

Newsletter N. 4 August 2026

Project N.: 101147501

ECO-CHAMPIONS

A European Journey Towards More Sustainable Communities

A Project That Leaves a Lasting Impact

After two years of international cooperation, **ECO-CHAMPIONS** has come to an end, leaving behind a valuable legacy of **knowledge, good practices and active participation.**

Through events, awareness-raising campaigns and local initiatives, the project engaged citizens, associations, public authorities and stakeholders across the five partner countries, promoting a more sustainable and inclusive approach to waste management.



Let's look back at the project's final milestones, celebrating the results achieved and the contribution of everyone who helped make this European journey possible.

ECO FESTIVAL IN GREECE: Food Bank in Patras

When Food Recovery Becomes an Act of Community!

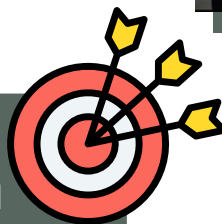
The **Eco-Challenges** organised by **Co2gether** in Patras and in all the region of Western Greece demonstrated how environmental sustainability and social inclusion can go hand in hand. Held in two phases during **May and June 2026**, the activities engaged citizens, volunteers and vulnerable groups—including older people, people with disabilities and detainees—promoting a participatory approach to sustainable waste management, with a **total of 274 participants**.

Through practical workshops, food rescue activities and circular economy initiatives, participants explored concrete solutions to reduce waste and promote the reuse of materials.



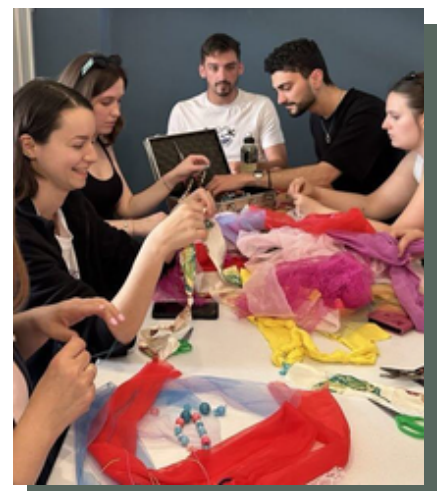
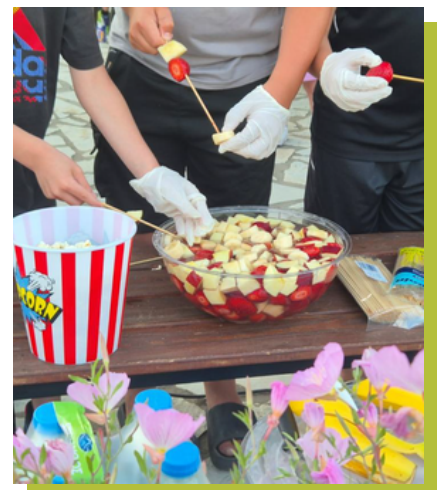
Main objectives

- To promote intergenerational activities and activities on waste management
- To create community building opportunities with local Food Banks, environmental NGOs and public authorities
- To ensure inclusivity and accessibility in all the activities
- To empower women providing them with the knowledge and tools to make sustainable choices



FOOD BANK ACTIVITIES IN PATRAS:

- Upcycling workshops using discarded materials and old jewellery;
- Zero-Waste Challenge using rescued food;
- Creation of artwork and collages from old newspapers and magazines;
- Educational seminar on recycling and reusing sanitary materials and medicines;
- Food collection, sorting and repackaging activities;
- Women's Food Rescue Programme carried out in cooperation with supermarkets and local grocery stores;
- Eco-Cinema and inclusive activities for older people and people with disabilities;
- Workshops on making reusable beeswax wraps and cloth napkins.



THE VOICE OF CITIZENS: Online Voting and European Petition

To actively engage citizens, **ECO-CHAMPIONS** launched a European online voting campaign and petition, inviting participants to identify the actions they considered most effective for improving waste management.

Conducted through an online platform accessible in all partner countries, the consultation gathered ideas and shared priorities from each country. The results were later presented during a European online event held on 29 May, bringing together project partners and local communities.



The most popular practices confirmed the importance of waste prevention, reuse, recycling and collaboration between citizens, institutions and local organisations, helping shape the project's final recommendations!

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS SELECTED BY CITIZENS

Based on the preferences expressed by citizens in Belgium, Greece, Italy, Kosovo and Spain, it was possible to identify a number of **shared priorities** for promoting more effective and sustainable waste management.

While reflecting the specific needs of each local context, the selected recommendations converge around **five key themes**, representing a shared vision of the actions that should be strengthened at both local and European level.



Environmental education and awareness



Strengthening separate waste collection and
waste management services



Promoting recycling, reuse and composting



Encouraging the active involvement of
citizens and local communities



Introducing clearer regulations and
incentives for sustainable behaviours



4th TRANSNATIONAL PROJECT MEETING



The **4th Transnational Project Meeting** brought the partners together in Patras, Greece, to review the results achieved and share the latest activities carried out within the **ECO-CHAMPIONS** project. Hosted by **Co2gether**, the meeting also offered an opportunity to enjoy informal moments together, further strengthening the relationships built over two years of collaboration.



The first day opened with a hands-on workshop organised by **Co2gether** at its premises as part of the **Eco-Challenges**.

By creating **beeswax wraps** and **reusable cloth napkins**, the partners experienced a simple yet effective alternative to single-use plastic, demonstrating how small everyday actions can make a tangible contribution to waste reduction.



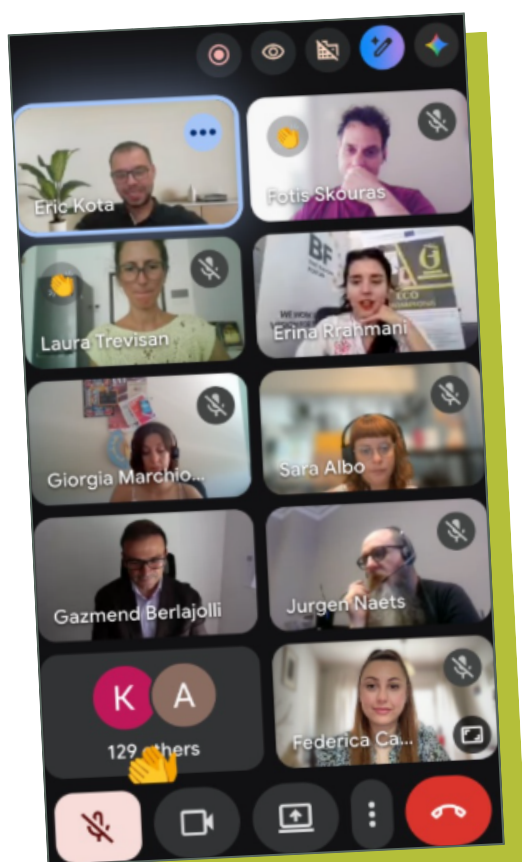
The partnership then gathered together to review the **ECO-CHAMPIONS** journey, share the results achieved and define the final organisational and operational aspects ahead of the project's conclusion.

The following day, the project came to a close with the final event hosted in the **community of Chalandritsa**, providing an important opportunity for dialogue with citizens, stakeholders and local representatives. During the event, the project's results were presented and participants reflected on the value of European cooperation in promoting more sustainable waste management.

The evening concluded in a warm and friendly atmosphere, with an opportunity to discover **local traditions through traditional Greek cuisine and folk dances**, making the partners' final farewell even more meaningful.



CELEBRATING THOSE WHO MAKE A DIFFERENCE: The ECO-CHAMPIONS Online Ceremony



The **ECO-CHAMPIONS Online Ceremony** marked the official conclusion of the project, bringing together participants from the partner countries—**Belgium, Greece, Italy, Kosovo** and **Spain**—to share the results achieved and celebrate the contribution of the communities involved.

During the ceremony, the partners presented some of the most significant experiences developed in their respective countries, highlighting **different approaches and good practices for more sustainable waste management**.

The event concluded with the **presentation of the ECO-CHAMPIONS Digital Badges**, recognising the commitment of citizens, volunteers, associations and organisations that distinguished themselves through their contribution to promoting sustainability.



ECO CHAMPION

To All of You
European Union
REGISTERED PARTICIPANT

PARTICIPATION NUMBERS:

 Italy

65 participants

 Belgium

98 participants

 Spain

49 participants

 Greece

61 participants

 Kosovo

55 participants

Total attendees at the ceremony: 328 participants



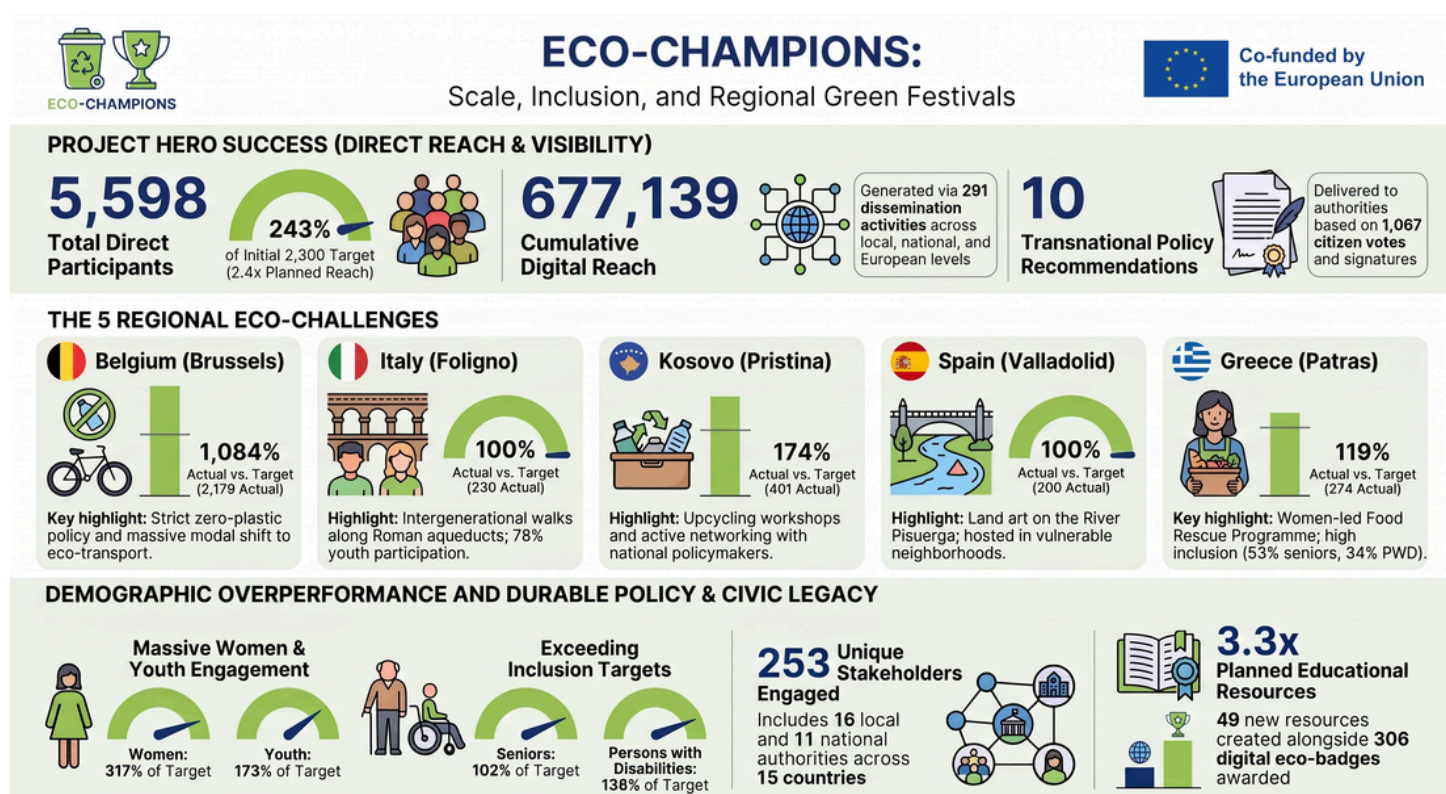
Watch the ceremony online:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xceOs5cZ71M>

ECO-CHAMPIONS IN NUMBERS

After two years of activities, **ECO-CHAMPIONS** leaves a **tangible impact across the territories involved**, thanks to the participation of citizens, organisations, institutions and local stakeholders. From the regional Eco-Challenges and awareness-raising activities to policy recommendations and newly developed resources, the project has turned European cooperation into tangible results.

The figures below highlight the scale of this journey and the legacy built together.



THE ECO-CHAMPIONS LEGACY

The online ceremony and the awarding of digital badges **officially conclude the ECO-CHAMPIONS journey**, but its impact will continue through the collaborative networks built, the shared expertise, and the best practices developed throughout the project.

Over these two years, citizens, organizations, and public bodies have helped promote more sustainable and participatory waste management, demonstrating how European cooperation can translate into concrete change for local communities.

Thank you to everyone who has helped make ECO-CHAMPIONS an example of participation, collaboration, and commitment to a more sustainable future!

LET'S KEEP IN TOUCH



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thebalkanforum.org

co2gether.gr

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