

# THE ROLE OF PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A MODERN APPROACH TO WASTE MANAGEMENT AT THE MUNICIPAL LEVEL

POLICY PAPER SUMMARY



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Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum Georgian National Platform is an association of local and international non-commercial legal entities registered in Georgia, aiming to promote and implement the goals set by the Joint Declarations of the Prague, Warsaw and Vilnius Eastern Partnership Summits and the EU-Georgia Association Agreement of European Neighborhood Policy and other joint events.

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## Summary

By signing the Association Agreement with the EU, Georgia took the responsibility upon itself to harmonize its waste management system, together with other fields, with EU requirements.

Georgia's Waste Management Code, which entered into the force on January 15, 2015, aims to introduce legal grounds in the field of waste management for carrying out waste prevention, increasing recycling, and processing waste in an environmentally safe manner. However, Georgia's waste management sector must change significantly in the next few years. According to the duties imposed by the AA, the country must establish a waste management system, which will comply with EU requirements.

The National Waste Management Strategy clearly shows Georgia aims at recycling more and preventing waste.

Municipalities are mostly responsible for waste management as from 2019 every municipality will be tasked with waste separation duties, while for 2025 a separation system for paper, plastic, glass and metal waste is to be established. Hence, Georgia's local municipalities, and the entire society, will face significant challenges in the near future.

Successful implementation of a waste separation system is directly linked with the mentality of the population and their active involvement in the process. Therefore, it is important that every municipality raises public awareness on this issue.

A crucial milestone in raising awareness among citizens on waste management issues is educating them on waste prevention and elimination. However, current awareness raising activities are not sufficient, since they do not have an adequate scale, they do not cover every target group or Georgia's entire territory. Lack of information causes the creation of ad-hoc waste dumps and a careless attitude of the population towards waste, which negatively affects the environment and economic development of the Country, namely its tourism industry development.

In general, a waste management policy aims to establish a society which recycles waste. Individuals, and the entire society as a whole, have a major role in the waste management process.

The implementation of modern approaches to waste management at the municipal level, namely the separation of waste at its sources, requires that the population is actively involved in the process. However, the level of public involvement depends directly on the level of education and awareness on this matter.

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The state must take necessary measures to foster new attitudes and approaches towards waste management. The country must create unified system on educating and informing its population on the environment of waste management, which ensures the inclusion of every stakeholder in the process. Namely, the following basic approaches must be implemented:

- Prepare a draft law on Educating and Raising Awareness of the Public on the Environment and adopt it, which will support the creation of a national environmental education system;
- Increase the Environmental Information and Education Center's role by creating regional divisions, which will support the Center to become more operational and deliver more results;
- Support NGO work in the field of environmental education and information, by increasing their role in the process. The NGOs are able to greatly contribute in raising the citizens' awareness and hence, in increasing motivation to implement modern approaches to waste management;
- Implement educational programs for several different stakeholders, ensuring that waste management prevention and recycling is properly understood, seen as the only alternative, and that creative approaches are implemented;
- Utilize the potential of the of educational establishments to their maximum. Namely, creating new MA programs, which will be directed at awareness-raising of the population on the environmental work planning and implementation;
- Improve relations between waste management municipal enterprises, educational establishments and NGOs on waste management awareness-raising and how to plan them jointly;
- Increase the role of (especially local) media to support the implementation of the waste management policy, informing the public with relevant information.

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