



**EWAsTER**

**Interreg**  
Euro-MED



Co-funded by  
the European Union

A close-up photograph of a broken, teal-colored smartphone lying on a sandy beach. The phone's screen is shattered and covered in sand. In the background, the ocean waves are crashing onto the shore, creating white foam. The overall scene conveys the theme of e-waste pollution in natural environments.

# From E-Waste to Opportunity: Building a Circular Future Together

**#4 NEWSLETTER**

STRENGTHENING AN INNOVATIVE SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY



## Welcome to the final newsletter of the project, co-funded by the Interreg Euro-MED Programme

As the EWAsTER project approaches its conclusion, one message stands out clearly: **electronic waste** is not just an environmental challenge—it is an **opportunity for innovation, education, social inclusion, and circular growth**.

Over the past three years, partners from across the Mediterranean have worked together to develop **practical solutions** that prevent electronic waste from polluting our communities and natural environments.

Through **collaboration** between municipalities, regional authorities, schools, businesses, NGOs, and citizens, **EWAsTER has transformed ambitious ideas into real actions with measurable results**. Three pilot actions became the driving force behind this transformation.

Beyond the pilot actions, the project strengthened European cooperation through international **workshops, validation**

**meetings, policy dialogue and participation in major events** such as ECOMONDO 2025 and the Interreg Euro-MED Forum 2026. The project connected local experiences with European ambitions, contributing valuable knowledge to the ongoing transition toward a circular economy.

Most importantly, EWAsTER leaves behind more than project outputs. It leaves a **transferable model, tested methodologies, strengthened partnerships, and empowered communities** ready to continue the journey toward sustainable resource management.

The results clearly demonstrate that when education, innovation, policy and community engagement work together, electronic waste can become a valuable resource rather than an environmental burden.

**EWAsTER may be reaching its final chapter, but its impact is only beginning!**

EWAsTER project team

## EWAsTER by the Numbers: A Legacy of Impact



**3,000+**

Students engaged



**60+**

Schools involved



**1,200+**

Family members reached



**190+**

Teachers mobilized



**3,100 kg**

E-waste collected



**20**

Businesses supported



**18**

New jobs created



**1,500 kg**

Additional e-waste  
prevented



**5 tons**

CO<sub>2</sub> emissions avoided



**8**  
countries

Working together  
for circularity

Across borders.  
Across sectors.  
For a circular Europe.

EWAsTER unites communities, institutions  
and businesses to transform e-waste  
challenges into sustainable solutions.





## Pilot Action Spotlight #1

### WEEE BEHAVE


Empowering Europe's Next  
Generation for Sustainable  
E-Waste Solutions

Focus on:

- schools
- competitions
- family involvement

31 March 2026 marked the triumphant conclusion of the WEEE BEHAVE pilot – a landmark joint initiative uniting five European institutions in the fight against harmful e-waste practices. Spearheaded by Aradippou Municipality (Cyprus), Municipality of Rethymno (Greece), UBBSLA (Bulgaria), UCPB (Italy), and RSU Málaga (Spain), this collaborative effort has redefined how we address electronic waste through transformative education and active community involvement.

With an impressive track record of success, WEEE BEHAVE has reached over 3,000 young learners (ages 6–12) from more than 60 schools, alongside the enthusiastic participation of 1,200 family members and 190 committed teachers. Together, they collected over 3,100 kg of discarded electronics, proving that even small actions can spark big changes.



*"This project has been eye-opening for my students", shares **Mrs. Mirena Georgieva**, a teacher from Varna region, Bulgaria. "They now understand the importance of recycling and are eager to share what they've learned with their families. It's wonderful to see them take ownership of such a vital issue."*

At its core, the pilot focused on cultivating sustainable behaviors from an early age, using interactive workshops, creative competitions, and engaging games to instill lifelong habits around proper e-waste disposal. This forward-thinking approach not only bridged critical awareness gaps but also forged robust foundations for scalable, data-informed interventions.

As WEEE BEHAVE evolves, its mission remains steadfast: to transform awareness into action, nurture sustainable habits, and empower generations to come to champion a greener, more environmentally conscious tomorrow.



## Pilot Action

## Spotlight #2

## WEEE REUSE

From Waste to Work: Creates green jobs and social value

Focus on:

- circular business models
- social enterprises
- vulnerable groups
- CSR

The EWASTER project’s WEEE REUSE pilot action has successfully concluded, demonstrating the power of circular economy principles to drive both environmental and social progress. Implemented collaboratively by partners in Slovenia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina, the pilot tested innovative business models integrating reuse of electronic and plastic waste with social inclusion and job creation.

Key achievements include supporting 20 businesses—spanning social enterprises, NGOs, SMEs, and craft sectors—to adopt reuse-oriented practices. This led to the creation of 18 new jobs and the support of over 20 existing ones, particularly benefiting vulnerable groups such as persons with disabilities and marginalized communities. Strong stakeholder engagement fostered collaboration between the private sector, social enterprises, NGOs, and public institutions, while also promoting corporate social responsibility (CSR) measures.

The pilot revealed significant potential for reuse in diverse sectors, especially creative industries like souvenir, handicraft, and jewelry production. By linking sustainable waste management with inclusive employment strategies, WEEE REUSE has shown how circular economy approaches can build more resilient and equitable local economies.

With its adaptable framework and valuable insights gained through peer reviews and transnational knowledge exchange, the pilot provides a strong foundation for scaling up inclusive circular economy models and informing future policy development across Europe.

**“Circular economy is not only about materials—it is about people.”**



## Pilot Action Spotlight #3

### WEEE PROCURE

Giving Electronics a Second Life

Focus on:

- reused devices
- avoided emissions
- cost savings

The WEEE PROCURE action, implemented by the Union of Bulgarian Black Sea Local Authorities (UBBSLA) and Italy's Marche Region, set out to test an “eco-renting” model for IT equipment—offering users up-to-date hardware while keeping devices in service through maintenance, refurbishment and resale. Early on, however, legal, administrative and technical constraints in the two participating regions forced a pivot toward locally viable circular pathways.

#### Marche Region (Italy)

##### Reuse & Refurbishment Model

Public bodies now collect decommissioned IT assets, assess them, and forward the devices to a network of technical institutes, repair workshops and reuse centres. Refurbished units are redistributed to schools, NGOs and citizens, extending product lifespans, closing the digital-divide and creating training opportunities for technicians. The approach has been codified in the region's Waste Prevention Programme, guaranteeing policy-level support.

#### Varna Region (Bulgaria)

##### Digital Exchange Platform

Because Bulgarian public-procurement law does not accommodate eco-renting, UBBSLA built “TechSwap,” an online marketplace that matches surplus or end-of-life devices with organisations or individuals needing them. The platform handles data-security, ownership and liability issues, enabling legally compliant swapping, reuse and recycling across municipalities, businesses and the public.

The pilot proves that circular solutions for e-waste can be tailored to regional realities without abandoning the eco-renting ambition. Structured reuse systems and digital exchange platforms both deliver measurable environmental, economic and social benefits while respecting existing legal frameworks. Their modular design—leveraging public ICT inventories and technical-school capacities—makes them readily transferable to other European territories facing similar constraints. The WEEE PROCURE experience demonstrates that flexibility, cross-sector collaboration, and local adaptation are the keys to turning e-waste into opportunity for communities and the planet.

## European Cooperation in Action

# From Rethymno to Rome: Building Mediterranean Partnerships

## EWASTER Featured at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Interreg Euro-MED Italy Forum – May 15, 2026, Rome

The project was showcased by the Marche Region at the 2nd Interreg Euro-MED Italy Forum, held at the FH55 Grand Hotel Palatino in Rome. Organized by the Italian National Contact Point for the Euro-MED Programme, the forum gathered regional authorities, project partners, and stakeholders to turn ideas into concrete actions through interactive workshops and panel discussions.

### Key Highlights

The forum increased EWASTER's visibility within the Mediterranean cooperation ecosystem and reaffirmed its commitment to cross-border partnership. By presenting a flexible, region-specific model for reusing WEEE, EWASTER demonstrated how circular-economy practices can be integrated into public procurement, policy frameworks, and local innovation networks. Participation in the forum strengthened partnerships, opened new pathways for knowledge transfer, and positioned EWASTER as a catalyst for a more sustainable and resilient Mediterranean future.

## 5th EWASTER Validation Workshop – Rethymno, Crete (21–22 April 2026)

The fifth validation workshop of the EWASTER project, hosted by the Municipality of Rethymno, brought together partners, local authorities, and experts to consolidate local actions into a broader European impact. The hybrid event opened with remarks from Deputy Mayor for Environment, Circular Economy, and Quality of Life of the Municipality of Rethymno - Stelios Spanoudakis and PACT Executive President Soumodip Sarkar, emphasizing the importance of EU cooperation in tackling electronic-waste challenges. Partners reviewed activities, exchanged experiences on pilot implementation and outcomes across regions. Contributions from the Solid Waste Management Center of Chania further reinforced the importance of cooperation between municipalities and technical bodies. Overall, the event strengthened cross-border collaboration, showcased tangible local results, and reinforced EWASTER's roadmap toward a circular, EU-wide approach to WEEE management.



## Athens Hosts MED Innovation Summit 2026

The Mediterranean is not only confronted with global challenges — it is rapidly emerging as a hub of collaboration, innovation, and collective action for a sustainable future.

We are proud to see EWAsTER contributing to this important dialogue at the MED Innovation Summit 2026, where leaders, innovators, researchers, and changemakers are coming together to accelerate the green transition, strengthen climate resilience, and advance sustainability across the region.

Prof. Soumodip Sarkar, Executive President of PACT, took part in the panel “Economies of Regeneration: Redesigning Growth for a Sustainable Future”, sharing insights on how new economic models can drive long-term positive impact.



**MED Innovation Summit 2026**

Panel III: Economies of Regeneration: Redesigning Growth for a Sustainable Future

Prof. Soumodip Sarkar, Executive President of PACT and representative of the eWAsTER Project, joined the panel “Economies of Regeneration: Redesigning Growth for a Sustainable Future”

**A big thank you to our eWAsTER representatives driving this mission forward:**

- Prof. Soumodip Sarkar  
Executive President of PACT
- Mrs. Mariana Ivanova  
CEO of UBBSLA
- Vasileios Myriokefalitakis  
Rethymno Municipality
- Mr. Stelios Spanoudakus  
Deputy Mayor of the Rethymno Municipality

The Euro-MED Innovation Summit 2026, held within the Circle the Med Forum, brought together a broad coalition of policymakers, researchers, innovators, and EU-funded projects to accelerate the Mediterranean’s green and digital transition. Far beyond a policy dialogue, the Summit showcased concrete results from ongoing Euro-MED cooperation, demonstrating how innovation is increasingly being translated into practical solutions across territories.

A recurring message throughout the event was the repositioning of the Mediterranean as a strategic space for innovation and climate action. While the region faces increasing environmental pressures, it is also emerging as a testing ground for new governance models, technologies, and cooperation frameworks.

## Special Feature

## Circularity comes alive at **ECOMONDO 2025**

*The EWASTER project was featured in the official programme of Europe's leading green technology fair — the 28<sup>th</sup> edition of ECOMONDO in Rimini. The leading international event in Europe and the Mediterranean basin for the green, blue and circular economies, organized by Italian Exhibition Group (IEG), opened on 4<sup>th</sup> of November with more than 1,700 exhibitors in attendance, of which 18% foreign, 380 hosted buyers from 66 countries, over 30 official delegations and about 90 international industry associations.*

Thanks to the Marche Region, the project had an exhibition stand as well as a seminar was held at Tulipano Room Hal B6 dedicated to promote the transitions to a circular and recourse efficiency economy creating a sustainable model for WEEE, prevention e-waste from polluting Mediterranean waters.

Chaired by Lorenzo Federiconi and Massimo Sbriscia on behalf of Marche Region, the seminar brought together stakeholders, policy makers, opinion leaders, local authorities, research bodies and institutions, etc.

The second day of the fair was planned as study visits, exploring real-world examples of circular economy and sustainable waste management across the Marche Region. Partners experienced something absolutely unforgettable — a meeting with the extraordinary Italian music group, they build their instruments from recycled materials and everyday objects. Their motto says it all: “Don’t throw away anything. Just PLAY IT!” This encounter reminded us that creativity has no limits — and that sustainability can be playful, artistic, and inspiring.

### Two days takeaway?

Circularity isn't just a concept — it's hands-on, local, educational, and creative!



## Looking Beyond EWAsTER

# CIRCULAR ECONOMY IN ACTION

Big steps forward for WEEE compliance,  
collection and investment in Europe



## Europe's circular economy momentum is growing

Europe's circular economy transition is gaining momentum, with new developments in electronic waste management, recycling compliance, and investment policy highlighting the growing need for coordinated sector-wide action. Recent initiatives demonstrate how regulation, education, and finance are increasingly aligning to strengthen Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) systems across the EU.

A key development comes from Portugal, where global marketplace Temu has signed an agreement with Electrão to support compliance with Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) obligations for packaging, batteries, and WEEE. The partnership integrates marketplace sellers into Portugal's established recycling infrastructure and improves consumer access to collection services through the Onde Reciclar platform. This initiative represents an important step in addressing challenges linked to online trade, unregistered imports, and informal waste flows, with Temu now engaged in over 50 similar agreements across the EU.

In parallel, the long-running Escola Electrão programme continues to demonstrate the impact of education-based collection systems. In its 15th edition, the initiative has already collected over 306 tonnes of waste across nearly 700 schools in Portugal, combining environmental education with practical recycling activities. With a cumulative total of around 7,500 tonnes collected, it stands as one of Europe's most successful school-based circular economy initiatives, showing how behavioural approaches can significantly strengthen WEEE recovery.

Together, these developments underline the importance of territorial initiatives such as eWAsTER in bridging Europe's implementation gap through pilot actions, stakeholder engagement, and regional cooperation. They reinforce the need for integrated approaches involving institutions, businesses, schools, and citizens to accelerate the transition toward a more circular and resource-efficient Europe.

## What Happens Next?

As EWAsTER reaches its conclusion, the work does not stop here. Over the past years, partners have tested innovative pilot actions, engaged thousands of citizens, supported businesses and public authorities, and developed practical solutions that can be replicated far beyond the project's lifetime.

The end of EWAsTER is not the end of the journey. The project's pilots, partnerships and lessons learned provide a foundation for future action across Europe. By empowering citizens, supporting businesses, and promoting circular innovation, EWAsTER has shown that sustainable e-waste management is achievable when communities work together.

Now, we invite you to discover the full results, exchange experiences with experts and practitioners, and become part of the next chapter of the circular economy transition.

# Join the Final Project Conference



**EWAsTER** | **Interreg Euro-MED** | Co-funded by the European Union

## EWAsTER Final Project Conference

Varna, Bulgaria | 14 July 2026

Hosted by UBBSLA

This final gathering will bring together regions, cities, experts, stakeholders, and innovators to exchange knowledge and explore solutions for preventing e-waste from polluting MED water by turning waste into a resource.

The Journey Continues: Join Us in Varna and Discover the Future of EWAsTER









From Project Results to Lasting Impact  
Turning E-Waste into Opportunity

 **14 July 2026**

 **Varna, Bulgaria**

Hosted by the Union of Bulgarian Black Sea Local Authorities (UBBSLA), the Final Project Conference will bring together regional authorities, municipalities, experts, businesses, researchers, civil society organisations and environmental stakeholders from across Europe.


The event will showcase the project's achievements and explore practical solutions for preventing electronic waste from polluting Mediterranean waters while promoting innovative circular economy approaches.

|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
|  <p><b>EVENT DATE &amp; PROGRAMME</b></p> <p><b>14 July 2026</b><br/>– Full Working Day</p> <p> Results Sharing &amp; Exchange of Experience Session</p> |  <p><b>VENUE</b></p> <p>The event will take place at:<br/><b>Hotel Chernomorec</b><br/>Located in the city center of Varna, offering convenient access to key attractions and the seaside.</p>  |  <p><b>PARTICIPATION</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Participation is free of charge</li> <li> Lunch is included</li> <li> Seats are limited, early registration is recommended</li> </ul> |
|--|---|--|

 Please register by **10 July 2026:**



 We look forward to welcoming you to Varna for this important milestone event, where we will reflect on project achievements, share valuable insights, and jointly explore solutions for preventing e-waste pollution in the Mediterranean and promoting circular approaches that turn electronic waste into a valuable resource.

 More detailed information and agenda updates will be shared soon.



### Duration

01/2024 - 09/2026



### Total budget

2,046,650.00 €



### Interreg Funds

1.637.320 €

### Project partners

10 partners and 14 associated, in tandems of technical and political bodies, covering 8 countries among MED region – Portugal, Spain, Greece, Italy, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria and Cyprus

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## WHO WE ARE?

Lead partner

- Alentejo Science and Technology Park (PACT), Portugal

Project partners

- Municipality of Rethymno, Greece
- Marche Region, Italy
- Environmental Research Institute (ORZ), Slovenia
- Municipality of Neum, Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Union of Bulgarian Black Sea Local Authorities (UBBSLA), Bulgaria
- Union of the Municipalities Pian del Bruscolo (UCPB), Italy
- Provincial Waste Consortium of Malaga (RSU-Malaga), Spain
- Association LiNK Entrepreneurial Center, Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Aradippou Municipality, Cyprus

## WHAT WE DO?

EWAsTER is a transnational project aiming to promote local and regional policies for better e-waste management, to reduce e-waste environmental damage in the selected areas, while promoting new innovative eco-business models based on the conversion of the currently linear electrical and electronic (E&E) sector into a sustainable circular model.

## WHAT WE ACHIEVE?

- Transnational Methodology for MED prevention and management of e-waste
- 8 new Action Plans for e-waste management
- Joint testing of 3 pre-identified innovative solutions
- Deployment of solutions for Transnational e-waste prevention and management
- Promoting the transition to a circular and resource efficient economy!



EWAsTER

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## Contacts



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Every action counts. Every partnership matters.  
Together, we are creating a circular future.

Euro-MED0200699 EWAsTER

Project co-funded by European Union, European Regional Development fund (ERDF)  
and by National Funds of partners.

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EWAsTER FINAL NEWSLETTER

# FROM E-WASTE TO OPPORTUNITY



Building a Circular Future  
Across the Mediterranean

Three years of **cooperation, innovation** and **local action** to **prevent e-waste** from polluting our seas and turn waste into environmental, social and economic **value**.

Together, we are turning e-waste into *opportunity* for people, communities and the planet.



**EDUCATE**  
Young minds, big change



**REUSE**  
From waste to work

**INNOVATE**  
Smart solutions for a circular future

**3,000+**  
Students engaged

**60+**  
Schools involved

**20**  
Businesses supported

**18**  
New jobs created

**4,600+ kg**  
E-waste collected/prevented

**5 tons**  
CO<sub>2</sub> emissions avoided

**SPECIAL INVITATION**  
**EWAsTER FINAL CONFERENCE**

14 JULY 2026 | VARNA, BULGARIA

Join us for a full day of results, exchange, innovation and solutions for a cleaner Mediterranean and a *circular future!*

EUROPEAN COOPERATION  
Stronger together

CIRCULAR SOLUTIONS  
For a sustainable future

LOCAL ACTION  
Global impact

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