

# Champions of waste reduction

February 19 2014, by Ute De Groot

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14 years ago, the region of Lahti in Finland has implemented a model of integrated waste management. As a result the people of Lahti were able to increase their rate of recycling to more than 90%.

Other regions in Europe are motivated by success stories like this one, and are now supported by a team of experts from ECOPOL to implement their new policies.

In Greece, most of the waste of Athens ends up on a giant landfill. Every day more than 5.000 tons are deposited on the Ano Liossia landfill. Waste management experts from ECOPOL have studied how the Greek could learn from the Lahti case taking into account all the local circumstances. The result: the region around Athens is now building four waste utilization plants to increase their recycling rate.

Also the region of Styria in Austria has profited by implementing a [waste management](#) policy from Belgium. In Graz a new type of second-hand shops has recently opened. The idea is simple: used goods like electrical household appliances, clothes, furniture and textiles are collected, sometimes repaired and re-sold. The goods stay in the life cycle. The people benefit not only by the excellent value for money, but also by the generation of new jobs. The region of Styria plans to open at least seven such second-hand shops by 2015, which will then be able to recycle 850 tons of goods in the most economical way – by re-using them.

The European Commission aims to eliminate landfill waste by 2050. The

dissemination of such role models of waste management will become crucial to achieve this goal.

**More information:** [www.ecopol-project.eu/](http://www.ecopol-project.eu/)

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