

# THE RREUSE INTERNATIONAL NETWORK

## SUPPORTING SOCIAL ENTERPRISES OF CIRCULAR ECONOMY

RREUSE is an International Network representing 850 social enterprises active in re-use, repair and recycling activities. Specialized in the field of the circular economy, they provide inclusive employment, generating social, economic and environmental impacts for their communities



Since 2001, the Network supports the development of social enterprises in the circular economy sector across 26 countries, through innovative policies, partnerships and exchange of best practices.

Main activities of the Network members include: Collection, sorting and redistribution of used textiles and clothing; Collection, repair and re-use of electronics, furniture and bulky items; Re-use of household items such as bric-a-brac, books, toys and paint; Operating second-hand retail outlets; Collection and recycling of paper, cardboard, wood, plastics and metals; Home, community and cooperative composting; Food distribution services and management of food banks.

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Approximately 105,000 employees, trainees and volunteers are engaged in these activities. Through 2.200 shops across the involved countries, the Network reaches 39 million customers, with a sales turnover of 1.125 billion €.



The 2019 RREUSE Report highlights the positive social and environmental impact generated by their re-use, repair and recycling activities. The social enterprises work with 22 different material streams, including furniture, electricals, textiles, books & records, bric-a-brac, toys, bicycles, construction materials, biowaste, vegetable oil, food donations, glass, paper, wood, packaging&plastics, metal scrap, used cartridges, batteries, mattresses and paint, among others.



In 2019, 1.000.000 tonnes of these materials were diverted from landfill and the Network has managed to reach the following impact results:

- 257.000 tonnes of textiles collected, of which 90.000 re-used;
- 305.000 tonnes of electricals collected, of which 20.000 re-used;
- 215.000 tonnes of furniture collected, of which 85.000 re-used;
- 16.000 tonnes of books&records collected, of which 5.500 re-used;
- 32.000 tonnes of Bric-a-brac collected, of which 14.000 re-used.



For the associated social enterprises, the Network represents an important support in terms of technical assistance, exchange of practices and also an instrument to facilitate access to national or international funds or programs supporting circular economy.

The Network is also active in promoting national initiatives and policies oriented to support circular economy activities managed by social economy actors. The Network highlights the value that social economy enterprises bring to the circular economy in terms of job creation and



their crucial role for a just and green transition towards a resilient low-carbon economy, given the activities to curb the use of resources whilst providing local and inclusive employment.

The [Briefing - Job creation in the re-use sector](#), published in April 2021 by the Network, for example, outlines that on average a social enterprise creates 70 jobs per 1,000 tonnes of waste collected with a view of being re-used, highlighting in general the labour-intensive nature of the circular economy, with a special focus on the re-use sector. Data and statistics are presented in order to highlight their great potential of job opportunities when supported by organic public policies and programs.

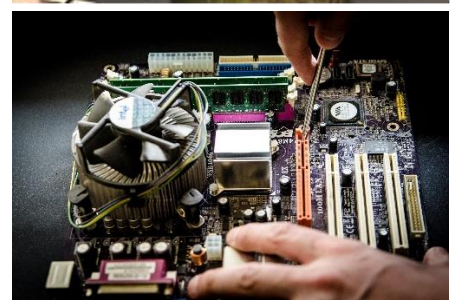
The importance and urgency of developing circular economy approaches to reduce the large quantities of waste produced by our societies and the continuous use of new raw materials have become important current issues. However, the development of this great potential still represents a great challenge, taking into account the complex systems of regulations implemented by the different countries for the waste management and for the access to raw materials by social enterprises. The current modes of industrial production of the main consumer goods also affect the development of this potential. In the different sections of the RREUSE website it is possible to access a wide range of articles and publications that point out these different aspects and the initiatives realized by the Network to achieve its objectives.

RREUSE for example promotes policy frameworks that enhances [cooperation between all the actors of the re-use value chain in order to prevent re-usable goods from being destroyed too early](#). *Re-use Centers and local Networks* could collect these items before they become waste (re-use) or separate these items from the waste stream (preparing for re-use) and give them a new life, whilst simultaneously providing significant employment and training opportunities in the re-use and repair sector. Municipalities, waste management operators and producers should establish partnerships with the social economy actors to generate organic plans for the preparation and reuse of waste activities. The Network informs that in the European Union these waste preparation and reuse systems are implemented in Spain and in the Flanders Region, in Belgium, using these two examples to inspire other countries and policies.

Another important aspect on which the Network is active concerns the problem of the [duration and reparability of the products put on the market](#). Consumer goods are now less durable and repairable than in the past, not only generating serious environmental consequences but at the same time putting at risk the economic viability of re-use and repair organizations. RREUSE acts to influence policies to promote more durable products with the industry, adopting repair-friendly criteria as: durable and easy to repair product design; spare parts availability guaranteed for longer periods and free access to repair service documentation and software for all re-use and repair Centres.

RREUSE is member of the [European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform Coordination Group](#) and in this framework the Network pursues the objectives to expand the contribution of social economy enterprises in re-use, repair and recycling activities, providing quality and inclusive jobs. The Network's initiatives can also influence the [EU Circular Economy Action Plan](#) that is part of the [European Green Deal](#) launched in 2020 by the European Commission.

RREUSE invites other interested organizations and social enterprises [to join the Network](#).



## To know more

[RREUSE website](#)

[RREUSE in Facebook](#)

[RREUSE Publications](#)

[RREUSE 2019 Report](#)

[RREUSE members](#)

[RREUSE Targets](#)

[Guidance for municipalities to develop local re-use strategies](#)

[Position paper on Reduced taxation to support re-use and repair](#)

[Job creation in the re-use sector](#)

[Right to Repair campaign](#)

[RREUSE in Circular Economy Platform News](#)

[EU Circular Economy Action Plan](#)

[European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform](#)

