviser to the Chairman on EU Issues and Head of the Brussels Office of the Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments, took the floor to present compelling examples of how the SDGs are being integrated into local policy-making. Kaupuža's presentation illustrated that by aligning local actions with the SDGs, municipalities can inspire a ripple effect, driving change within their communities while contributing to broader, global goals.

The Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments is implementing SDGs related activities for and together with Latvian local authorities since 2016.



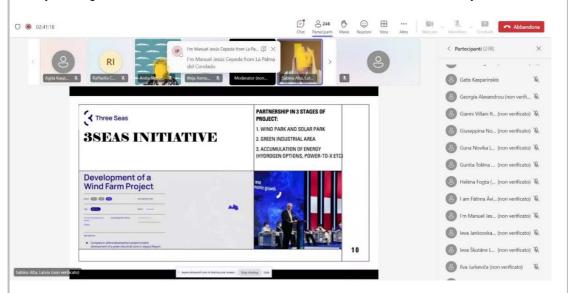
particularly poignant segment followed, featuring two case studies from Latvia that exemplified local action in support of Agenda 2030. **Inga Grīnfelde**, an associate professor at LBTU Latvia

University of Life Sciences and Technologies, presented the Svēte River project, which is a model for ecosystem services. This project uses a collaborative approach, engaging citizens in sustainable development practices. It highlights the power of community involvement and the potential for local resources to contribute to environmental preservation and the green transition. Grīnfelde's work exemplified the concept of a "Triple Helix" model—where academia, government, and business work in tandem with local communities to achieve sustainable outcomes.



**Sabīna Alta**, from Laflora Ltd., then shared how her company's business model had evolved in response to sustainable development goals. Laflora is the biggest Latvian peat extractor, in the sector from 1995 (peat extraction, production of peat substrate and products for horticulture and forestry - food production, cultivation of ornamental plants). 90% exports to ~ 100 countries; turnover, 2023: 28.6 million eur; employees, 2023: 296. Latvian peat products are in demand all over the world, they play an important role in European horticulture, providing 31% of the demand for professional horticulture:

Alta's case demonstrated how private businesses can transform their practices to align with sustainability principles, providing inspiration for other businesses to follow suit. This segment further cemented the idea that sustainability is a shared responsibility across all sectors of society, from governmental entities to businesses to the local communities they serve.

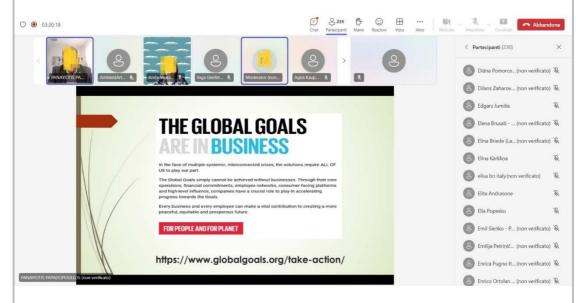


Then, the workshop featured a variety of case studies from different municipalities and regions, each highlighting practical actions taken to align with the Agenda 2030 goals and the green transition. These real-life examples showcased how local governments, institutions, and communities are embedding sustainability into their policies, practices, and regulatory frameworks.

One of the first cases was presented by **Alfredo Gualmini**, from the Carabinieri Corps in Italy. He shared insights into Italy's waste and environmental legislation, focusing on how the country

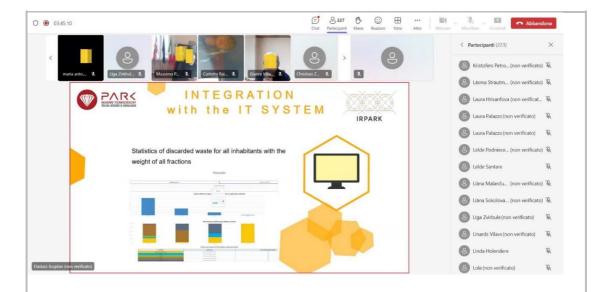
is adopting policies that align with Goal 22 of the Agenda 2030—promoting more responsible production and consumption. Many types of waste can be dangerous, toxic, harmfulness. Gualmini highlighted the role of the Carabinieri's Ecological Operational Unit in enforcing these regulations, illustrating how law enforcement can be a critical player in driving environmental protection and sustainability. The case from Italy emphasized the importance of strong legislation and enforcement in the green transition and how governmental action is key to shaping environmental behaviour.

Next, **Panayiotis Papadopoullos** from the Troodos Network in Cyprus presented the Cypriot approach to achieving Goal 17—partnerships for the goals. This case underscored the value of collaboration between various local and regional stakeholders, from government bodies to NGOs, in advancing sustainability efforts. Papadopoullos explained how Cyprus has fostered partnerships that not only promote sustainability but also strengthen community ties and ensure that local solutions are effectively scaled and implemented. His presentation emphasized how important it is to create synergies between different local actors, with an eye toward long-term, impactful collaborations, such as in Troodos area. Presenting the Lavender Thematic center, the actions for the tourism, the cultural route in Platres.



Finally, **Dariusz Bogdan**, the President of the Science and Technology Park in Suwałki, Poland, shared the innovative solutions being developed in the northeastern region of Poland. Suwałki's focus on the "wee4green" initiative demonstrated how local governments can influence sustainable development through creative, locally-tailored solutions. Bogdan outlined how Suwałki has become a model for other municipalities in Poland, using cutting-edge technology and local know-how to implement environmentally sustainable practices. His case highlighted the importance of local innovation in driving change, especially in regions that may be overlooked in broader national or European frameworks. The collaboration between local science and technology institutions, businesses and municipalities in Suwałki is a great example of how localized solutions can have a significant impact on regional sustainability.

These cases demonstrated the diverse ways in which municipalities and regions across Europe are contributing to the green transition. They underscored the interconnectedness of local actions and global sustainability goals, showing that by embedding the principles of the Agenda 2030 in local frameworks, cities and communities are creating meaningful, lasting change. The session provided valuable insights for participants on how to take inspiration from these examples and apply similar strategies in their own local contexts.



Following these insightful presentations, the conference opened up to a dynamic debate and Q&A session. This time allowed participants to engage directly with the speakers, fostering an interactive dialogue that deepened understanding of the discussed topics. The community's voice was evident here as local concerns and experiences were brought forward.

Overall, the WE4GREEN Conference was a powerful reminder of the critical intersection between local action and global sustainability goals. By focusing on Agenda 2030 and highlighting real-world examples from local municipalities, businesses and communities, the event illuminated how local efforts are crucial in driving the green transition forward, both in Europe and beyond. The space dedicated to community-driven dialogue underscored the significance of local involvement, with the collective contributions of citizens, municipalities, and organizations playing an essential role in shaping a sustainable future.

For the first time, ten European municipalities came together to organize an Online Event and the it turned out to be a resounding success, drawing up to 246 online attendees. This collaboration was a significant milestone, showcasing the power of local governments working in unison to tackle global challenges, such as the green transition, through a shared platform. The municipalities leveraged their collective resources, expertise, and networks to create a conference that resonated not just locally, but globally.

The municipalities worked closely to ensure that the conference was not only a virtual event but also an inclusive and interactive experience for participants. Jelgava Local Municipality and the Partners harmonised the contents, speakers and local case studies, bringing together representatives from various sectors, such as government, academia and business, to discuss the UN Agenda 2030 goals and green transition practices.

The collaboration involved intensive planning, including regular coordination meetings, content development and technological set-up. The online platform had to be tested and refined to handle the complexity of multiple presentations, interactive sessions and real-time participant engagement. Despite the challenges of organizing such a large-scale virtual event, the municipalities were able to create an engaging, accessible and smooth online experience that attracted 246 participants in January 16th.

#### DAY 2 - 17th January 2025.



Day 2 activities was held from 9.30 to 12:30 CET:

#### Access and Registration

Conference Moderator welcome: Āris Ādlers
Opening of the WE 4 GREEN 3<sup>rd</sup> EVENT - Introduction

Presentation of the agenda of the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of the Event by moderator Āris Ādlers

**Inspiring speech** by Aiva Apša - Ķīšeniece, association "Latvijas Lauku forums" (Latvian Rural Forum)

#### Topic presentation

European Green Deal: Circular economy. Transition to sustainable agriculture.
 Water Resilience. Nature restoration

Inese Kausa, DG ENV - Environment DG of European Commission

 Sustainability for recycling companies – a driver of responsible growth Kaspars Fogelmanis, Executive Director, EcoLead Ltd.

# **Latvian Local Cases**

**Living Testimonials** about citizens' engagement in society for the sustainability and territorial protection, fighting the food and water wasting, green actions

- Climate change and its perceptions in Latvia: what stories do we tell?
   Vineta Kleinberga, Researcher, Faculty of Social Sciences, Rīga Stradiņš University
- From waste to resources and digital tool for residents to use things again
   Evija Ozola Ozoliņa, www.lietovelreiz.lv
- Kalnciems Secondary school eco school and low energy sports hall Gunita Tolēna, Kalnciems Secondary school

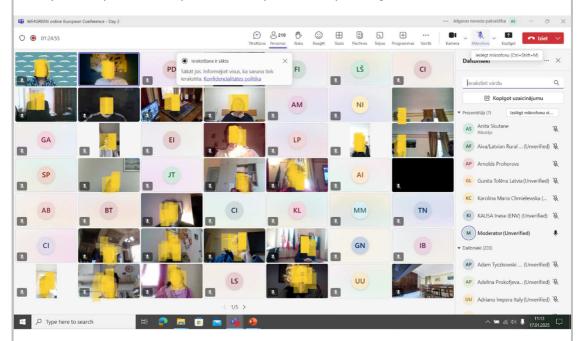
#### Cases from the Partnership

**Living Testimonials** about citizens' engagement in society for the sustainability and territorial protection, fighting the food and water wasting, green actions

School green education and best practices

- Paola Perotto, Teacher at Leardi-Luparia High School from Casale Monferrato, Italy **Examples of green actions and activities in Suwałki**Karolina Chmielewska, Youth City Council of Suwałki, Poland
- Questions time.
- -Debate
- -Closing comments by Gabriella Bigatti, WE4GREEN Project Manager.

The **second day** of the WE4GREEN 3rd Event kicked off with an efficient and welcoming registration process, quickly bringing attendees together for another enriching day of discussions. **Āris Ādlers**, the conference Moderator, opened the day with a brief introduction and a clear overview of the agenda. He set the tone for the day, which would delve deeper into crucial issues such as the European Green Deal, sustainable agriculture, and the importance of citizen engagement in green actions. The focus on sustainability remained central throughout the day, with a particular emphasis on the practical steps being taken at local levels.



The day's first inspiring speech came from **Aiva Apša- Ķīšeniece** of the Latvian Rural Forum. Her speech provided an empowering perspective on the importance of rural communities in driving sustainability. She emphasized how rural areas, often at the heart of agricultural production and natural resource management, have a pivotal role to play in the green transition. Through community involvement and collective action, rural populations can lead the way in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals and contribute to global efforts against climate change.

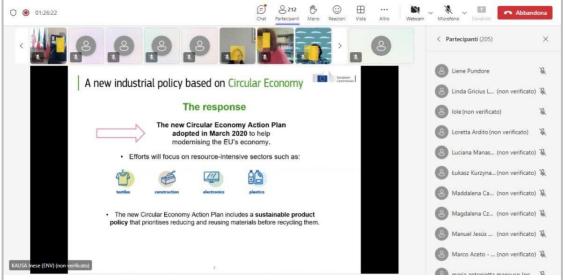


Following this, **Inese Kausa** from the <u>Environment DG of the European Commission</u> presented on the European Green Deal. She highlighted key initiatives, including the transition to a circular economy, sustainable agriculture, and water resilience. Kausa explained how these elements are interlinked, emphasizing the need for systemic change in agricultural practices and resource management to build a more sustainable and resilient Europe. Her presentation was particularly relevant in the context of the Green Deal's overarching goals, which aim to achieve climate neutrality by 2050, with tangible actions for the coming decades.

She warned the audience of possible and worrying scenarios. The consequences of environmental degradation and climate change affect not only the health of our planet, but also the resilience and well-being of our societies, acting as a threat multiplier and a source of instability and insecurity.



For example, she said that:" Plastic makes up 85% of litter on European beaches. Half of it is single-use plastic that is only used for a short time before being thrown away; A sixth mass extinction of biodiversity is underway; The world's population is projected to grow by almost one third to 10 billion by 2050; Without urgent global and national climate action, sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia and Latin America could see more than 140 million people displaced within their borders by 2050..."

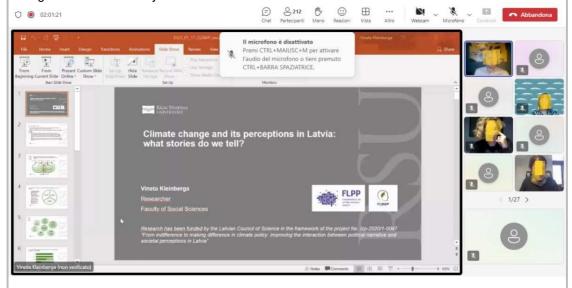


Next, **Kaspars Fogelmanis**, Executive Director of EcoLead Ltd., discussed sustainability within the recycling industry: the evolution of lead-acid battery recycling, from past to present. EcoLead produces lead ingots by recycling all used lead-acid batteries in Latvia in an environmentally and health-friendly manner.

His presentation focused on how companies in the recycling sector can serve as drivers for responsible growth, pushing for the adoption of green technologies, circular business models, and sustainable practices. Fogelmanis highlighted that the recycling industry is not just about waste management but also about creating economic opportunities and fostering a more

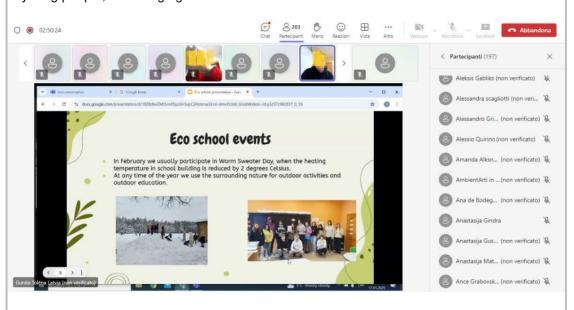
sustainable industrial landscape. He said that to support the circular economy we must consider that 95-98% of materials are recoverable.

The Latvian Local Cases segment brought in powerful testimonials about citizen engagement and local action. The first case came from **Vineta Kleinberga**, a researcher at Rīga Stradiņš University, who presented on the local perceptions of climate change in Latvia. Her research explored how Latvian citizens understand and react to the challenges posed by climate change, as well as the stories they tell about their experiences. Kleinberga's work emphasized the importance of public awareness and the role of education in shaping attitudes towards climate change and sustainability.



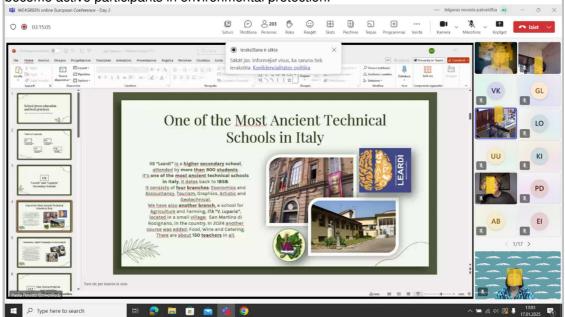
**Evija Ozola-Ozoliņa** followed with a presentation on a digital tool aimed at promoting reusing items and reducing waste. Her initiative, *lietovelreiz.lv*, allows Latvian residents to exchange or repurpose items they no longer need, reducing waste and promoting a more circular approach to consumption. This initiative was an inspiring example of how digital tools can empower citizens to take sustainable actions in their everyday lives.

**Gunita Tolēna** from Kalnciems Secondary School shared the school's journey in becoming an eco-school. The school not only implemented energy-saving measures but also built a low-energy sports hall, demonstrating how educational institutions can be models of sustainability. Tolēna's presentation highlighted the potential for schools to foster environmental stewardship in young people, encouraging sustainable habits that can last a lifetime.



The next section highlighted inspiring cases from the WE4GREEN partnership, showcasing citizen engagement from some European areas (IT, LV), involving schools and young people. **Paola Perotto**, a teacher from Leardi-Luparia High School in Casale Monferrato, Italy, discussed the role of education in promoting green values. She shared examples of how the

school integrates sustainability into its curriculum and daily operations, inspiring students to become active participants in environmental protection.



**Karolina Chmielewska** from the Youth City Council of Suwałki, Poland, followed by discussing the green actions and activities implemented by the youth in her community. Chmielewska's presentation illustrated how young people can be at the forefront of sustainability efforts, from organizing local clean-up events to promoting eco-friendly practices in schools and neighbourhoods. For instance, they realized many Eco-Laboratories and educational Anti-Smog actions. This focus on youth was a powerful reminder of the potential for younger generations to lead change, both locally and globally.

After the presentations, the conference opened up to an engaging Q&A session, allowing participants to delve deeper into the topics discussed. This interactive part of the event fostered a lively debate, with participants asking questions and debating the challenges of the green transition.

The conference concluded with closing remarks from **Gabriella Bigatti**, the WE4GREEN Project Manager, who expressed gratitude for the insightful presentations and the active participation of the attendees. Bigatti emphasized the importance of collaboration and continued dialogue in advancing sustainability, reminding everyone that the green transition is a shared responsibility that requires action at every level—from local communities to global organizations. With this inspiring message, the second day of the WE4GREEN event came to a close, leaving participants motivated and more informed about how they can contribute to sustainable development in their own communities.

The combination of multimedia—videos, photos, slides—and the thoughtful integration of interactive moments, like Q&A sessions, created an immersive experience that kept the attendees not only focused but also inspired. This approach to the online workshop not only made it engaging but also allowed for a comprehensive exploration of local and global sustainable development efforts, leaving participants with practical takeaways.

In conclusion, the two days of the WE4GREEN 3rd Event reached significant milestones, both in terms of participation and the depth of discussions. The event successfully **brought together over 202 participants any day** (as planned into the G.A.), creating a diverse and engaged online community from across Europe. On January 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> a large classroom from Kalnciems Secondary School – LV joined the conference and followed the presentations. On January 17<sup>th</sup> also one from Leardi-Luparia High School – IT (each classroom was connected with one unique access to the TEAMS platform).

Through a rich mix of presentations, case studies and interactive sessions, the attendees gained valuable insights into the practical applications of the UN Agenda 2030 goals and the green transition at the local level. The conference showcased the vital role of the involved Municipalities, the local businesses, schools and citizens in driving sustainable change, offering real-life examples of how local actions can contribute to global sustainability efforts. The discussions ranged from the implementation of circular economy principles and sustainable agriculture to innovative digital tools and citizen engagement in environmental protection.

These shared experiences highlighted that sustainability is not just an abstract global concept but something that can be actively pursued through community-driven initiatives.

By the end of the event, participants were not only informed about the challenges and opportunities of the green transition but also inspired to take action in their own contexts.

The Conference highlighted the importance of the collective efforts of local governments, as navigated the complexities of sustainability in an interconnected world. The municipalities proved that even in the face of the technological challenge (online), they could successfully come together to create an impactful and far-reaching event that sparked important conversations about the future of green transition and sustainable development

The event concluded with a renewed sense of purpose, with attendees leaving motivated to continue the work toward a greener, more sustainable world.

#### **LINKS**

https://www.comune.ottiglio.al.it/

https://www.jelgavasnovads.lv/lv/jaunums/aizvadita-tiessaistes-konference-vides-un-

ilgtspejas-jautajumi-latvija-un-es

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/We4Green-Project

# **EVENT DESCRIPTION SHEET - 4**

PROJECT			
Project name and acronym:	[LOCAL GREEN DEALS: OUR MUNICIPALITIES FOR THE GREEN TRANSITION - WE 4 GREEN]  Ref N. 101138490 - CERV-2023-CITIZENS-TOWN-NT		
Participant:	[COMUNE DI OTTIGLIO] (OTTIGLIO - ITALY)		
PIC number:	883830342		

	EVENT DE	SCRIPTION		
Event number:	Deliverable D4.1 – WE4GREEN EVENT			
Event name:	WP4 - EVENT 4 - Citizens' engagement and green transition - seminal in Spain			
Type:	[Network of Towns Event 4: EVENT IN SPAIN]			
In situ/online:	/in-situ			
Location:	[SPAIN]], La Palma del Condado Municipality			
Date(s):	[2-3-4 April 2025]			
Website(s) (if any):	Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/We4Green-Project			
Participants				
Female:	43			
Male:	40			
Non-binary:	0			
From country: POLAND Suwalki City Municipality	6			
From country: LATVIA  Jelgava Local Municipality	5			
From country: CYPRUS Platres Community Council	7			
From country: ITALY Ottiglio, Cella Monte, Rosignano Monferrato, Ozzano Monferrato, Sala Monferrato, Camagna Monferrato Municipalities	14			
From country: SPAIN La Palma del Condado Municipality	51			
Total number of participants:	83	From total number of countries:	5	
Description				
Provide a short description of the	event and its activities.			

# D4.1 – WE4GREEN EVENT 4

Place: La Palma del Condado in (ES), in situ

<u>Lead Beneficiary</u>: LA PALMA DEL CONDADO MUNICIPALITY (ES)

Dates of the event: 2-3-4 APRIL 2025

Number of countries involved: 5 [4 foreign countries (Cyprus, Poland, Latvia, Italy) + 1 in situ (Spain)]

Number of individual direct participants: 32 foreign + 51 local participants = 83

Number of invited/international participants: 32

From CY = 7 from LV = 5 from IT = 14 from PL = 6

• Number of local participants from ES= 51.

# Brief description of the Event 1:

The project has been approved by the European Commission under the call 2023 NETWORK OF TOWNS. The WE4GREEN activities will be carried out over 24 months: from December 1, 2023 until the end of November 2025.

Members of the partnership are from 5 different countries: Poland - Suwalki City Municipality, Latvia - Jelgava Local Municipality, Cyprus - Platres Community Council, Spain - La Palma del Condado Municipality; Italy - Ottiglio, Camagna Monferrato, Rosignano Monferrato, Sala Monferrato, Ozzano Monferrato and Cella Monte Municipalities.

WE4GREEN took inspiration from the Green Deal - the Europe's growth strategy for a modern, resource-efficient and competitive economy. To create the first zero-carbon continent in the world by 2050.

The transnational project allows the 10 Municipalities and their citizens, to activate events, debates, meetings for the green topics, actions for local Green Deals, fighting the climate change and promoting the environmental sustainability. The Municipality of Ottiglio (Lead Partner) and the other partner municipalities are exploring topics such as the Green transition, the circular economy, applied renewable energies, sustainable waste management and the fight against climate change, from their local perspectives. The main project aim is to develop Local Green Deals - Local green pacts at any municipal level: a tailor-made local action plan to accelerate and expand the green transition of every single territory involved in the 5 European countries.

The workplan foresees **5 Work packages** with five WPs dedicated to Events, visits and training: 3 events in situ & 2 online. The participating organizations worked hard for preparing the Event n. 4°, held in Spain. With the approval of the European Commission, the Event has been held in April 2025 and not in May 2025. The dates for the realization: **2-3-4 APRIL 2025**, as arranged with the EU project Officer.

The 3 intensive days saw the citizens' involvement. Thanks to the meetings, 2 seminars, ceremony and visits, the WE4GREEN EVENT 4 involve several direct persons and capture the attention of quite a lot of citizens.

The participants from **Poland**, **Italy**, **Cyprus and Latvia** arrived in **Andalusia (ES) in early April 2025**.

From the 2nd to the 4th of April 2025, the town of La Palma del Condado, nestled in the heart of Andalusia, hosted the fourth transnational event of the WE4GREEN project. This event marked a crucial step in the implementation of the EU-funded initiative (Ref. No. 101138490 - CERV-2023-CITIZENS-TOWN-NT), aligning its local experiences and public dialogue with broader European policies on environmental transition, sustainability, and democratic participation.

The Event 4 agenda was realized as follows:



#### I DAY - April 2, 2025

The first day of the event was characterized by a warm welcome and the spirit of hospitality deeply rooted in Andalusian culture. Delegations arrived at Sevilla Airport, where they were met and transported to La Palma del Condado.

Upon arrival, the Teatro España in Plaza de España came alive with the opening ceremony. The event officially began with the **Welcome Ceremony** and the speech from the Mayor of La Palma del Condado, **Ms. Rocío Moreno Domínguez**, who welcomed consortium members and highlighted the significance of the green transition for small local municipalities. Her welcome to the Partners members was marked by a sincere warmth and a clear vision for the future of her town within the broader framework of the EU Green Deal. She spoke not only as an institutional representative, but as a citizen of a community that lives daily with the challenges and opportunities posed by environmental change.

Ms. Moreno Domínguez emphasized the symbolic value of hosting such an event in La Palma del Condado, a town historically tied to agriculture and viticulture, and today striving to become a model for small-scale ecological transition. Her words were a call to action, encouraging municipalities—regardless of their size—to take ownership of their environmental future and to see in European cooperation not just a political formality, but a living tool for real change.

The Ceremony continued with a general overview of the planned activities and a presentation of the local context, showcasing La Palma's dedication to sustainability.

Each partner Municipality then took the stage to present their community's green journey.



# WE4GREEN EVENT 4 La Palma del Condado (Spain), 2 April 2025 WELCOME CEREMONY

Teatro España, La Palma del Condado, 16:30 - 19:00

Welcome to Consortium members by La Palma del Condado Mayor, Rocío Moreno Domínguez

Welcome speech by Massimo Pasciuta, Project Coordinator and Ottiglio Mayor

Presentations by Municipalities of Suwalky (PL), Jelgava (LV), PLatres (CY), Ottiglio, Camagna Monferrato, Rosignano Monferrato, Ozzano Monferrato, Cella Monte, Sala Monferrato (IT)

Speech by Spanish Professor from Catedra del vino about Environmental issues
CATEDRA AULA DE LA EXPERIENCIA

These presentations, enriched with visual materials, created a vibrant mosaic of local experiences, illustrating the diverse ways in which European territories are addressing climate and environmental concerns.

Later that afternoon, an academic from the Cátedra del Vino delivered a compelling talk on the link between environmental preservation and traditional wine-making practices, emphasizing how ancient knowledge can serve contemporary ecological goals.

The first day concluded with a graceful performance by the Municipal School of Dance, celebrating the local folklorist dance, as intersection of culture and environmental awareness, followed by a Welcome Dinner, where informal exchanges further strengthened the sense of community among participants.

#### II DAY - April 3, 2025

The second day began early, with participants boarding buses to visit the **Doñana Natural Park**, one of the most important protected natural areas in Europe. This park, located between the provinces of Huelva, Seville and Cádiz, is recognized by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site for its extraordinary biodiversity and the richness of its ecosystems. This was the planned Visit to see applied strategy for the sustainable tourism and the safeguard of the local natural areas. Instead in the afternoon, as planned into the approved application form, it was held in the morning.

At the arrival at the La Rocina Visitor Centre, the group was welcomed by environmental guides who provided an introduction to the park's ecological function within the wider Mediterranean context.

The visit was not merely a sightseeing excursion, but rather a profound educational experience aimed at understanding the vital connection between biodiversity preservation and climate resilience. The delegates had the opportunity to explore the area surrounding the Acebrón Palace, where environmental education activities were conducted, including guided walks and interpretation of local flora and fauna. The group was then taken through the Marisma-Cotos, where the intricate balance of wetland ecosystems was explained. These marshlands are crucial breeding and feeding grounds for migratory birds and endangered species such as the

Iberian lynx.



As the group moved towards the dunes and the Atlantic coast, discussions focused on the effects of rising sea levels and coastal erosion, offering concrete examples of how climate change is reshaping natural landscapes. What struck many was how Doñana's delicate ecosystems are simultaneously vulnerable and resilient, and how conservation efforts led by local authorities and NGOs are deeply intertwined with European policies like the EU Biodiversity Strategy. The entire experience reinforced one of the project's key messages: that meaningful environmental transition must begin with a deep, personal connection to the land and its stories.

Later, the delegates returned to La Palma del Condado and gathered at Bodega Garay, a local winery that has become a reference point for sustainability in the field of viticulture. Founded on principles of environmental stewardship, the winery's philosophy is centered around producing high-quality organic wines while preserving the integrity of the land and its resources. Over a carefully prepared lunch showcasing seasonal products, Mario Garay, owner and visionary behind the winery, explained how the production process at Bodega Garay avoids the use of chemical pesticides and fertilizers, relying instead on natural composts and traditional cultivation methods. He emphasized the importance of preserving local grape varieties and working in harmony with the seasonal rhythms of nature.

What made the visit particularly impactful was the way in which the winery integrated sustainable practices across all levels of its operation, from the vineyard to the bottle. Energy efficiency measures, reduced water usage and a circular waste management system were among the features highlighted. Moreover, the winery functions as a community hub, offering educational programs for schools and public events to raise awareness on climate and agriculture. The experience at Bodega Garay illustrated how small enterprises can act as powerful agents of change in rural areas, leading the way in green innovation without compromising tradition or quality.

In the afternoon, the participants reunited themselves at the Salón de Actos of the Ayuntamiento de La Palma del Condado. The venue hosted the first **Public Seminar** of the event, entitled "**WE4GREEN Seminar 1: Citizens' Engagement in the Green Transition**." This seminar, open to local citizens and featuring the presence of citizens, academics and public officials, was divided into two thematic parts.



# SEMINAR 1 - First part: SPANISH CASES

- Presentation 1: "Organic wines and green practices" Cases of sustainability and sustainable development applied in La Palma del Condado - SPEAKER By GARAY BODEGA - Mario Garay
- Presentation 2: "History of the vineyard in Huelva and green agriculture" Cases of sustainability and sustainable development applied locally - SPEAKER By ASSOCIATION OF FRIENDS OF WINE – Antonio Redondo Morales

The first segment was dedicated to Spanish case studies. Bodega Garay illustrated the vineyard's commitment to organic wine production, presenting it as a model of how small enterprises can contribute to the green transition. Antonio Redondo Morales from the Association of Friends of Wine offered a historical perspective on the evolution of viticulture in Huelva and its growing focus on ecological agriculture, drawing a clear connection between cultural heritage and sustainability.



# SEMINAR 1 - Second part: FOREIGN CASES

Cases of sustainability and sustainable development applied for/by citizens – from Partners

- ITALY Ottiglio Municipality Mayor, Massimo Pasciuta, The problem of microplastics on plates and food safety
- LATVIA Gunita Tolēna, Deputy Director of Kalnciems Secondary School, Our green school education
- CYPRUS Panayiotis Papadopoullos, Troodos Network, "Our Regions for Climate R4C" Project running in Troodos
- POLAND Jerzy Gałązka acting Head of Environmental Protection Department the City Hall of Suwałki, Ecological education in urban spaces

The second part of the Seminar shifted the focus to foreign Partners' contributions. The Mayor of Ottiglio, Massimo Pasciuta, addressed the pressing issue of microplastics, emphasizing the health risks linked to environmental pollution and the need for urgent policy responses. Pasciuta addressed a topic that deeply concerns both experts and citizens alike; the presence and impact of microplastics in our food systems. His presentation was both sobering and enlightening, as he described how microscopic plastic particles—originating from the breakdown of larger plastic items—are now routinely found in soils, waters and even within the human body. He drew attention to how these particles are increasingly present on food crops and, more alarmingly, on the surfaces of everyday tableware, leading to potential ingestion. With reference to recent studies, he explained the health risks associated with long-term exposure to microplastics, such as hormonal disruption, inflammation, and even possible links to chronic diseases. The Mayor urged the audience to consider not only legislative actions but also behavioral changes at the local level, from reducing single-use plastics to supporting alternative packaging and raising awareness in schools. What emerged from his intervention was the urgent need for municipalities to treat the issue of microplastics not as a distant or abstract environmental challenge, but as an immediate threat to public health and food security. His appeal resonated with the core of the WE4GREEN project: empowering citizens and local institutions to recognize their role in shaping safer, greener and healthier communities. By connecting environmental degradation with tangible, everyday consequences, his speech successfully bridged the gap between ecological science and civic responsibility.



From Latvia, Gunita Tolēna shared her experience with the "Green School Education" initiative in Kalnciems, an innovative approach to embedding sustainability in education from an early age.

Cyprus contributed through the voice of Panayiotis Papadopoullos, who spoke about the "Our Regions for Climate – R4C" project in the Troodos area, highlighting Troodos area's Community resilience.

Finally, Jerzy Gałązka from Suwałki, Poland, discussed urban ecological education and its impact on shaping environmentally conscious citizens. The session concluded with reflections and a lively informal dinner, allowing participants to digest the richness of the day's discussions.



#### III DAY - April 4, 2025

The final day of the event was held at the Salón de Actos of the Ayuntamiento, at La Palma's town hall, again. The morning began with the registration of participants and the opening of the second **Public Seminar** "**WE4GREEN Seminar 2: Citizens' Engagement in the Green Transition**" focused on citizen engagement in sustainability. In this second public event, the emphasis remained on blending local and European perspectives, at the presence of citizens, general publics and councillors.

#### SEMINAR 2 - SPANISH CASES

 Manuel Robledo, professor of the Degree in Oil and Wine, green practices and environment linked to gastronomy

# SEMINAR 2 - FOREIGN CASES

Sustainable practices and green transition applied in the Partners' territories -- from Partners

- ITALY Giuseppe Bargero, Physician, Expert from Ottiglio Municipality, The connections among health, lifestyles and sustainability
- POLAND Marcin Bonisławski, President of the board Municipal Heating Company, The path to sustainable and green energy in Suwałki's district heating
- CYPRUS Yioula Michaelidou Papakyriacou, Troodos Network manager, *The Thematic Centers as hubs for green transition*

The first presentation was given by Professor Manuel Robledo (ES), who brought attention to how sustainable practices are being developed within the sectors of food and wine, especially through educational initiatives that connect young people to local traditions and environmental stewardship. This was followed by new contributions from the international partners. Dr. Giuseppe Bargero (IT), representing Italian partners, introduced a reflection on the relationship between public health, lifestyles, and sustainability, stressing how behavioural change is an essential pillar of the green transition.



From Suwałki, Marcin Bonisławski, from the Municipal Heating Company (PL), offered a technical insight into how his city is transforming its district heating system into a green and sustainable model. Yioula Michaelidou Papakyriacou from the Troodos Network (CY) closed the international segment by describing how thematic centers in Cyprus serve as community-based hubs for environmental education and innovation.

A debate session followed, during which participants exchanged thoughts on the challenges and opportunities presented by the green transition at the local level. The organisers concluded showcasing its efforts toward sustainable urban design and community involvement in environmental initiatives.

At the conclusion of the Seminar, the participants, doing a walking tour of La Palma del Condado city centre, arrived to the restaurant. A farewell lunch at *Nuevo Casino* and a final internal technical meeting focused on the progress of the WE4GREEN project have been held. Partners discussed upcoming milestones and agreed on strategies to ensure continuity and impact. The Project Coordinator, Massimo Pasciuta, concluded the session with final remarks, expressing gratitude for the fruitful exchange and reaffirming the commitment to continue working together toward a greener Europe.

Throughout the three-day event, all activities were documented through videos, photographs, and official reports. Educational materials were shared; satisfaction questionnaires were distributed to gather participant feedback and attendance was recorded. What emerged from this experience in La Palma del Condado was more than a simple exchange of ideas. It was a demonstration of how diverse municipalities, through collaboration, creativity, and citizen participation, can give concrete shape to the European Green Deal and translate ambitious goals into meaningful local action.

Over the course of three intense and meaningful days, representatives from ten municipalities across Europe, along with local stakeholders and citizens, gathered to reflect and build new approaches to citizen-driven green transformation.

#### LINKS

https://www.comune.ottiglio.al.it/

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/We4Green-Project



EVENT DESCRIPTION SHEET - 5
(To be filled in and uploaded as deliverable in the Portal Grant Management System, at the due date foreseen in the system.

Please provide one sheet per event (one event = one workpackage = one lump sum).)

PROJECT			
Project name and acronym:	[LOCAL GREEN DEALS: OUR MUNICIPALITIES FOR THE GREEN TRANSITION - WE 4 GREEN]  Ref N. 101138490 - CERV-2023-CITIZENS-TOWN-NT		
Participant:	[COMUNE DI OTTIGLIO] (OTTIGLIO - ITALY)		
PIC number:	883830342		

	EVENT DESCRIPTION				
Event number:	Deliverable D5.1 – WE4GREEN EVENT				
Event name:	WP5 - EVENT 5 - WE4GREEN online European Conference				
Туре:	[Network of Towns Event 5: ONLINE FINAL EVENT]				
In situ/online:	[online				
Location:	[POLAND)], online				
Date(s):	[15 – 16 October 2025]				
Website(s) (if any):	Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/We4Green-Project				
Participants					
Female:	133				
Male:	112				
Non-binary:	0				
From country: POLAND Suwalky City Municipality	110				
From country: LATVIA  Jelgava Local Municipality	28				
From country: ITALY Ottiglio Municipality	20				
From country: ITALY Cella Monte Municipality	11				
From country: CYPRUS Platres Community Council	10				
From country: ITALY Rosignano Monferrato Municipality	11				
From country: ITALY Ozzano Monferrato Municipality	13				
From country: ITALY Camagna Monferrato Municipality	18				

From country: ITALY Sala Monferrato Municipality	9		
From country: SPAIN La Palma del Condado	15		
Total number of participants:	245	From total number of countries:	5

#### Description

Provide a short description of the event and its activities.

#### WP5 - EVENT 5 - WE4GREEN online European Conference

#### D5.1 – WE4GREEN EVENT 5

Place: Online

<u>Lead Beneficiary</u>: **SUWALKI CITY (PL)**Dates of the event: **15 – 16 October 2025** 

Number of countries involved: 5 [5 foreign countries (Poland, Cyprus, Poland, Latvia, Italy]

Effective total number of individual direct Participants: (more than 202) = 245.

Number of invited/international participants per country:

from LV = 28 From IT = 82 From CY = 10 from ES = 15 from PL = 110

### Brief description of the Event 5:

The project, approved by the European Commission under the call 2023 NETWORK OF TOWNS, has been carried out over 24 months: from December 1, 2023 until the end of November 2025.

Members of the partnership are from 5 different countries: Poland - Suwalky City Municipality, Latvia - Jelgava Local Municipality, Cyprus - Platres Community Council, Spain - La Palma del Condado Municipality; Italy - Ottiglio, Camagna Monferrato, Rosignano Monferrato, Sala Monferrato, Ozzano Monferrato and Cella Monte Municipalities.

The transnational project allows the 10 Municipalities and their citizens, to activate events, debates, meetings for the green topics, actions for local Green Deals, fighting the climate change and promoting the environmental sustainability. The Municipality of Ottiglio (Lead Partner) and the other partner municipalities are exploring topics such as the Green transition, the circular economy, applied renewable energies, sustainable waste management and the fight against climate change, from their local perspectives. The main project aim is to develop Local Green Deals - Local green pacts at any municipal level: a tailor-made local action plan to accelerate and expand the green transition of every single territory involved in the 5 European countries.

The workplan foresees 5 Work packages with five WPs dedicated to Events, visits and training: 3 events in situ & 2 online. This was the final Event, held online in Conference format, that will be followed by Follow up phase.

The project event n. 5 was organised by Suwalki City (Poland).

the other 9 partner municipalities fully participated into its organisation and realisation, also under the coordination of the Municipality of Ottiglio (leader).

The event was an **online European Conference**, lasted 2 days combining **Part 1–day 1** and **Part 2–day 2**. The online workshop focused on the municipalities and cities as cornerstones to deliver the European Green Deal on the ground. The common path, started from the general need of improving the Green Deal overall knowledge, moved each partner to act and give a contribution to the Green Deal implementation from a local perspective, at territorial level.

As planned into the Application Part B and stated in the G.A.

The Event ensured the presence of the expected number of participants which <u>never</u> fell below 202 per day.

The **WE4GREEN European Conference (Event n 5)**, held online on **15–16 October 2025**, marked the fifth major event within the European project "Local Green Deals: Our Municipalities"

for the Green Transition". Organised by Suwalki City (PL) and coordinated by the Municipality of Ottiglio (IT), the project brought together partners from Italy, Poland, Cyprus, Spain and Latvia. The conference served as a milestone for sharing achievements, best practices, and future perspectives on sustainable governance, climate adaptation and community-based green transformation.

Moderated by **Emil Sieńko**, Chief Specialist for Social Communication and Promotion at the City Hall of Suwałki and WE4GREEN Project Referent ay Suwalki City, the event was hosted on the CISCO Webex online platform, connecting more than 2 hundreds of participants from across Europe - local government representatives, researchers, environmental experts and civil society actors.

15 October 2025 Online conference 9:30 – 12:30 CET

Online platform Link:

https://umsuwalki.webex.com/umsuwalkien/j.php?MTID=m8f38a14f5bb8d3adc7cecd6d53fd93a4



# DAY 1 - 15th October 2025.

Day 1 agenda was held from 9.30 to 12:30 CET:

# **Access and Registration**

Conference Moderator welcome: Emil Sieńko



#### Introduction

General overview of the Event by Conference Moderator: **Opening of the WE 4 GREEN 5**<sup>th</sup> **EVENT** 

## WE4GREEN Welcome Speeches

- Welcome speech by Marcin Bonisławski, the Vice-Mayor of Suwałki City
- **Welcome speech** by **Luminita Stanciulescu**, Project Officer European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA), established by the European Commission

# **Local Polish Cases**

- Jerzy Gałązka, acting Head of Environmental Protection Department, City Hall of Suwałki, Climate Change Adaptation Plan for the City of Suwałki until 2030
- Ilona Rżany, Head of Development and External Funds Department City Hall of Suwałki, The experience of Suwałki City in recent years and plans for the current EU perspective 2021-2027 in the implementation of green projects and renewable energy sources

#### Cases from the Partnership

- Italy Khalil Abid Department of Agricultural, Forest and Food Sciences University of Turin, Farming in the age of microplastics pollution: can livestock stay sustainable?
- Latvia Evija Ērkšķe, Project manager, environmental and energy specialist of Zemgale Planning Region, Increasing social acceptance for wind energy through environmental and community-based planning: BIOWIND project
- Italy Guido Gabotto, President Cosmo SpA Casale Monferrato, Waste disposal and treatment policies in Monferrato

Questions time. Debate

# Closing speech for Day 1:

- Massimo Pasciuta, WE4GREEN Coordinator and Mayor of Ottiglio, Sustainability, health and emerging diseases
- Closing comments for Day 1: Emil Sieńko, WE4GREEN Project Referent, City Hall of Suwałki

The first day began with access and registration at 9:30 CET. Emil Sieńko welcomed

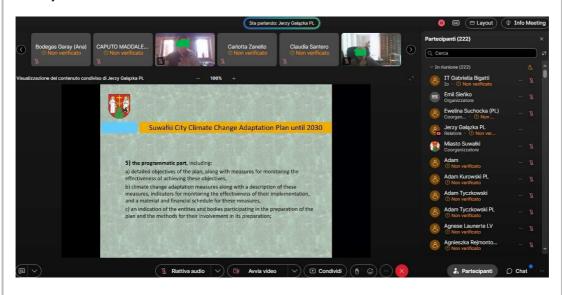
participants, introducing the daily agenda and emphasizing the importance of inter-municipal cooperation within the WE4GREEN framework.

The formal opening followed at 10:10 CET with two institutional greetings. **Marcin Bonisławski**, Vice-Mayor of Suwałki City, welcomed all partners, underlining Suwałki commitment to sustainability and its dual role as a local innovator and European partner. He recalled how Suwałki green transformation - from low-emission public transport to blue-green infrastructure - illustrates the power of municipal leadership in implementing EU climate policies.

Next, Luminita Stanciulescu, Project Officer at the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA), offered the European Commission's perspective. She underlines the potential of the CERV program and congratulated the partnership for its tangible activities, and hopes that the partnership can continue to strengthen in the future

The first session of technical presentations showcased Suwałki environmental strategies. **Jerzy Gałązka**, Acting Head of the Environmental Protection Department, presented the Climate Change Adaptation Plan for Suwałki until 2030, a strategic framework aimed at reducing the city's vulnerability to climate impacts. He illustrated how the plan integrates public health, infrastructure resilience, and ecosystem preservation. Actions such as expanding green roofs, restoring riverbanks, and creating retention ponds exemplify Suwałki proactive approach. The plan defines five main objectives: (1) protecting public health from climate threats, (2) expanding and preserving blue-green infrastructure, (3) maintaining effective infrastructure under extreme conditions, (4) improving public buildings' energy performance, and (5) integrating adaptation into city policy while raising awareness. Actions include new green roofs, water retention systems, energy-efficient retrofits, and crisis response mechanisms.

Following him, **Ilona Rżany**, Head of the Development and External Funds Department, discussed "The Experience of Suwałki City in Green Projects and Renewable Energy Sources." She described major EU-funded projects that have transformed the city - thermal modernization of schools, replacement of 7,700 streetlights with energy-efficient LEDs, and the purchase of low-emission buses. Looking ahead, she unveiled new plans for 2025–2027, including a biomass boiler plant, a waste-to-energy facility, and solar installations for 46 public buildings. Together, these initiatives are steering Suwałki toward energy self-sufficiency and climate neutrality.



After a short break, the moderator invited the international partners to share their experiences.

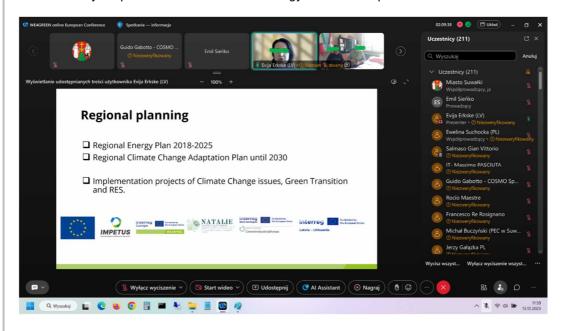
#### Cases from the Partnership

The session brought together a diverse set of European voices and scientific contributions.

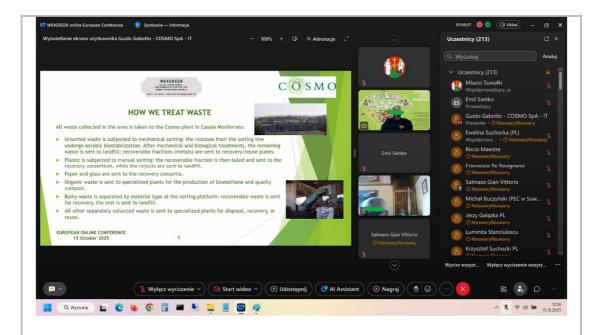
**Khalil Abid** (University of Turin, Italy) delivered a thought-provoking presentation titled "Farming in the Age of Microplastics Pollution: Can Livestock Stay Sustainable?" He explained how microplastics infiltrate agricultural systems through water, soil, and feed, with 100% of ruminant feeds in recent studies found to contain plastic particles. These materials, he warned, affect animal metabolism, organ function, and ultimately food quality. Abid urged European policymakers to strengthen regulations on plastic use in agriculture, calling the issue "a silent threat to sustainable farming and public health."

**Evija Ērkšķe**, Project Manager and Environmental Specialist at the Zemgale Planning Region (LV), introduced the BIOWIND Project, an Interreg Europe initiative promoting wind energy acceptance through community-based planning. It seeks to improve regional policies on

renewable energy by fostering public acceptance and balancing environmental and social interests. Coordinated by the Zemgale Planning Region (ZPR) in Latvia, the initiative runs from March 2023 to February 2027 and unites 11 partners from eight EU countries (Greece, Finland, Latvia, Ireland, Belgium, Hungary, Poland, and Spain). BIOWIND promotes integrated wind energy planning that respects climate goals, biodiversity, and community needs. Latvia, where about 75% of electricity already comes from renewables, aims to expand its capacity through new onshore and offshore wind parks, targeting 2,700 MW of renewable power by 2035, and aiming for energy independence in the future. The project supports this transition by developing regional action plans, organizing stakeholder consultations, and testing innovative participatory tools such as the Wind4Bio consultation approach. In Zemgale, BIOWIND also strengthens the Regional Development Programme 2021–2027, embedding public dialogue, biodiversity safeguards, and inclusive energy models like local energy cooperatives. Through workshops, policy learning, and pilot activities, Latvia contributes to shaping a socially accepted and environmentally responsible future for wind energy across Europe.



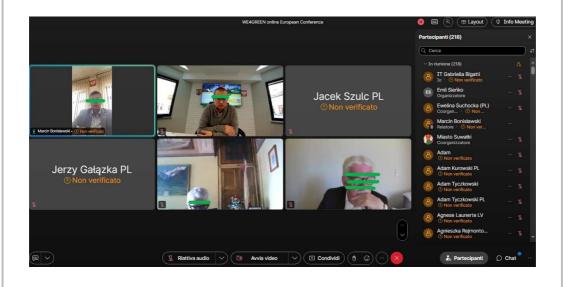
Finally, **Guido Gabotto**, President of **COSMO S.p.A.** (Casale Monferrato, Italy), spoke about "Waste Disposal and Treatment Policies in Monferrato." COSMO S.p.A., municipal company owned by 44 municipalities led by Casale Monferrato, manages the integrated waste cycle for about 67,500 residents in the Monferrato area. It oversees collection, sorting, recycling, and landfill operations, ensuring one of the lowest service costs in Piemonte. Waste is collected through tailored systems - door-to-door, roadside, and ecological islands - and treated at the Casale Monferrato plant, where recoverable materials are recycled and organic waste turned into biomethane and compost. Despite logistical challenges from a vast, low-density territory and the need to balance costs with circular economy goals, COSMO reached 68.8% separate collection in 2024. Upcoming projects include upgraded sorting and treatment plants, a new facility for absorbent hygiene products, and public awareness campaigns to improve waste quality, aiming to exceed 70% recycling and cut residual waste to below 126 kg per inhabitant by 2025.



The first day concluded with reflections from **Massimo Pasciuta**, Mayor of Ottiglio and WE4GREEN Project Coordinator. In his speech titled "Sustainability, Health, and Emerging Diseases," he linked environmental degradation to global health risks, stressing the need for cross-sectoral approaches. Emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases represent a growing global public health challenge. Unlike diseases that remain localized, these diseases have the potential to spread rapidly across regions and even continents, fuelled by human activity, environmental change, and globalization. The rise in these diseases is not random but closely linked to processes such as environmental degradation, climate change, intensive agriculture, and unsustainable economic practices. Understanding these connections is essential for developing effective prevention and mitigation strategies.

Approximately 58% of infectious diseases are now considered sensitive to climate change, demonstrating the intimate link between environmental conditions and disease dynamics. "Protecting nature means protecting ourselves," he said, urging municipalities to act as "laboratories of resilience."

The moderator, **Emil Sieńko**, closed the session by summarizing the day's insights and thanking all participants for their contributions, emphasizing the crucial bridge between research, local administration, and community involvement.



#### DAY 2 - 16th October 2025.

Day 2 agenda was held from 9.30 to 12:45 CET:

# **Access and Registration**

Conference Moderator welcome: Emil Sieńko

15 October 2025 Online conference 9:30 – 12:45 CET

### Online platform Link:

https://umsuwalki.webex.com/umsuwalkien/j.php?MTID=m8f38a14f5bb8d3adc7cecd6d53fd93a4



#### Introduction

Welcome and presentation of the agenda of the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of the Event by Conference Moderator, **Emil Sieńko** 

The WE4GREEN eBook, Gabriella Bigatti, WE4GREEN Project Manager

# Local Cases from the Partnership Examples of green actions and activities

- Cyprus Panayiotis Papadopoullos, President of Troodos Network & Referent for Platres Community Council, Local Green Deal: What applied in the Platres area as a green strategy
- Poland Marek Ratasiewicz, Youth City Council of Suwałki, Examples of green actions and activities in Suwałki
- Italy Daniela Demartini, Architect, Urban planning and land use: landscape protection in Monferrato
- Spain Mario Garay, Garay Wine Company, Local Green Deal: what applied at La Palma del Condado Municipality level as a green strategy
- Italy Mario Redoglia, Winemaker, Facing climate change in Monferrato: challenges and opportunities

Questions time. Debate.

Closing comments and final considerations on WE4GREEN project realisation by

- Emil Sieńko, WE4GREEN Project Referent City Hall of Suwałki
- Gabriella Bigatti, WE4GREEN Project Manager
- Massimo Pasciuta, WE4GREEN Coordinator and Mayor of Ottiglio

### Final Greetings by All Municipalities

Future plans

The closing day of the WE4GREEN European Conference, held on 16 October 2025, represented the emotional and intellectual culmination of two years of collective work under the CERV-funded project "Local Green Deals: Our Municipalities for the Green Transition." After months of exchanges, training events, field visits, and digital cooperation, the network of ten municipalities from five European countries gathered online for one final moment of reflection and celebration.

The event, moderated by Emil Sieńko of Suwałki City Hall, offered many particularly meaningful speeches. Together, these speeches traced the full arc of the WE4GREEN journey: from vision to realization, from local practice to European meaning.

#### Opening Presentation – The WE4GREEN eBook

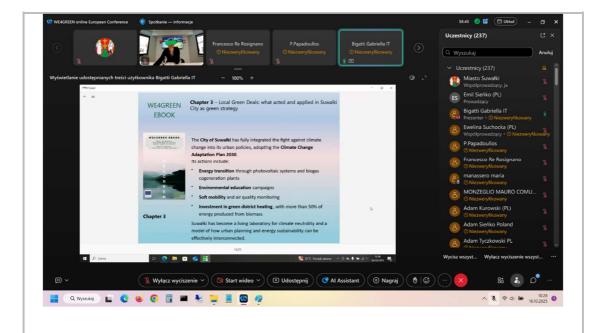
**Gabriella Bigatti**, Project Manager for WE4GREEN, presented the newly **WE4GREEN eBook**, a digital compendium summarizing all project activities. She described it as "a collective diary of cooperation," showcasing innovative green strategies from each partner municipality, meant to inspire further replication across Europe.

She introduced the digital publication as both a collective diary and a permanent legacy of the project, it and was created to document and share the entire WE4GREEN journey, from its official launch in December 2023 to its closing in November 2025.

It gathers results, experiences and lessons learned during two years of cooperation - demonstrating how small towns can turn the European Green Deal into everyday practices through citizen participation, cultural heritage, and environmental innovation.

The book opens with a comprehensive overview of the WE4GREEN project, explaining its origin, objectives, and core philosophy inspired by UNESCO's motto: "Reconcile humanity with nature: protect the environment through science, local knowledge, and respect for biodiversity." Bigatti highlighted how the project unfolded across five unique European ecosystems—each representing a different expression of the continent's natural and cultural diversity: the UNESCO vineyards of Monferrato (Italy); the Troodos Mountains (Cyprus); the Natura 2000 areas of Suwałki (Poland); the Andalusian landscapes near Doñana National Park (Spain); the Zemgale region (Latvia), rich in green innovation and renewable energy.

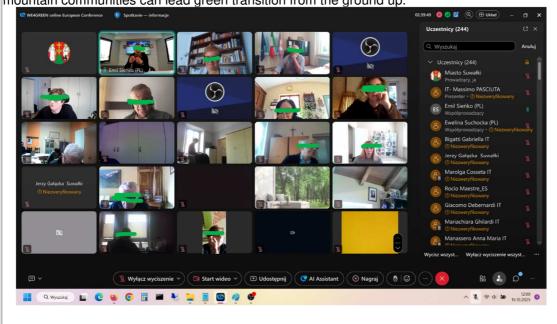
Moreover, the eBook's structure mirrors the evolution of the project with 7 specific chapters and an Appendix including the five *Event Description Sheets (EDS)*, prepared after each international event.



#### **Local Cases from the Partnership**

The session began with **Panayiotis Papadopoullos**, President of the Troodos Network and representative of Platres Community Council (Cyprus). His talk, "Local Green Deal: What Applied in the Platres Area as a Green Strategy," illustrated how small mountain communities can lead by example. Platres has implemented sustainable tourism initiatives, renewable energy installations and waste reduction programs that align with Cyprus national Green Deal framework.

In the green heart of the Troodos Mountains, Platres has become a model for sustainable rural development through lavender cultivation. Once a traditional herb, lavender now drives women's entrepreneurship, eco-tourism, and local identity. The Lavender Thematic Center serves as the hub of this transformation, linking culture, education, and green innovation. Through the WE4GREEN project, Platres aligns with the EU Green Deal by turning heritage into sustainability and tradition into innovation. This "lavender renaissance" shows how small mountain communities can lead green transition from the ground up.



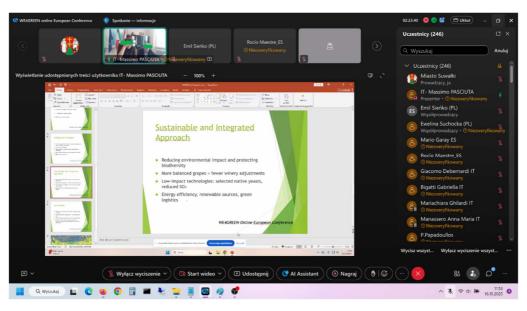
Next, **Marek Ratasiewicz**, member of the **Youth City Council of Suwałki**, presented "Examples of Green Actions and Activities in Suwałki." The speech demonstrated how young citizens are shaping the local sustainability agenda through educational campaigns, clean-up events and biodiversity monitoring. Under the WE4GREEN program, Suwałki has promoted ecological awareness among youth and the wider community through participatory

environmental education. The initiative includes several campaigns: "Cleaning Up for Poland", a large-scale civic action to collect litter and restore natural landscapes; "Outdoor Nature Lesson", which takes students into the field to learn about ecosystems directly; and "Forest Restoration", focusing on tree planting and biodiversity recovery. Students also participate in "Field and Laboratory Studies in Wigry National Park", combining hands-on science with environmental responsibility. Finally, "Eco-Friendly Ideas" workshops invite young citizens to design green solutions for everyday life - reducing plastic, conserving water, and promoting recycling. Together, these projects foster ecological sensitivity, local activism, and sustainable habits among residents. Suwałki demonstrates how community-based environmental education can cultivate a generation of citizens aware of their role in protecting the planet.

After a brief break, the conference resumed with an Italian-Spanish session dedicated to landscape, viticulture, and adaptation to climate change.

Architect **Daniela Demartini** was substituted by **Isabella Franzin** (IT) that introduced "*Urban Planning and Land Use: Landscape Protection in Monferrato*". Her presentation traced the evolution of Italy's landscape legislation, from early 20th-century protection laws to the European Landscape Convention. Beginning with Italian early legal framework—Law 1497/1939 on natural beauty and the Italian Constitution (Art. 9) - the concept of landscape evolved through Law 431/1985 (Galasso Law) and the European Landscape Convention (Florence, 2000), which recognized the landscape as a *collective heritage and a social need*. In Piedmont, landscape protection is governed by the Code of Cultural Heritage and Landscape (Legislative Decree 42/2004) and Regional Law 32/2008, which assign municipalities the responsibility to establish LLCs composed of qualified experts to review projects affecting protected sites. She described the pivotal role of Local Landscape Commissions—such as the one established in Ottiglio and neighbouring municipalities—in preserving the UNESCO-recognized "*Vineyard Landscapes of Piedmont: Langhe-Roero and Monferrato*". Highlighting the cultural heritage of the Infernot, subterranean cellars carved in pietra da cantoni stone, she described Monferrato as "a living landscape where nature and human craft intertwine."

Following her, **Mario Garay**, representing Garay Wine Company **(Spain)**, discussed "Local Green Deal Strategies in La Palma del Condado." He explained how the Andalusian wine region is adopting sustainable viticulture - reducing pesticide use, restoring soil biodiversity and engaging local farmers in circular economy initiatives. Bodegas Garay embodies a deep ecological passion, producing natural wines through fully organic and sustainable methods. Their vineyards eliminate herbicides and chemicals, using natural fungicides and compost to preserve soil life and biodiversity. Dry farming practices protect water reserves and prevent erosion, supporting the Doñana National Park ecosystem. In the winery, only grape juice is fermented — no additives, sulphites, or corrections — ensuring pure, authentic flavours.



Concluding the session, **Mario Redoglia (IT)**, winemaker from Monferrato, presented "Facing Climate Change in Monferrato: Challenges and Opportunities." He described how rising temperatures and unpredictable rainfall patterns are affecting grape quality and production cycles. However, he stressed that innovation, from new irrigation systems to resistant grape varieties, can transform these challenges into opportunities for more sustainable and resilient

agriculture.

The concluding remarks were jointly delivered by **Emil Sieńko** (City of Suwałki), **Gabriella Bigatti** (Ottiglio) and **Massimo Pasciuta** (Ottiglio Mayor and Project Coordinator). They collectively underlined that WE4GREEN had succeeded in building not just a partnership but a *European community of practice*. The conference closed with a joint statement from all municipalities reaffirming their commitment to continued collaboration and the development of future initiatives beyond 2025. Also, the Referents from Cella Monte and Rosignano Monferrato Municipalities expressed their pleasure with the qualified contents of the events and experts and underlined the will to continue to cooperate in the future.

In particular, Mayor **Massimo Pasciuta** delivered the official closing address of the WE4GREEN Conference. Speaking with warmth and conviction, he reflected on the project as a collective journey of discovery and solidarity. He described WE4GREEN as "an intense and stimulating adventure dedicated to the EU Green Deal and Agenda 2030, with sustainability at its core". Pasciuta emphasized that the project's strength lies in its human dimension: mayors, citizens, and technicians from five countries working together toward the same purpose—to build "a fairer, greener, and more resilient Europe." He praised the diversity of the experiences shared during the five international events, each bringing new inspiration and practical lessons. For him, the greatest message of WE4GREEN was that sustainability is a collective responsibility.

Gabriella Bigatti's words bridged institutional gratitude with a heartfelt reflection on what WE4GREEN had achieved beyond its formal boundaries. She began by thanking the European Commission and the CERV Programme, acknowledging their pivotal role in supporting networks of towns that embody European values of cooperation and sustainability. She also expressed deep appreciation to the Lead Municipality of Ottiglio and to all ten partner towns. Bigatti described WE4GREEN as "unique not only in structure but in spirit." The project, she said, connected ten municipalities from five ecosystems, transforming cultural heritage and natural landscapes into laboratories of innovation. From lavender fields to vineyards, from Baltic recycling hubs to Polish renewable energy projects, each place added "a different shade of green to a shared European landscape." And: "Let us carry forward the spirit of WE4GREEN - a spirit of cooperation beyond borders, of dialogue between people and nature, and of faith in a greener, fairer, and more united Europe".

Through the exchange of case studies - from Latvian wind energy strategies to Italian waste management systems and Polish climate adaptation plans - the event showcased how municipalities are not just policy implementers but key innovators in Europe's green transition. The WE4GREEN conference thus stood as both a celebration of past achievements and a call to action for the sustainable cities of tomorrow.

# **LINKS**

https://www.comune.ottiglio.al.it/

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/We4Green-Project

#### **PICTURES**

