



**TransWaste**

Formalisation of informal sector activities in collection and transboundary shipment of wastes in and to CEE

# **Deliverable 4.4**

## **Stakeholders standpoints**

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# 1 Introduction

In the first half of the Transwast project a great number of stakeholders was contacted in various ways in all considered countries. In this document an overview is provided of the results of these contacts. The interviews were held with stakeholders mentioned on the stakeholder list (see Deliverable 4.2.1) and were based on the surveys developed in Activity 4.3.1 (see Deliverable 4.3.1 and D4.3.2). However, a fair share of the interviews were conducted with interviewees that are not found on the list by name. They belong to anonymous stakeholder groups, like the informal waste collectors, the Waste Collection Centre workers or the citizens delivering waste. In many of the interviews the developed surveys were not followed step-by-steps, but they rather served as a basis for the conversation. Examples thereof are interviews that were conducted during border controls or at second-hand market visits.

In the following an overview of the numbers of conducted interviews is provided, following by a description of the results for the single countries.

**Table 1.1. Overview of conducted interviews with identified stakeholders in the 5 project countries**

Stakeholder	AT	HU	SK	D	PL
WCC-workers/managers	69	5	22	274	1
WCC-visitors	7	55	131	23	
WCC-waste pickers	83		75	26	
Metal shop-owners					29
Metal shop-waste pickers					83
Authorities-local	4	2	1		24
Authorities-regional/national	3+2	95	2	13	3
Researchers-universities		1			
WM companies/associations	64+3	34	7	52	14
Used items-market stands	3	40			123
Used items-transporters		40			10
Governmental organisations		2	8		6
Non governmental organisations	2	5			5
Other	13				1
<b>Total</b>	<b>251</b>	<b>248</b>	<b>246</b>	<b>388</b>	<b>299</b>

In the table above it can be clearly seen, that in all partner countries a large number of interviews was conducted. In the 'generating' countries Germany and Austria a strong focus was laid on the Waste Collection Centres. To a lesser extend this is also true for Hungary. The 'receiving' countries (Hungary, Slovakia and Poland) on the other hand show a stronger focus on the informal collection of used items and metals, since the latter type of informal collection is much more present there. Also the people directly involved in the transporting and trading of the informally collected waste are mainly met in these latter countries.

Relevant authorities have been spoken to in all countries. Due to differences in authority allocation in waste management related issues the type of contacted authorities varies from country to country (e.g. in German speaking countries waste management associations play an important role (here listed under WM companies), whereas in other countries this is less the case).

Governmental and non-governmental organisations and especially as research institutions have been contacted to a lesser content. However, though the Expert Conference that was organised in Vienna in November 2010 contacts were made and kept and knowledge was exchanged with the international research community on the topic of informal collection.

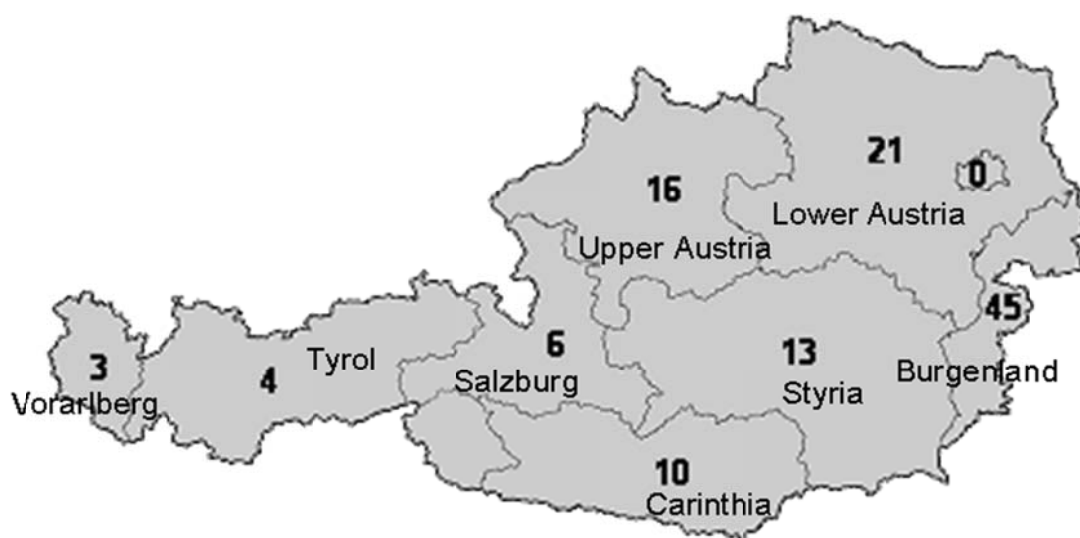
In the following chapters the results of the stakeholder consultations is provided for every Transwaste partner country. Thereby a structure is followed that for each relevant stakeholder or stakeholder group first, if available, quantified information is provided. This is followed by an overview of the discussed problems and difficulties, with finally the suggested solutions and formalisation ideas.



## 2 Austria

### 2.1 Introduction

At the beginning of the project the considered area of interviews in Austria was focused on the Eastern part of Austria as this part is most affected from informal waste collection activities. Yet, as investigations showed that the Western part of Austria is also affected, it was decided to involve also stakeholders coming from this part to receive a complete picture of the status quo. Figure 2.1 shows the number of municipalities in each province of Austria which were visited for carrying out interviews and observations. At these visits 69 staff from waste collection centres (WCC), 83 informal waste collectors and occasionally majors or representatives of the municipality (in total 8 interviews) and also 7 inhabitants were interviewed.



**Figure 2.1: Number of municipalities in each province of Austria which were visited for collecting information (in total 110)**

In addition to the interviews carried out at so called field visits, representatives from environmental ministries were interviewed by phone and by personal meetings and also from regional governments (2 interviews with people from ministry and 3 with regional governments of Salzburg, Lower Austria and Vorarlberg). Two local environmental authorities were also interviewed (MA 48 in Vienna and one in Vorarlberg).

Mostly waste management associations (WMA) are in charge of the collection of bulky waste, WEEE and metals in Austria and sometimes also operate the WCC. Such WMAs were interviewed as well, usually by e-mail. 63 WMAs from in total 92 gave information on our issues. Three waste management companies were also interviewed (Saubermacher, Umweltdienst Burgenland, Stipitz Burgenland).

Additionally two local social organisations were interviewed (Roma-Verein in Oberwart, Sarközy). They are dealing with Roma integration in Austria.

Three used-item market were visited (MA48 Basar in Vienna, flea market next to WCC in Ried im Innkreis, flea market in Oberwart) and interviews were carried out there. 5 clients at these used-item markets were interviewed.

## 2.2 Waste management associations (WMA)

### 2.2.1 Facts and figures

As mentioned before 63 WMAs from in total 92 replied to our inquiries on information for informal waste collection activities in their area of responsibility. Most of them operate the collection system via bring system. Rarely they still use kerbside system in still some remote areas. Only one WMA used the kerbside system for its whole area of responsibility.

### 2.2.2 Problems and difficulties

The following problems and difficulties reported from WMAs were identified; sometimes they also correspond with the topics mentioned from workers at WCC:

#### **Illegal disposal:**

Sorted items are disposed of illegally whereby the municipality has costs with cleaning ups. It is seen more problematic that items are illegally disposed of at motorways, which cause money and subsequently emissions to the environment. An association in Tyrol reported also that it's a problem that collected items are sighted and sorted in unseen places like parking sites or parking sites at motorways. The items which are not wanted are left at those sites and need to be disposed by affected municipalities or operators from motorways. It was determined that many WEEE were left at parking sites from ASFINAG<sup>1</sup> in Carinthia. The reason for that was that behind the buildings at those sites power points of 220 V are installed. These power points were used to try WEEE. WEEE which didn't function anymore was left at the parking site.

#### **Loss of money (cherry-picking):**

loss of money because of taken valuable materials (e.g. metals, rims, cables). It was also reported that sometimes cables of WEEE are missing. There are contracts with the waste disposal company that machines don't need to be separated from pollutants. The entire machines must be delivered with all its cables and motors. The problem is that some informal collectors only take valuable items, which give revenues. The rest stays at the responsibility of the association. The association has a contingent liability, which means they have to collect waste every time even if the revenues are low.

#### **Costs:**

Costs arise for the municipality or the WMA from clearing ups, when informal collectors rummage through containers or through prepared bulky waste at kerbsides or when unwanted items are disposed of improperly. There are also costs of repairing broken containers or storage boxes or fences.

#### **Tricky flyer distribution:**

In one district in Upper Austria problems with waste collectors were reported. They say that they collect items for the daily usage, but no waste. Consequently the waste collectors know how to avoid legal issues, as they officially don't carry waste or bulky waste. The collectors distribute flyers usually at Fridays after lunch time and collect the items on Monday. By this time period, it is impossible that the municipality or the waste management association can react and set counteractive measures. The waste collections because of flyers can't be easily prevented, because they take place in a small scope (in small and remote areas) so that whether police nor municipality get to know.

#### **Complaints from residents:**

<sup>1</sup> ASFINAG plans, finances, builds, maintains, operates and charges Austrian motorways.

Main problem is that the inhabitants complain why they have to pay for the disposal when informal waste collectors are coming and take the items for free. Complaints arise also when collectors took accidentally first aid boxes, warning triangle or spare tyres from car boots. This led to disputes among residents and waste collectors. Other complaints are when waste collectors ring at houses and ask for more materials and items.

**Notification can't be followed:**

For a notification by law the time, place and the person who acts against the law has to be recorded. This is often not possible, reported one WMA. In addition when notification can be given, the persons already left to a foreign country again or are out of money. There is no commitment with Hungary for administrative penalty. Then notifications can't be followed and are useless.

**Unknown disposal:**

The other disadvantage is that materials are taken out of the waste cycle and the disposition is unknown

**Ecological problems:**

Ecological problems because of improper handling of waste and littering appear. Hazardous items, like accumulators (because of the lead), are collected and are recycled improperly. Environmental problems occurred when accumulators were dismantled so that the acid was removed and only the lead was taken. Yet, also inhabitants did this kind of dismantling of accumulators.

**Not taken waste:**

It was reported that items which are prepared for informal collectors doing kerbside collections are sometimes not taken or only partly taken. Then the responsible WMA gets complaints, saying that it wasn't picked up. Some inhabitants think that these collections are organised from the waste management association.

**Accidents:**

Risk of injury for informal collectors inside of waste collection centres and consequential problems with missing working permissions and missing Austrian accident insurances was reported by WMAs. It was also reported from accidents with informal collectors. In one municipality in Burgenland it was for example reported that five or six years ago waste collectors were allowed to go inside of the WCC in that municipality, but than an accident happened and one collector was injured. Since that time they are not allowed to go inside anymore.

## 2.2.3 Solutions and ideas

**Information to public:**

Some associations published information on the informal collections with flyers und inform the inhabitants that it is illegal. The situation was improved by this way. When waste collectors appear they are rigorously reported. One waste management association in Lower Austria has introduced in 2008 a regulation which is saying that it is forbidden to take wastes out of the waste collection centre. Since that time the number of waste collectors decreased in this district. The inhabitants in one district in Salzburg where informed by the municipalities in certain newspapers that fines can occur when waste is given to informal collectors. The residents contact immediately the residential service if flyers appear, as it is known from local newspapers that these acts are illegal. Therefore big problems can be avoided. Yet, waste collectors appear regularly at WCC. A poster was also put on the notice board in front of some WCC saying that the stay inside of the site is only for authorised or delivering persons allowed.



The consequence is that they try to catch residents outside of the WCC and stop them for asking for some items.

### **Change of collection system:**

Kerbside collections shall be changed to bring system in the near future. In one district of lower Austria the bulky waste collection changed this year from kerbside to bring system. Foreign waste collectors don't appear until now at WCC. One WMA in Tyrol also reported that the collection of bulky wastes changed from kerbside system to bring system. Since this change there are no problems with waste collectors anymore. Positive effects had also the disposal of WEEE at WCC for free. The illegal disposals decreased. In Carinthia it was also reported that the number of informal waste collectors decreased as the bulky waste collection system changed from kerbside to bring system. Informal waste collection activities still occur in very remote areas in municipalities with 600 to 8.000 inhabitants as it is the case in Carinthia.

### **Notifying vehicles:**

Vehicles, which are caught during collections, were notified by one WMA in Lower Austria. The notifications were sent to authorities in Hungary, Slovakia and Austria and to environmental ministry as well as interior ministry. Foreign authorities' answer was that they would help Austrian authorities by solving this problem, but own initiatives don't exist. Authorities also said that they will give information for such waste collectors on their homepages. Other answers from authorities are also not problem solving. Inhabitants were requested to notify anonymously.

### **Using police force:**

In some regions no problems occur with informal waste collectors. When flyers appear, the inhabitants inform immediately the police. Inhabitants are sensibilised, because of burglaries and thefts. The police are then driving through the area, where flyers are distributed and on the specific date when the informal collection was announced. One WMA in Upper Austria reported that the presence of waste collectors has decreased due to actions of the staff together with the police. Another example shows one specific district in Upper Austria where collectors distributing flyers don't appear. When they come to distribute flyers they are asked by the police if they have an authorisation for collecting wastes. As they usually don't have an authorisation, they need to leave.

### **Execute complaints:**

There are no problems concerning informal waste collectors in the district. If the municipality is informed when collectors are driving around, they execute a complaint.

Take pictures:

One responsibilities of a WMA reported that he took pictures from the licence plate numbers of the cars of the collectors waiting in front of the WCC. Thereupon the collectors got scared and left the place.

### **Fines:**

A district administrative authority in Salzburg reported that they declared a fine for the collection by informal waste collectors and for inhabitants which provide items for them.

### **Training staff:**

Staff from WCC is informed during trainings to ban waste collectors from the site. If this doesn't work, they need to contact the police.

### **Signs:**

The municipalities reacted with putting up a note saying that collecting is forbidden with a penalty of € 360. Since that sign has been issued there have been no informal collectors at the WCC anymore. Also parking prohibition signs were installed in many municipalities in Burgenland and Lower Austria in front of WCC to ban collectors.



Consequent banning:

Some municipalities reported that they can keep the collectors away, if they consequently tell them to go.

**Security service:**

One municipality in Burgenland introduced a security service which bans the informal collectors. In another municipality in Upper Austria security service was introduced so that the handover of useable items can happen organised.

**Change of containers:**

Thefts or burglaries at WCC randomly occur. One WCC reported that they have containers with a ramp for the unloading of wastes. It is dangerous and difficult for informal collectors to get waste out of the containers. That is why they have no thefts. In former times waste was stored in open boxes. Then there were thefts. But the reconstruction was not only done because of the thefts, but more for the collection vehicles, which can more easily unload waste from ramps.

## 2.2.4 Conclusion

WMAs mostly dislike the situation of informal waste collections mostly because of the financial losses and the complaints of the residents caused by littering. Solutions for problem solving were already introduced by WMAs, but often unsuccessfully (e.g notifying vehicles, signs etc.). They are keen on finding more solutions for the problem. Generally the attitude of the WMAs at the beginning of the project was rather negative to informal collectors. They wanted to ban informal activities. Yet, in the course of discussions with some WMAs the benefits of integrating informal collectors were determined. Formalisation options are now willing to find.

## 2.3 WCC-workers/managers

### 2.3.1 Facts and figures

Facts and figures from interviews with workers and WCC managers are presented in Deliverable 3.1.1.

### 2.3.2 Problems and difficulties

The following problems and difficulties reported from workers at WCC were identified; sometimes they also correspond with the topics mentioned from WMAs:

**Obstruction of work and traffic:**

In addition they walk inside the centre and sometimes there are so many that the traffic inside the center gets problematic. Harassment of Styrian citizens in their daily delivering business in front of or inside waste collection centres was also reported. Traffic jams occur in front of WCC when informal collectors stop the cars to look for useable items.

**Disarrangement:**

The problem is that the waste collectors rummage through the bulky waste containers and create therefore disarrangement. Kerbside collections come together with pollution on streets and kerbs, because non useable items are left. At parking areas waste collectors exchange their items. Unwanted items are left at the parking area. It occurs that these waste collectors don't pick up everything. The rest remains on the street or on the pavement. The waste management associations need to take charge of it then. Problems occur when goods which are not suitable remain in front of the collection centre or are disposed illegally. bulky waste containers are turned upside down.

**Conflicts:**

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Conflicts between informal collectors were reported but only rarely.

#### **Confusion for residents:**

The problem is that the residents don't know anymore, who collects what in case of kerbside collections. One time it's the waste management association, one time the informal collectors, one time an authorised person for collecting clothes.

Bribes:

Bribes to staff at WCC were reported more than once. One worker at a WCC in Upper Austria was bribed by waste collectors with a bottle of wine for example. It happened also that staff which was bribed was dismissed.

#### **Residential collectors:**

Problems arise also when other private residential persons take items from the containers. The staff tells them then, that this is prohibited as the same rules apply for them as for informal foreign collectors. Another example where residential collectors gladly occur is in the capital city of Tyrol, where kerbside collection still takes place. Usually inhabitants of the city go through streets, where bulky waste and WEEE collection takes place the other day. The street names where collections take place are only known to the concerned residents but not known to the general public. Still collectors know about the street names and appear. It was observed that some collectors cut the cables from WEEE and some took computers as well as some collectors which looked for useable items. Foreign collectors have not been seen during these collections.

#### **Thefts at WCC:**

In exceptional cases containers are broken up to catch WEEE and old PCs, was reported in Salzburg. Staff from WCC in Carinthia reported that it was broken into containers with clothing or that wastes are stolen during the weekends. Another municipality in the North of Burgenland reported serious problems with burglaries. It is a waste collection centre, which is situated further away from the municipality. Therefore it is an easy target for burglars. The fence is very often destroyed and WEEE, fluorescent lamps, accumulators, metals and tyres are stolen. In one WCC the waste collectors even entered storage rooms for hazardous wastes without allowance and took also a lot of empty garbage sacks.

#### **Accidents:**

Risk of injury for informal collectors inside of waste collection centres and consequential problems with missing working permissions and missing Austrian accident insurances were reported also from staff. Staff is worried, because if something happens with collectors inside of the centres, then it is on their responsibility.

### **2.3.3 Solutions and ideas**

#### **Save of money:**

It was reported that it is advantageous that informal collectors take the waste. The waste association and the municipality respectively saves money, especially during bad economic condition. Also savings of disposal costs because of recirculation of bulky waste was reported.

#### **Social issue:**

It was reported that in front of the waste collection centre there are waste collectors which stop deliverers. Yet, there are no problems, as the deliverers give them their goods voluntarily. One municipality reported also that daily there are two to three Hungarians waiting for suitable items. The deliverers give them goods like Ski, small furniture, functioning fridges, TVs and so on. Big bulky wastes, like a cupboard, are not taken. As soon as the private deliverers unload their waste at the collection centre it passes into the property of the waste management association and nothing is given to collectors anymore. This system works well. Sometimes



support from the police is needed, but usually the two to three Hungarians make no problems. They wait until deliverers stop to give them items, but don't "attack" them in the cars.

#### **Work-assistance:**

work-assistance for waste collection centre staff by informal collectors was reported several times. At one municipality in Burgenland for example a Hungarian waste collector is still allowed to go inside of the WCC. It is advantageous for the workers there, as the waste collector helps them and also takes care of other waste collectors. As he speaks Hungarian, it is easier for him to explain other waste collectors that they need not to or only when they are allowed to enter the waste collection centre. A waste collector at another municipality is also allowed to help workers and is allowed to take metals in exchange. This is also approved by the major in that municipality. Sometimes the reliance of workers to waste collectors is so high that waste collectors are left alone at the WCC to watch it, as it was observed in one case in Burgenland. Residents know them and accept them. The waste collectors have been quite old and watched residents bringing items for the WCC. If there were interesting items for them, then they took it.

#### **Flea markets going with the WCC:**

There is one example in Upper Austria where the waste collection centre works in combination with a flea market. At certain times every day (one hour in the morning, one hour in the afternoon) the centre is open for everyone. Within the centre there is a hall, where items are placed for sale. Bargaining can be done with the staff there. Visitors can buy only goods, which are placed inside the hall. Other goods, like WEEE or items in containers, at the waste collection centre are not allowed for sale. Clients at this flea markets are people from the town with foreign descent. They came from Bosnia, Albania, Serbia etc. They come regularly to the place and buy items. One group from Bosnian descent collect items during the week and drive afterwards to Bosnia to sell it. Another collector stated that he is unemployed, but is interested in repairing electronic goods. He sells those goods at flea markets in Linz and gives also one week guarantee. Conflicts occur many times at the flea market in the waste collection centre, because one man is favoured by the staff and is allowed to go inside before all the others. So the most appropriate items are already taken from him.

One WCC in Upper Austria operates also a flea market, where Hungarian waste collectors are regular clients. They park outside of the centre and visit the flea market. By this way the centre earns a lot of additional money. A security service visits regularly the flea market and the WCC and makes sure that there are not too many collectors at the same time. Prices are set by a worker and collectors try to bargain with her.

In a lot of municipalities in a district in Salzburg there are kind of flea markets together with WCC, where Austrian and foreign collectors are clients. The staff reports that this works fine, only sometimes there are too many and it disturbs the working flow. One worker also proposed some improvements like letting clients inside only for certain times not for the whole opening hours of the WCC. Then a more controlled way of flea market operations and WCC operations could be guaranteed. One worker at another WCC lets collectors inside to the flea market only for 5 minutes. Collectors appearing at those WCC are mostly from Romania or Bulgaria, and take WEEE, contents and clothing.

Another municipality in Tyrol has also a kind of flea market together with the WCC. There is also a power plug, where clients can try the functionality of electrical goods. Clients are mainly from Bulgaria. According to the staff these Bulgarian collectors are very well organised and take the goods over to a bigger van, which transports it to Bulgaria.

#### **ReUse-shops:**

One WMA mentioned that despite they have ReUse-shops in the district, which recover WEEE, more WEEE have to be disposed than can be recovered. Therefore it is good that informal waste



collectors also take WEEE and reuse them. The problem is the system in Austria. With the collection of WEEE the items get immediately in the waste scheme. In the Netherlands WEEE is collected and dryly stored. Afterwards it is tried to recover or reuse it.

#### **Consistent banning:**

Problems because of informal waste collection activities don't exist anymore, as the procedures are clear, when flyers or other informal activities appear: fines, police force, notifications. It is only annoying, when they act again and again.

#### **Rules:**

Problems occur more often at WCC, when waste collectors stop cars and take items from the boot. Therefore rules were developed at several WCC, which are published on a notice board. If these rules are not obeyed, the police is called. One municipality in Tyrol remarks that, if waste collectors would take things, but leave the rest tidily, it won't be a problem. Another municipality in Burgenland reported also that waste collectors would be let inside if they behave according to certain rules.

#### **Charges:**

One WCC in Styria has introduced charges for bulky wastes for residuents. With this introduction they have also banned waste collectors from the site with the argument that they can't ask for money from the residents for wastes which are afterwards taken by the waste collectors.

### **2.3.4 Conclusion**

Staff/workers at WCC have to deal with informal collectors often directly meaning they are the ones who repeatedly try to ban the people from the premises, if the WMAs say so, but also often have good relationships to them. The workers stay between the informal collectors and the WMAs or municipalities which are their employers. Problems for workers are only created if informal collectors are dealing beyond the rules of the workers, e.g. if the worker doesn't allow informal collectors to go inside of the centre and the collectors try to, conflicts are the consequence. If the collector obeys this rule and waits in front of the centre, than they can work next to each other without problems. Workers are also often overextended when many collector groups try to enter the centre. This is understandable and workers can't be blamed for that. This is only one example on problems which need to be handled by workers. On the other hand workers refuse to ban collectors, as good relationships were established through the years. The social conscience is often strongly affected by workers as they deal face to face with informal collectors. Solutions on the situation are therefore very welcome from the side of the workers as well.

## **2.4 WCC-visitors**

### **2.4.1 Facts and figures**

The established questionnaire was tested in practice and was perceived as unsuitable for talking to deliverers and inhabitants. Only 7 inhabitants were questioned during the field visits. Most of them answered very scarce and shortly. Some have been very interested in what is done or why interviews are carried out. So information on the project was given, but useful answers on the questions couldn't be collected.



## 2.4.2 Problems and difficulties

### Xenophobic attitudes:

One visitor stated that the opinion of the inhabitants concerning informal collections is very differentiating. One part of the inhabitants doesn't have anything against these kinds of activities and even support them by "donating" still useable items. The other part is against it. The visitor mentioned that the main opponents are people who are xenophobic. This was also approved by the observations at field visits.

The attitude between collectors and inhabitants was observed during the stay at the WCC to find the percentages of visitors, who support it and visitors who are against it. The relations were also discussed with the staff or in case of kerbside collections only observed. In 25 % of the visited municipalities the relation could not be evaluated, but in 41 % the relation was considered as good. In 4 % of the municipalities the relation was even very good between collector and inhabitants. In 22 % it was just ok and only 4 % find it bad. In 4 % of the municipalities people resigned the collectors.

### Behaviour of Roma:

Interviews with workers or residents showed that Roma women are counted to the most inconvenient of waste collectors, as they are loud and intrusively. These facts occasionally scare residents. Consequently residents feel offended by this behaviour and ignore them or worse send the police to them. Another example is that these waste collecting groups like to see the collection as a game and have fun with the habit of the first catching the item wins it. This leads to tumults in front of waste collection centres when a car stops. Residents are again scared, although these "plays" are ordinary for Roma and still structured. Another reason for the mistrust against Roma is that some cases have been reported, where every content of a car was taken by them, even warning triangles or first aid kits. Such reports contribute to the mistrust and the consequence is that no residents stop in front of waste collection centres for Roma anymore. Concerning kerbside collections the mistrust for Roma continuous as incidents has been reported, where other things than prepared once are taken. Prejudice among Roma is very present and one group which acts illegally is enough to destroy the reputation of all Roma collectors.

### Thefts:

Prejudice among the inhabitants is existing saying that informal collectors, which do kerbside collections also take items which are not prepared for their collections, but are also taken knowingly or unknowingly (e.g. bicycles, lawn movers, motor saws).

## 2.4.3 Solutions and ideas

One visitor mentioned that a church community is operating in the local area, which collects useable goods and brings them to Hungary two times a year.

## 2.4.4 Conclusion

The observation showed that most of the visitors and inhabitants respectively have nothing against the informal collections and even support them. Despite these good results from the observation very hostile attitudes from some visitors were experienced. Some visitors even railed against the collectors. The attitudes were hostile mainly to Roma.



## 2.5 WCC-waste pickers

### 2.5.1 Facts and figures

Facts and figures are presented in Deliverable 3.1.1. The origin of waste collectors which were interviewed in Austria is also displayed in this report, as this is important for interpreting the statements of the following chapters. Figure 2.2 shows that most of the interviewed collectors came from Hungary.

#### Origin of the waste collectors

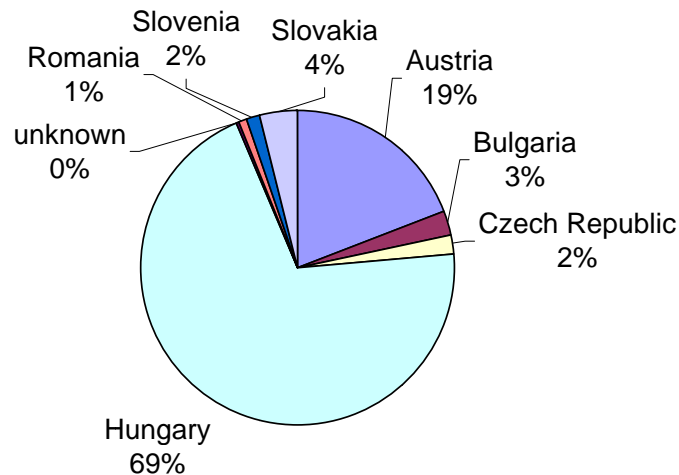


Figure 2.2: Origin of the collectors (n = 266)

In total 266 collectors could have been recorded, but only 83 interviewed. At least 57 women were among the 266 collectors and at least one child. It was reported that children come together with their parent collectors especially during holiday seasons. 19 persons of the collectors have been met twice or three times during the field visits, which means at 118 municipalities.

### 2.5.2 Problems and difficulties

#### Problems with police:

Collectors told that they were stopped by the police sometimes. They were asked for their identification cars and papers and if the car is okay, e.g. lights and breaks are working, they could continue. Sometimes they got penalties because of overloading their vehicle. If they transport valuable items, they usually take notes from persons, who handed it over to them and show it to the police. A collector also said that he keeps the telephone number of the worker at the WCC. So if problems with the police occur, he rings him. Other collectors report that they are known to the police already and have no problems with them. It was told only randomly that police banned the collectors from waiting in front of WCC and threatened with a penalty. All in all there were no problems with police reported.

#### Reputation:

Collectors were asked if something changed in the recent years. The journey to Austria was facilitated due to the opening of the borders, but now more collectors are coming, which means more competition. Another problem mentioned was that more criminals are coming and that it is not good for their business. In former days the collectors had sometimes to bribe the customs at the border.

#### Decreasing quality of goods:

Concerning the quality of the items, collectors mostly stated that there are less and less goods which are suitable to find at WCC. They think that since the Euro has been introduced in Austria, the situation has been getting worse and worse. Austrians don't throw so many useful items away anymore.

#### **No allowance to go inside WCC:**

The change from kerbside system to bring system in many municipalities in Austria has changed the collection habits for the informals. The reachability of goods was thereby reduced. In addition to that collectors are not allowed to enter the WCC anymore. This changed in recent years too.

#### **Competition:**

Collectors mentioned that too many collectors are sometimes waiting at one WCC. This leads to conflicts.

### **2.5.3 Solutions and ideas**

Most of the interviewed collectors stated that they have no solutions or ideas. Many said that the situation is good as it is. Some solutions and other ideas were though collected from the interviewed persons, which are:

#### **Restriction of number of collectors at one WCC:**

As sometimes too many collectors are waiting at one WCC, the idea from some collectors was to restrict the number. On their opinion it would be better that each collector is allocated to a specific WCC.

#### **Fairness of staff:**

Collectors mentioned that if staff would act with more fairness (e.g. not favouring one group before the other), less conflicts would occur.

### **2.5.4 Conclusion**

The overall opinion of the interviewed collectors in Austria was that they are more or less satisfied with the situation as it is, although the quality of products is decreasing. Problems with police were only randomly reported. Yet, a kind of regulation at WCC, e.g. restriction of the number of collection groups, would be appreciated.

## **2.6 Authorities-local**

### **2.6.1 Facts and figures**

Municipalities are directly affected by informal collection activities. The opinions of the representatives of the municipalities were therefore also interesting to know. The opinions mainly correspond with WMAs.

### **2.6.2 Problems and difficulties**

Problems mentioned by majors or other representatives of the municipality were littering, loss of valuable materials and complaints from inhabitants. These issues were already discussed in the chapter of WMAs and workers of WCCs. Similar problems are therefore covered by these stakeholders.

Yet, it was also mentioned from majors that this kind of informal activities are tolerated, if everything runs smoothly. The social issue was augmented by the representatives, but also cost savings. It was reported that it is advantageous that informal collectors take the waste. The



municipality saves money, especially during bad economic condition. Also savings of disposal costs because of recirculation of bulky waste was reported.

### 2.6.3 Solutions and ideas

One representative of a municipality stated that the infrastructure of the WCC should be improved so that informal collections can be regulated better.

Also the wish of a better support of the police was given.

### 2.6.4 Conclusion

Both negative and positive opinions were found among the representatives of the municipalities. On the one hand they tolerate or even support the situations because of cost savings and for social reasons; on the other hand they dislike the situation because of complaints from inhabitants and littering in front of the WCC.

## 2.7 Authorities-regional/national

### 2.7.1 Facts and figures

Two people from the authority of environmental crimes were interviewed, two people from the environmental ministry and three people from provincial governments (Vorarlberg, Salzburg, Lower Austria). Also regional environmental authorities (two) were interviewed. In Vienna (MA48) operates 19 WCC called "Mistplätze" in Vienna. Only Viennese inhabitants are allowed to dispose of specific wastes. The second regional environmental authority is responsible for the province of Vorarlberg.

### 2.7.2 Problems and difficulties

People from the authority of environmental crimes mentioned that they can only act if an element of environmental crime or an administrative offence occurs. The police are allowed to control the vehicles and the people inside. If they tranship waste, they control the papers for the transshipment. If they identify stolen goods, then they are allowed to arrest the items and the persons involved.

If an administrative offence occurs as it might be with informal collection activities, the police is allowed to keep mobile phones or GPS systems.

#### **Business permit:**

Interviewed persons from provincial governments stated that if informal collectors collect directly from households they need a business permit. This is available from the provincial governor. Without it they won't be allowed to do this.

#### **Obligation of waste collection:**

Municipalities have an obligation to collect waste. This is often delegated to WMAs. Wastes need therefore to be handed over to WMAs by residents. Residents are not allowed to hand them to somebody else.

#### **Out-dated law:**

As in the case of Lower Austria, the provincial law derives from 1992. It is therefore out-dated and doesn't contain how to act with informal collection activities. The law doesn't contain that the police need to intervene in case of waste management issues. On the other hand in national law and in a provincial law like in Styria it is included that police has the obligation of intervention in such issues.



**Waste vs used good:**

The opinion of the environmental ministry is to stick with the term waste. According to them the informal collectors handle waste and therefore they need the according permits. Permits issued e.g. in Hungary need to be approved in Austria. Requirements of getting a permit for waste collection shall get more difficult from the year 2011. Until the end of 2010 it was quite easy to get a permit.

**Mistplätze**

The environmental authority in Vienna (MA48) reported that no problems were observed with informal collectors at the 19 "Mistplätze". More problems occur with inhabitants which dispose of items illegally.

However, it was reported that informal collectors act with collections directly from households. It was also reported from witnesses that collectors were observed waiting in front of WCC also.

**Vorarlberg**

The authority responsible for Vorarlberg reported that there are massive problems with informals.

**2.7.3 Solutions and ideas****Cooperation with IMPEL:**

The authority of environmental crimes proposed to contact IMPEL, but they rather deal with "big fishes" like illegal transports of end of life vehicles to Africa or WEEE to Asia.

A solution can only be found together with the ministries and the provincial governments.

**Training for collectors:**

It is demanded by environmental ministry that collectors shall know the environmental consequences of what they are doing. This shall be educated in certain trainings which should be compulsory when getting permits for waste collection.

**Establish requirements for equality of permits from different countries:**

It is demanded by environmental ministry that requirements shall be determined to make permits from different countries, e.g. Austria and Hungary, valid in both countries.

**Exemption of waste:**

According to environmental ministry it is possible to exempt wastes to become a used good. Yet, this can only be done by certain responsible persons. Additionally it needs different procedures for different products. For example is an exemption of a cupboard easier to carry out than for WEEE.

**Increased police force:**

The authority from Vorarlberg mentioned that he introduced more police controls at main routes to frighten the collectors.

**2.7.4 Conclusion**

Regional and national authorities refer to national and regional law and point out that activities carried out by informal people can only be accepted in Austria if permits are obtained. A transnational cooperation would be possible in terms of establishing requirements for equality of permits. The environmental authority in Vienna sees no problems with informal collection activities, but the authority in a more remote area in Austria does.



## 2.8 WM companies

### 2.8.1 Facts and figures

As in Austria the collection of bulky wastes, WEEE and metals from households (items which are interesting for informal collectors) are carried out mostly by waste management associations the opinions of WMA often corresponds with the opinions of WM companies.

### 2.8.2 Problems and difficulties

The answers about informal waste picking especially at these companies depend heavily on the interviewed person: One person reports that there are only marginal problems with informal waste pickers, and another person reports that there are big problems on construction and demolition sites with theft (unknown if theft is really done by informal pickers).

### 2.8.3 Solutions and ideas

One waste management company in Burgenland has many problems with collectors. They need to **equip their digger with GPS<sup>2</sup>** to prevent it from being stolen.

Furthermore they employ only **strong drivers**, because they need to deal with waste collectors to prevent them on rummaging through the metal containers.

### 2.8.4 Conclusion

WM companies can be affected by informal collectors directly and indirectly. Directly they are affected if collectors rummage through their waste containers, mainly metal containers, on their premises. Indirectly they are affected by reduced amounts which they get from WMAs.

## 2.9 Used items-market stands

### 2.9.1 Facts and figures

Three used-item markets were visited. Two of them are operated by WMAs (in Vienna and Ried im Innkreis) and one is privately organised (Oberwart).

First used item market stand visited was the one in Upper Austria. It is already described in one solution option in the chapter about WMAs. The responsible person of the market and also staff there was interviewed.

The second observed market was the market of MA48 in Vienna. The market has already opened in 1988 and is operating from Tuesdays to Saturdays. Items sold at the markets come from waste collection centres all over Vienna. Staff at waste collection centres select useable goods and store them separately from waste. The items are neither tested for their functionality nor repaired. Therefore they are also sold without warranty. Prize labels say that the items may be defective and no warranties can be claimed. Prizes are fixed with labels on each product. Therefore bargaining is not existent on this market.

Items which are sold range from TVs, pots and pans, dishes, sporting equipment, toys, IT appliances, small WEEE, like lamps, coffee machines and mixer, washing machines, bicycles, clothes, decoration items, furniture, but also roofing tiles and occasionally laminates. Items are delivered each day. In 2009 in total 780 tons were delivered. This is an average of 3 tons each

<sup>2</sup> The Global Positioning System (GPS) is a U.S. space-based global navigation satellite system. It provides reliable positioning, navigation, and timing services to worldwide users on a continuous basis



day, stated the responsible person of the market. Many items are sold on one day, only some stay more than one day at the market. Exceptions are relatively expensive items (like one antiques for € 500), which stay one month at the market. Only 7 to 8 % of the items need to be disposed, because they can't be sold said the responsible person of the market.

According to the rating of the staff 50 % of the clients are Austrians and 50 % are foreigners. Yet, only a few people were identified as typical collectors during an observation week. The majority of the clients are families and other people who buy goods for their private use or used item dealers. The results of the observation show that 87 % of the clients, which bought goods, came from Austria. Only 4 % came from Hungary and 3 % from Romania. From Slovakia, Serbia and Czech Republic came each only 1 %. The rest came from other countries which couldn't be identified due to linguistic problems. In total 558 clients buying goods were counted in five days at the flea market.

Therefore the influence of informal collectors buying goods from the regular flea market in Vienna on the total transhipped amounts was estimated as neglecting and wasn't further investigated.

In addition to these two markets from WMAs, one private used-item market (Oberwart) was observed and people interviewed to require information on informal collectors. It was stated there that this kind of informal collectors rarely appear at the flea market. Clients at those markets are rather antiques dealers and people who buy for their private use.

### 2.9.2 Problems and difficulties

No problems with informal collectors were reported at the market in Vienna and at the market in Oberwart (Burgenland).

Problems reported at the market in Ried im Innkreis were that clients stay for more than one day in front of the market and **live in their vehicles**. It is therefore not appreciated by the municipality by the inhabitants.

### 2.9.3 Solutions and ideas

A **security service** was once ordered so that the operation of the WCC and the flea market next door can operate smoothly.

### 2.9.4 Conclusion

Used-item markets in Austria are only relevant for the informal collectors, if they operate next to WCC. Other flea markets are not favoured by informal collectors. It is assumed that prizes are too high there. The results of interviewed clients at those flea markets (see market visitors) show that such clients are able to pay more in order to receive good quality goods.

## 2.10 Market visitors

### 2.10.1 Facts and figures

Five persons were interviewed at the market in Vienna. These five persons were chosen for interviews as they appeared to be informal collectors (in the former chapter it was described that most of the clients of the market are private customers who take the items for their own use or used item dealers). Yet, when interviewing it was found that only two of them were really informal collectors. They enjoy the good quality of goods and are able to pay more for it.

### 2.10.2 Problems and difficulties

The collectors have no problems and difficulties when buying from the market, as everything is regulated and structured.

### 2.10.3 Solutions and ideas

They receive an **invoice** for the bought goods and have therefore no problems when stopped by the police.

### 2.10.4 Conclusion

The investigations in Austria showed that informal collectors are found only randomly at official flea markets, like it is in Vienna. Yet, they are able to pay the prices there if a good quality is determined.

## 2.11 Non governmental organisations

### 2.11.1 Facts and figures

In the province of Burgenland there are Roma who speak mostly the Hungarian language. From the contact person's point of view the Roma from Burgenland are not involved in waste collection activities as described in this report. They do it rather the other way round, like buying antiques in Hungary, fix them up and sell them in Austria. Another contact person, a representative of a Roma union, stated also that Austrian Roma are not involved in waste management in Austria. The economic interest in this activity is not given for Austrian Roma.

In former times they did door to door collections for furniture, but these times are over. It was only reported once that an Austrian Roma came to a WCC for the purpose of collecting items, but this happened three to four years ago. At another municipality it was told that one Austrian Roma came once and asked for computers. The worker allowed him to look at the computers, but the man didn't find appropriate parts.

### 2.11.2 Problems and difficulties

In one municipality in Lower Austria it was reported though that Austrian Roma have been coming to the WCC. According to other collectors they don't obey rules and often dispute.

### 2.11.3 Solutions and ideas

Their solutions and ideas are about Roma integration in Austria, but as they don't handle in this kind of informal waste collections they are out of scope of our project.

### 2.11.4 Conclusion

Roma unions in Austria stated that Roma in Austria don't deal with this kind of informal waste collections. They rather buy it from Hungary and sell it as antiques in Austria again. The Roma unions in Austria therefore belong not to the narrower circle of stakeholders.

## 2.12 Conclusions for Austria

Most of the problems can be found among waste management associations (WMAs) which lose money because of informal collection activities. According to them informal collectors take



mainly valuable materials. WMAs need to maintain the waste collection system, which is financed on the one hand from fees and on the other hand from revenues of selling valuable materials out of wastes. The waste collection system and consequently the fees for households are therefore in danger if informal waste collection activities are continuing. Municipalities on the other hand argued that informal collectors also take materials which are of no value for the Austrians anymore. The amount of waste which needs to be costly disposed is decreasing due to informal collectors and this saves money for the community but also for WMA. Problems occur mostly if informal collectors don't obey rules set by WMA, workers at WCC or municipalities. Littering is another issue which was often mentioned in combination with informal collectors. Also thefts are feared by residents if informal collectors appear in municipalities.

Both sides of opinions were found among workers and residents: opponents and supporters of informal collections. Hostile attitudes against foreign informal collectors especially against Roma people were observed among residents but also among workers. This always created bad relationships which consequently lead to conflicts. Other workers and residents saw the informal collection activities from a social point of view and were glad that people find a use for goods which are wasted in our society. Long relationships were often developed between workers and informal collectors which made cooperation more easily. Conflicts or problems at those points of action were randomly reported.

Regional or national authorities stick on legal difficulties and shrug informal collections off as illegal. In their opinion they handle with waste and therefore waste collection permissions are necessary.

Solutions were already implemented by some WMAs. These solutions were most of the time about banning informal waste collections (e.g. parking prohibition in front of WCC). Yet, they have mostly turned out to be unsuccessful. Informal collectors always found their way back on track (e.g. waiting beyond the parking prohibition signs). Solutions on integrating informal collectors in the system were rarely detected (e.g. work assistance, recycling corner), but those were successful. Perhaps this would be the key issue for Austrian stakeholders: not working against each other, but working together.



## 3 Germany

### 3.1 Introduction

In Germany two general surveys to determine the status quo of informal sector activities were conducted. The first survey contains interviews with waste recycling centres in the states of Mecklenburg Western Pomerania, Brandenburg, Berlin, Saxony Anhalt, Saxony, Thuringia and Bavaria. Those states were chosen as they are situated directly at respectively near to the border to Eastern Europe. For each administrative district of the mentioned states 3 recycling centres were chosen by chance, which were contacted via telephone. All together the sample size was 347 recycling centres, whereby 224 answers could be used for the analysis. After receiving information that also in the western part of Germany informal collection occur, a second survey was conducted. An email questionnaire was sent to the public waste disposal authorities of all administrative and urban districts of Germany to get information on the waste picker issue in the corresponding disposal area. The answering quotes were quiet low. From 412 questionnaires only 61 returned. But according to the amount of returned and answered questionnaires, it is possible to assume that in the eastern part of Germany the waste picker issue is more present than in the western part as eastern administrative districts occur to have an answering quota of 25 Percent whereas only 7 percent of the western administrative districts provides an filled questionnaire.

Moreover interviews with informal pickers were conducted at the collection points mostly in front of recycling centres. In Germany it is common to use the official bulky waste collection via call, whereas citizens call the official waste management organisation to arrange an individual appointment for the bulky waste collection. Therefore the informal collection during street collection diminished over the last years. Nevertheless the informal collection takes place in front of recycling centres or for example through advertisement notes in the letter box of citizens. Some furnishing companies were asked but the results will not be presented in this contribution as no waste picker occurred. Moreover the companies are obliged to dispose furniture with minor mistakes respectively not to give away not sellable items for free.

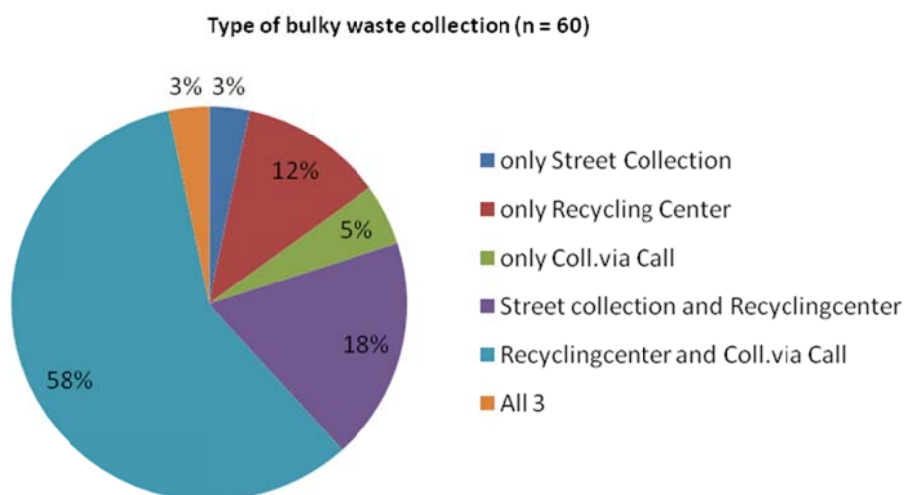
During the first periods and through the national workshops some governmental institutions gave information about the waste picker issue and their point of view. Nevertheless Germany has a big problem with informal shipments to developing countries in Africa and Asia. Therefore the focus and interest of the governmental institution is focused more on the transcontinental than transnational waste shipment as the amounts transhipped to developing countries are assumed to be much higher and more problematic than the shipments to Eastern Europe.

### 3.2 WCC-workers/managers

#### 3.2.1 Facts and figures

The waste organisations that were asked via email had to answer the question, which collection system they offer. Around 60 percent of all answered questionnaires contained the option recycling centre and collection via call. As mentioned the collection type via call is used, next to other reasons, to prevent the informal collection. Only 18 percent of the asked interview partners still use the street collection, whereas some of them mentioned a forthcoming change into the collection via call.





### 3.2.2 Problems and difficulties

Problems and difficulties that were mentioned from the staff of the recycling centres respectively the responsible persons at the waste management organisation are wide spread. Especially waste pickers in front of recycling centres leave collected but not interesting items behind whereas the waste organisation has to take care of the littered items. This follows in higher labour and material costs (f.e. petrol). In this context the conducted “cherry picking” of the informal sector is another point of criticism as they only take working and valuable items but do not care about the not wanted items rather their proper whereabouts. Another form of littering occurs if the waste pickers disassemble the items to obtain the valuable resources like metals or semiconductors and leave the body of the treated item behind. Moreover the waste management organisations reported about burglaries into the recycling centres at night. Next to the missing materials the waste organisation has to pay for the repairing of the marred items caused by the burglary. But also Germans were mentioned in this regard. Other reported about traffic problems as citizens stop directly at the street to transfer their items to the waste picker. This causes a traffic jam, whereas in general recycling centre had to call the department of Health and Safety. Some of the waste picker occurred to be quiet aggressive as some of the interview partner reported about oral arguments. If the recycling centre has rush hour and a lot of persons are delivering their items, it occurs that waste picker can go to the area of the recycling centre and can collect items, as the staff is not able to survey all the incidents at the centre. A lot of interview partner reported that a prohibition of the informal collection activities is mostly senseless as the collectors stop at another collection centre.

### 3.2.3 Solutions and ideas

Regarding the staff rather responsible persons of the waste management organisation the reactions how to solve the issue and which ideas they would have or already accomplished the answers contained a more negative than positive background. Some of the interview partners reported about measurements that prohibit the informal collection activities. This included the usage of police actions, parking prohibits, video controls, enlightenment of the population, employee training, temporal limitation of the stay at second – hand – markets that are installed

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at recycling centres, constructional limitation of the space to stay in front of recycling centres, instructions not to give items to third parties and advices to the waste picker that an informal collection prohibition exists. Contrariwise other interview partners reported about attempts to integrate the waste picker within the daily business. One recycling centre f.e. allowed the entering of the waste picker, but as the appearance increased alarmingly and the waste picker became more and more obtrusive the entering was forbidden again. Other recycling centres implemented a second - hand - market. But not in all cases the waste pickers are allowed to enter such markets, as they are not German citizens. This is related to the cross - financing of collection centres through regular waste fees of the citizens. Some even have temporal limitations of stays at these markets to prevent the informal collection. Some of the interview partners reported that the waste pickers have the opportunity to buy items at a low price. They found the advantage within the value of the item. As the waste picker has to pay for the item and get a comparatively high - quality product, his attitude towards the product is a better one as if he only collects it while not being sure about the functionality. The probability that he litters the product is less.

### 3.2.4 Conclusion

In general the attitude of the waste management organisations towards the waste picker was negative due to the impacts they have on the proceedings like littering, missing materials or influences on the daily operations. Nevertheless it was recognisable that starting points to somehow integrate them are available as a lot of the interview partner realised that a prohibition of the informal sector activities are not successful as they just appear for a short time or relocate their collection position to the next recycling centre.

## 3.3 WCC-visitors

### 3.3.1 Problems and difficulties

In general the positions of the recycling centre visitors, means the citizens, which deliver their wastes at the waste collection centre can be divided into three categories. The first category contains citizens, which have compassion with the waste pickers and want to do something good for the people, which mean to give them their waste in order to help them to get an income. The second category does not care if the waste organisation or the waste pickers get the goods. They are just interested in getting rid of the items they define as waste. The third category feels bothered through pickers that can have a quit aggressive way to show that they are interested in the items they want to deliver at the recycling centre. In this case it occurs that the waste picker is jumping in front of the car of the citizen or is waving and screaming quiet heavy at them when they pass the waste pickers. Moreover the citizens complained about the written notes in the letterboxes, where waste pickers advertise their willingness to collect old and not used items. Often it occurs that after the announced date the informal collection did not take place and the items are positioned in front of the house until the waste management organisation collects it or the citizens carry it back.

### 3.3.2 Solutions and ideas

To avoid such meetings that result in distrust, it is advisable to train the waste pickers concerning the habits and behaviours of other countries. Even more a pass or identification card would support a developing trust between citizen and waste picker. This would also ensure one



the one hand a guarantee of collection, where citizens can be sure that the provided items are collected in time and on the other hand the certainty that the collection and the treatment of the items is ensured in terms of quality.

### 3.3.3 Conclusion

In general the citizens either do not care about the waste pickers or just stop to get rid of the items they have not taking care if the waste picker or the waste organisation will treat it. An advertisement rather enlightenment of the population might lead to a sensitisation of the backgrounds of the waste pickers and therefore what consequences the delivery at the waste organisation or at the waste picker has. In order to structure and control the informal sector activities it is advisable to implement trainings for the waste picker concerning habits of other countries but also to reach language skills to have better communication possibilities. But also to develop the trust of the citizens concerning such formalised waste picker organisations.

## 3.4 WCC-waste pickers

### 3.4.1 Problems and difficulties

In general it was difficult to undertake interviews with waste pickers in front of recycling centres as there was a language barrier and often it was not clear if this was a real language barrier or reluctance. In general the waste picker complained about the items which are left and that the business was more profit-yielding in the past years. A peculiarity could be found in Berlin. There a more structured waste picker system could be watched. Those pickers were situated with a transporter (also with German license tags) in front of recycling centres and promote their willingness to take old electrical stuff through a sign, on that was written "hi-fi systems, fridges, washing machines etc". The German waste pickers weren't willing to give information about their background. This could be explained through former measurements which were undertaken through the waste management organisation to prevent such collection actions. Nevertheless one of the asked persons of one German Transporter did have had an Eastern European background. Therefore it is not sure that the number plate shows the origin of the owner/picker.

### 3.4.2 Solutions and ideas

In general it is important to found a willingness of waste pickers to take part in a formalised organisation. During the interviews it was difficult to find an access to the waste picker based on language barriers and their reserve. Steps to win a trust of the waste pickers and to elucidate the economic and social advantages of a formalised picking should take into account. Therefore an enlightenment of the waste pickers is indispensable. Moreover trainings should be included within a formalised organisation that teaches skills like languages but also proper treatment ways.

### 3.4.3 Conclusion

The waste picker handling rather contact should be first based on a diplomatic structure. It is important to convey what economic and social advantages the participation in a formalised organisation has. Through the long - term informal activities, which were antagonized through waste management organisations, the trust of waste picker is often low. Moreover it has to be considered that the sense of responsibility of the activities is less than in other professions, as



the waste pickers can choose if they or if they don't work from day to day. Training and enlightenment are indispensable to establish a successful organisation dealing with the formalised waste picker activities

## 3.5 Governmental organisations

### 3.5.1 Problems and difficulties

During the interviews with regional and national governmental institutions it was clear that the focus of their work concerning informal transshipments of waste is more on shipments to developing countries in Asia or Africa. Consequently the discussions were mostly about the formulation "informal" as most of the interview partners had the opinion that these activities are illegal and not informal. In this view the governmental institutions refer to article 3 (1), where it is defined that waste is everything which the owner disposes of, wishes to dispose of or must dispose of. In case of waste definition through the owner, producers or holders of waste from private households are obligated to make such waste available to the legal entities who are obligated, pursuant to Land laws, to carry out waste management (public-law parties responsible for waste management), to the extent that such producers or holders are unable, or do not intend, to carry out recovery themselves. That means, if the informal sector collects items, which are declared as waste through the owner and officially belongs to the public entities responsible for the waste management, they commit a crime, which can be punished through fines. Still it is difficult in several cases to divide between second hand item and waste. Therefore new guidelines and recommendations for action will be presented soon to prevent informal sector activities referring to shipments of wastes. Furthermore the amendment of the German waste law will give detailed requirements concerning the end of life characteristics of a good rather at which time an item loses the waste characteristic. Referring to the interview partners especially the legal background has to be very clear to act in a formal way.

### 3.5.2 Solutions and ideas

The solution of the problem is a clear differentiation between waste and second - hand - good. If it would be categorized as waste the following requirements apply. In Germany the Waste Movement act (AbfVG) gives detailed and additional regulations to the Directive 1013/2006/EG. Apart from the regulations concerning transshipment of wastes into other EU member states, the transport permission ordinance (TgV) is applying either for national or transnational transports. Within article 3 TgV it is stated that the management of the transportation department have to show an adequate know-how. Concerning the interview partners those requirements are difficult to maintain for a formal waste picker organisation.

### 3.5.3 Conclusion

Considering the difficult differentiation between waste and second - hand - good, it is advisable to focus on second - hand - goods, means items that are reusable or lose their waste characteristic through a repair. Otherwise the legal requirements to fulfil a transnational shipment of waste are diverse and complicated. Moreover the amount of bureaucratic work is immense and partially not acceptable for a socio economic enterprise. Only considering second - hand - goods would be in line with the waste avoidance as the most preferable option in the waste hierarchy and would raise the quality of products, which are transhipped.



### 3.6 Conclusions for Germany

The issue of waste picking is assessed differently in Germany rather through the interview partners. Nevertheless a general negative attitude was recognisable. Especially waste management organisations have to deal with the impacts the waste picker cause like littering, missing materials or influences on the daily operations. But also first attempts were accomplished to integrate or at least tolerate the waste picking activities somehow. This is motivated through the knowledge that prohibitions of informal activities failed as the waste pickers appeared again after a short time or found other places to collect. In some cases also citizens are acting based on a beneficial background, means to offer waste picker a basis to improve their income. But in general it could be concluded that the main reason to forward items to the pickers was disinterest. Either they do not care about the waste pickers or just stop to get rid of the items. They do not care if the waste picker or the waste organisation will treat it. At this point an enlightenment of the population is necessary especially with regard to knowledge on waste picker backgrounds and what consequences an uncontrolled transferring of items has. But also to develop the relation between citizen and waste picker, means to reduce the distrust between both, can be accomplished through the mentioned enlightenment of the population but also through trainings of waste picker. Hence, they are able to acquire language skills and knowledge of common habits and behaviours of populations of other countries. Contrariwise the work with the waste pickers should clearly indicate them that the participation in a formalised waste picker organisation offers economic and social benefits for them. Moreover it is important to communicate or rather indicate them a feeling of responsibility for the work they are doing for themselves but also for the society. Therefore training and enlightenment are very important to obtain a successful socio-economic organisation. Also the fact that different legislative frames are available at the different countries is an important fact in this context. As interview partners from governmental institutions reported, it is nearly impossible rather not thinkable that a socio - economic organisation can bear such a bureaucratic effort, means to pass the notification proceedings, which are necessary to be allowed to transport waste from one to another country. Therefore the specification should be on second - hand - goods as at the same time waste avoidance would take place and high(er) - quality items would be transferred to the corresponding markets.



## 4 Hungary

### 4.1 Introduction

There are two different types of waste in Hungary: 1 - waste coming to Hungary from the west, 2 - waste collected by kerbside collections throughout the nation.

Three areas of Hungary were chosen as research area. A desktop research was done on the possible regions before the one for further research was picked. First of all the focus was laid on the cross-border region (Austria-Hungary) because a lot of transshipment happens over the borders. The way of the material flow doesn't stop as the goods cross the border. It travels first to the West Hungarian region and from there it travels to all Hungary and also to other Eastern countries.

Beside the western part of Hungary, it was decided to do an analysis in big cities too, like in Budapest and in Miskolc and also in other parts of Hungary where a connection could be to other countries, e.g.: Romania.

The affected regions are:

- cross border region Austria - Hungary
- West Hungary
- Budapest
- Miskolc

### Interviews with stakeholders

In Hungary the target area was the Austrian-Hungarian border area – including the Transdanubium region – Budapest and Miskolc.

We have contacted the formal and the informal sector as well. From the informal sector we worked with the Hungarian Customs and Finance Guard, Tax Department, the University of Pannonia Georgikon Faculty of Agriculture in, Keszthely, the Ministry of Environment and Water, ALCUFER – waste management company, the Ministry for National Development and Economy, the National Association of Recyclers of Hungary, Electro-coord Hungary – Non-profit Ltd., the National Institute for Environmental Health (ÁNTSZ) and the National Consumer Protection Authority. Regarding the informal sector the Association of Hungarian Roma People plays an important role in the project and with their help we could contact many bulky waste collectors who do this activity for their every-day-life.

### First impressions

There are Waste Collection Centres only in bigger cities what more and more people use, but there are no informal waste collectors inside and they are not allowed around the Waste Collection Centres either. The local waste picking varies in bigger and smaller cities and also differs in the West compared to the East.

The fieldtrip series has started in Devecser which is the centre of the informal collectors in West Hungary, where we met the most important people: mayor, a used item shop owner, people who sell their items at home in their garages – they were not friendly because what they are doing is illegal and they are aware of it.



As a second step interviews with customers in North Hungary were carried out, who visit waste collection centres. Most of them see bulky collectors around their home, but not around the depots. They rather go to the centres than make use of the kerbside collection. Most of them bring building offal and green waste from spring until late autumn.

By interviews information about the informal sector from the official point of view were also gathered. Questionnaires were sent to all municipalities and solid waste management service companies in Hungary. The companies say that the situation is terrible. The citizens use the kerbside collections but they do not know (or they know and simply don't care) what they can put outside and because of this there are a lot of hazardous waste on the roads. The collectors make a huge mess and don't care about the environment and look only their advantages (they break TVs, monitors, refrigerators, lights and throw everything away they don't need).

We have also made many interviews with actual bulky waste collectors selling their collected or bought products at used item markets. This activity is not only done by Roma people, so it can not be handled as roma-issues.

**From the formal side** the discussed issues with the stakeholders were the following:

- waste or used item?
- environment protection regulations
- circumstances of kerb side collection
- Austrian legal background and practices,
- law of commerce (used items), law of metal commerce
- affected, missing institutions/authorities - (ORFK, Ministry of Municipalities and Regional Development, National Organisation of Local Settlements)
- refurbishing firm
- used item markets
- entrepreneurial permit, tax paying
- integration of the bulky waste collectors - change of approach, education

**From the informal side** we have received the following information:

Most of the bulky waste collectors (lomis) collect the goods from private houses and in front of junkyards in abroad once or more a week. Someone even travels for goods to Nederland; there he seeks the used items markets. In these markets, handicapped people repair and sell the junk/goods. A few of them can speak German well, but the rest know only the bases of the necessary words. The age group of the people that have been asked varied and some of them have been doing this act for more than 20 years now. In case of more families the work is inherited from generation to generation. Nowadays more and more people have to buy the goods from used item dealers, markets or private houses. In some cases, they have to even bargain with the owner. Usually the simpler goods are repaired (bicycle, maybe lawnmower) by lomises (bulky waste collectors). They rarely pay for the repair, because this amount would be higher than the sale price. The vendors of Devecser earn money from this activity. Usually they don't find job in their profession or they inherit this life-style. Some lomis work under trading concern (they have licences and give bill after the shopping), many lomis work to survive their every-day-life (they are selling the goods in exchange for any goods (vegetable, potato, flour, etc. - barter). While the tax agency keeps random controls in Hungary every year, in Austria the police control. It indicates how serious the problem is. Some of them are being stopped very often and fines can be from a few hundred even up to 1200 Euros. The main



reasons are usually overloaded vehicles, engineering problems, speeding, banned collection of wastes, etc.

By their opinion there are some things what should be done to improve their activity

- to stop being blamed for theft in Austria
- know sources for goods
- reducing control by the Austrian police
- reducing the number of lomis
- to have a common central facility, but some see it as a new source of problems and conflicts in the lomis community.

There is an initiation by the Association of the Hungarian Roma People to join the individuals and companies who deal with used item together towards the economic and environmental eligibility of their activities. Those bulky waste collectors who cannot fulfil the strict criteria's can join companies who are members of the organisation as employee or trustee. The members could deal with collection, transport and commercial activities after fulfilling the obligatory education to eliminate the lack of their environmental and economic knowledge. This organisation and its activities would be an environmental conscious solution towards the disused items (junk).

## 4.2 WCC-workers/managers

In Hungary because it is prohibited for bulky waste collectors with collecting purpose to enter waste collection centres the WCC workers couldn't talk about their experiences with bulky waste collectors.

### 4.2.1 Problems and difficulties

The following issues have arisen during meetings with stakeholders

- waste or used item?
- environment protection regulations
- circumstances of kerb side collection
- Austrian legal background and practices,
- law of commerce (used items), law of metal commerce
- affected, missing institutions/authorities - (ORFK- National Police Headquarter, Ministry of Municipalities and Regional Development, National Organisation of Local Settlements)
- refurbishing firm
- used item markets
- entrepreneurial permit, tax paying
- integration of the bulky waste collectors - change of approach, education
- it is not a roma issue; it is an issue of the bulky waste collectors.
- changes on cultural level
- education
- the current regulation needs to be modified and a special activity code (TEÁOR) is needed for this kind of work, but it is hard to imagine this as a separate sector.

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- an understandable guide should be prepared for the bulky waste collectors about the current regulations written on their level.
- for those people who can not get the entrepreneurial permit could maybe work for others in a legal way and could use their experiences.

#### 4.2.2 Solutions and ideas

As the conclusion of national meetings the stakeholders are willing to work together. See the Hungarian final conclusion of the study.

#### 4.3 WCC-visitors

In Hungary Waste Collection Centres are well known and more and more people use them as an option to take their unnecessary thing/waste to. They rather go to the centres than make use of the kerbside collection. Most of them bring building offal and green waste from spring until late autumn.

#### 4.4 WCC-waste pickers

In Hungary bulky waste collectors are not allowed to go in Waste Collection Centres and they do not even stand and wait in front of it either. Most of the citizens see bulky waste collectors around their home but not around the depots.

#### 4.5 Metal shop-owners

Regarding the metal collection a new regulation became operative in 2009 (LXI. Act in 2009, June 29). It was published in the 89<sup>th</sup> issue of the Bulletin of Hungary. The commerce of metal is can be done only by a licence give by the metal trade authority. This authority is the VPOP (Hungarian Customs and Finance Guard) assigned by the State

There have been some companies who dealt with metal collection and the commerce of the useable parts. Not all companies had a licence to collect, transport and treat metal with hazardous parts (e.g: WEEE, part if vehicles, etc.).

Ferrous and non-ferrous metals are put out by many people when official companies collect waste at kerb side collections. It is depending on the waste management association if metals are separated from bulky waste or collected all together.

#### 4.6 Authorities-local

We have reached 5000 municipalities, including every district in Budapest. The received questionnaires cover about 8,7% of the population. The map below shows the percent of participation in the different regions. We mainly found interested municipalities on the Western part of Hungary.

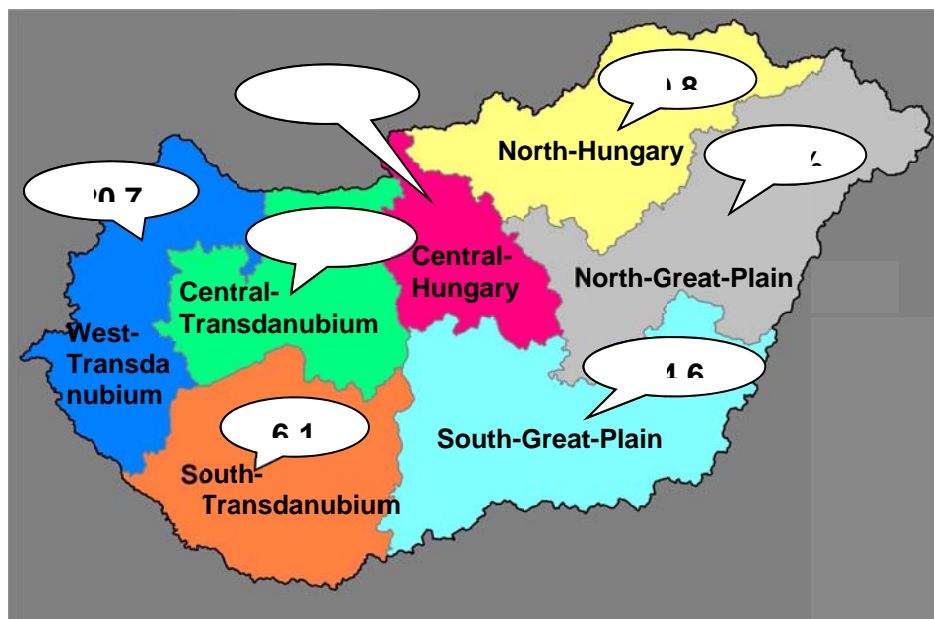


Figure 4.1: Percent of participation in the different regions.

5

Figure 4.2: Population classification according to municipality size

The municipalities in Hungary are contracted with, owner or partly owners of the utility companies. The regulation regarding waste transportation is defined, which also cover regulations of the kerbside collections in many cases (26,8% of the respondents). There is no municipality who had separate decree on bulky waste collection. Kerbside collection has to be organised at least once a year by utility companies or waste management companies. Almost 60% of the respondent organise kerbside collection once a year, 30% twice, 3% more then 2 times, and in case of 1 municipality said that there is no kerbside collection.

37,8% of the respondent know about bulky waste collectors who do it for living at their town. The percentage of the bulky waste collector on national level 0,61%, which is about 60 thousand people. It is interesting that where the municipalities mention bulky waste collectors, there are special decree regarding kerbside collections, and at those places the unemployment rate it nit so high.

23% of the respondent know about bulky waste collectors who go abroad and brings used item to Hungary. Concerning the total population of Hungary this would be is 1800-2000 people on national level.

Mainly the bigger cities, where the population is higher than 10 thousand have used item markets.

43% indicated that there are people at their town who deal with used item trade. 2/3 of these towns are with the population over 10 thousand people. Looking at the whole country, there would be 100 used item markets in the country and 3700 used item shop which sells clothes, or technical devices, or furniture, or sport gears, or all of the above.

26% of the municipalities have their own regulations regarding kerbside collections, but most of them highlight the waste transport. At some municipalities the current situation at kerbside collections causes problems, but they are not willing to change it. Those, who are willing to change would start with selective collection, establishing waste collection centre, but some of them think that the more kerbside collection would have a positive affect on the current situation. Only 1 of them would prohibit bulky waste collection and another would see the solution in transport to waste collection centres. Some of them see it as a problem; most some of them don't see it, so they are not thinking of any modification in the rules.

The evaluation happened by the data from the questionnaires (see below), working with aggregated data. The answers which got the most signs are highlighted. Below these numbers you can see the percentages which mean what percent from all the answers chose that option. At the questions, where we didn't receive answer the percentage is below 100%

Number of citizens	<b>Less than 1000</b> 32%	<b>Less then 5000</b> 33%	Less than 30000 19%	Less than 100000 16%	More than 100000
How many times are there kerbside collections?	<b>1x</b> 61%		2x 28%	More 4% Never 7%	
Is there any special regulation regarding kerbside collection?(e.g.: bulky waste collection is forbidden, only waste collection centres function for this purpose, etc.)*	Yes (5*) 26%			<b>No</b> 74%	
What is the unemployment rare compared to the population of the town?	<b>Below 7%</b> 52%		Between 7-12% 27%	More than 12% 15%	
Please estimate the proportion of the population who lives out of bulky waste collection.	37% of the respondent defined the number				
How does the population relate to bulky waste collectors?	Badly 25%	The citizens help them 6%		<b>Unconcern</b> 27%	

Is there any person, who goes to foreign countries (Austria, Germany, Netherland, etc.) to collect bulky waste at kerbside collections and they sell the collected items in Hungary? If yes, how many people?	Yes, there is 23%	No, there isn't 28%	<b>Don't know</b> 44%
Is there any person who takes used item to countries east and south from Hungary. If yes, how many people?	Yes, there is 1%	<b>Don't know</b> 99%	
Is there used item market at your town? (flea market)?	Yes, there is 14%	<b>No, there isn't</b> 86%	
Is there any local regulations?*	Yes, there is <sup>(12*)</sup> 5%	<b>No, there isn't</b> 88%	
Is there any legal used item trader at your town?	Yes, there is 42%	<b>No, there isn't</b> 56%	
How many second hand shop are in the town?	38% of the respondent defined the number of the second hand shops in the town.		
Does the local government of the town plan to change the current kerbside collection method in the town?*	Yes, it does <sup>(15*)</sup> 6%	<b>No, it doesn't</b> 93%	
Does the local government of the town plan to change the current bulky waste collection in the town?*	Yes, it does <sup>(16*)</sup> 2%	<b>No, it doesn't</b> 94%	

#### 4.7 Authorities-regional/national

The representative of the **Ministry of Rural Development** gave their ideas about the project. For example, the definition of waste depends on the development of each country and it is hard to define when an item becomes waste. Because the environmental norm is under continuous aggravation, disassembling items will have a better effect for the environment in a 5 year prospect regarding LCA. One of the Formalisation possibilities for regulating the bulky waste collector activity could be the waste commercialism, but the bulky waste collectors do not deal with waste but used items. In the commercial regulation the waste is mentioned which can be found under the estate authorisation section (is it simplified) and man must fulfil the notification obligation and it can be controlled in 30 days after the announcement. Due to the lack of local regulation the international situation is difficult to solve. The Ministry of Rural Development suggested making contacts with IMPEL. According to Csaba Markó the bulky waste collection issue has to be framed like the old-clothesman in the seventies, because it was tied to registration and it was done lawfully. They suggested targeting the employment direction because the problem of the bulky waste collectors is not only environmental problem but also social problem, and funds might be possibly on social areas. A wide social joining is necessary which is task of the labour policy. Minimal tasks have to be defined. A program should be

written which would cover training, a method, because on the field of environment protection only prohibition can be formulated.

The **Ministry of National Economy (NGM), Department of Employment** and with the **Ministry of Administration and Justice** suggested that besides the existing researches the different expected interests should be also analyzed in the Formalisation process and the effects of the expected damages should be analyzed as well. Establishing a favourable operational environment the right tools need to be found – it was mentioned many times during the discussion. It is important to develop a close, strictly operating system which does not offend the already existing interests. This system must assure knowledge and preparedness, and it also has to open the door to controlling during the bulky waste collection. The bulky waste collectors can be trained for the changes and by this they receive a method of working, and in the future the responsible ones will be chosen from them. The bases of the training must be developed in 2011 and it should be submitted, and after it is accepted, a 30-hour training should start at 2-3 places, which would be developed by the experts based on the demands, and by the continuous controlling the final version of the training program could be finalised. Besides this, the bulky waste collectors have to feel that they are trusted and they are part of a functional system. This structure needs to be operating accordingly to existing laws and regulations. It could be understood as a new community development what can be the base to reach the aim of the project. Finding the key elements are important – it is already defined by the TransWaste project, because there is a good partner relationship with the leader of the bulky waste collection (LOMI) centre in Devecser – and the problem should be solved there first of all, and in the future it can make stand as a sample. By the tragedy in Devecser, with the above mentioned initiation many people's life could be solved. It would be worthy to attract the people who do bulky waste collection currently, who have experience and all the others could stand behind them and they would get proper knowledge (language, law, waste handling, etc.) because it is necessary for the changes. In the last 2 years of the project by the end of the first year the training should be carried out, and the second year could be the monitoring period. The goal is having the bulky waste collectors behave in a cooperative way, and to answer the purposes and expectations.

The processor and refurbishing centre will play an important role in the future which will appear in the Hungarian waste management regulation based on the European directives.

In the Transdanubium – around Pécs – because of the low employment rate and the inadequate social situation a civil organisation established a centre (its activity is collection, disassemble, selling), but because at first it was specialised for cars and then for furniture, many areas were not covered which is affected by the bulky waste collection activities. Currently there is no information whether the centre still operates or not.

This situation should not build on the problem of Austria, but it should be a bottom-up approach. It affects 3 areas:

- Employment
- Social development
- Environment protection

A suggestion was formulated to present this issue on the governing level and to contact the under-secretary, who is responsible for environment issues referring to the KIM and NGM positive cooperation.

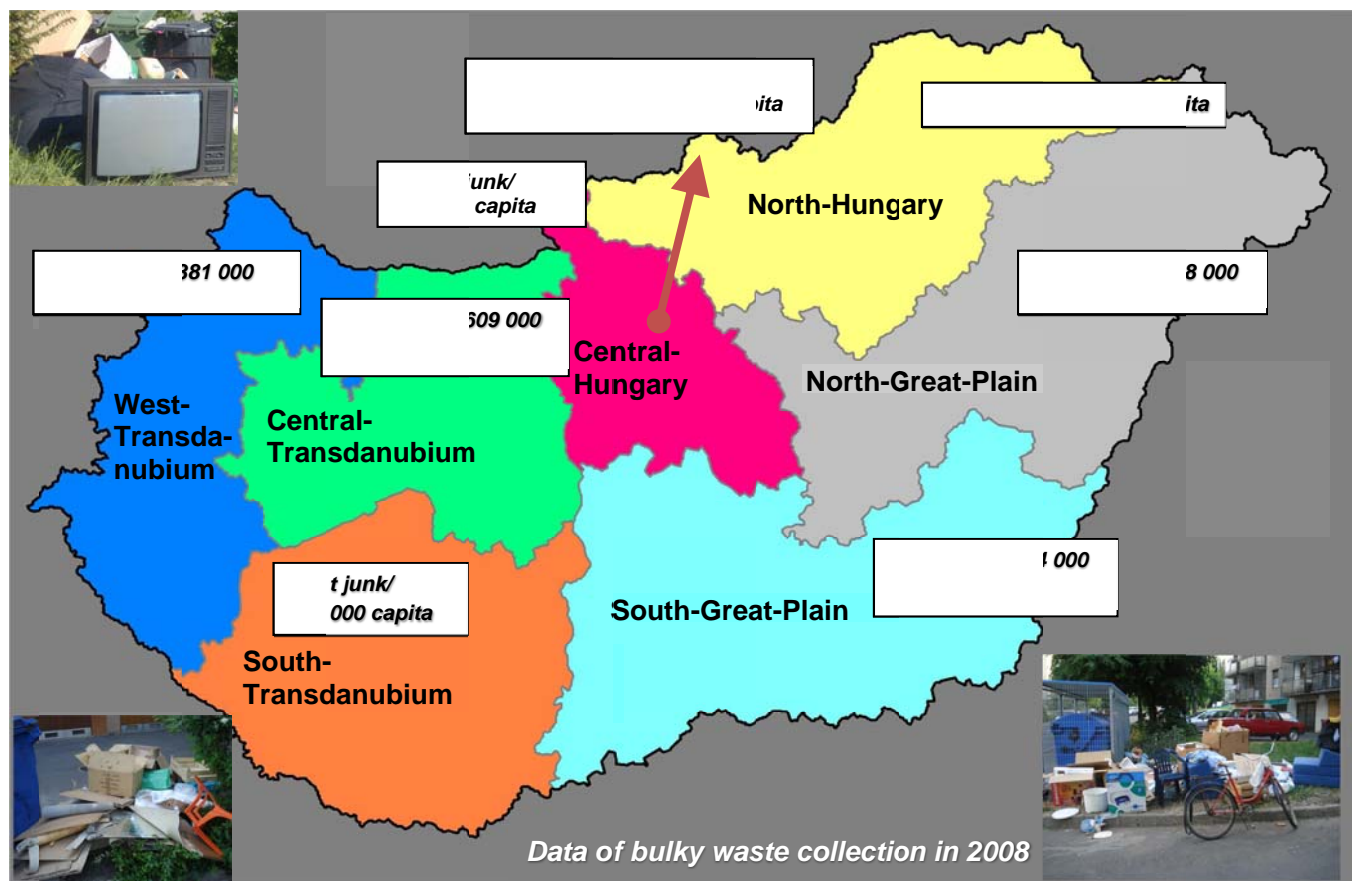


### 4.8 Researchers-universities

We have been working together with a research group for a university at the Westerns part of Hungary. They – as sociologist looked at the problem mainly from the social point of view and gave important issues to look at. They also helped with the method of getting information from them. In their opinion there should be an appealing, regulated opportunity for the bulky waste collectors whereby they would give up these activities, and the current situation would have to be eliminated, or side by side on one hand to legalise and on the other hand to roll back this situation. Everything needs to be done such a ways that the bulky waste collectors shouldn't be scared and they should feel that they are safe.

### 4.9 WM companies

By the summarized data in 830 towns of the country 3 million citizens were covered. The 1<sup>st</sup> figure shows the amount of collected waste by kerbside collections on a regional level in 2008. The small picture defines the average amount of the waste/households/year according to the country.



**Figure 4.3: Amount of collected waste by kerbside collections on a regional level in 2008**

The evaluation happened by the data from the questionnaires (see below), working with aggregated data. The answers which got the most signs are highlighted. Below these numbers you can see the percentages which mean what percent from all the answers chose that option. At the questions, where we didn't receive answer the percentage is below 100%

How many towns are supplies by your	830 towns
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company?			
How many households/citizen does it mean?	<b>1,1 million households/3 million citizens</b>		
How many waste collections centres does your company operate? How many operated?	<b>80</b>		
How many kerbside collections are there at your area??	<b>1x</b> <b>54%</b>	<b>2x</b> <b>44%</b>	<b>More</b> <b>2%</b>
How does the kerbside collection happen?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>At public places 53%</b></li> <li>• Separate route by fractions</li> <li>• Guarded container at certain areas 1%</li> <li>• Removal from houses by order 42%</li> <li>• Other</li> </ul>		
Is there any regulation about kerbside collections at your town?*	Yes, there is 30%	<b>No, there isn't</b> <b>67%</b>	
What is the amount of the collected bulky waste by kerbside collections done by you annually?	<b>25000 tons/2008</b>		
Please estimate the composition of the bulky waste.	<b>34</b>	<b>% wood, furniture</b>	
	<b>5</b>	<b>% metal</b>	
	<b>14</b>	<b>% technical product</b>	
	<b>11</b>	<b>% paper, book</b>	
	<b>12</b>	<b>% clothes, rag</b>	
	<b>3</b>	<b>% tires</b>	
	<b>21</b>	<b>% other</b>	
Do you collect hazardous waste by separate collection?	Yes 20%	<b>No</b> <b>77%</b>	
In case of kerbside collections at public places, what estimated proportion of the bulky waste gets to bulky waste collectors?	<b>19 %</b>		
Do the citizens cooperate by kerbside collections?	<b>They take advantage of kerbside collections</b>  <b>88,3%</b>	They don't pay attention to the dates  <b>5%</b>	
Do kerbside collections concern institution?	Yes, WMC take their bulky was away as well <b>23,3%</b>	<b>No, WMC do not take their bulky waste away</b> <b>70%</b>	

Do you select bulky waste after collection?	Yes, there are more fractions 20%	Only hazardous 10%	<b>No, there is no capacity for it</b> 60%
Are there bulky waste collectors at kerbside collection?	<b>Yes</b> 94%		No 3%
Can bulky waste collector go into waste collection centres?	Yes 3%		<b>No</b> 77%
Can bulky waste collector go into landfills?	Yes 7%		<b>No</b> 84%
Do you have any problems with bulky waste collectors?	<b>Yes</b> 46%		No 40%
Are there any bulky waste collector organisation at landfills who do post collection legally?	Yes 20%		<b>No</b> 68%
Are you planning any changes regarding kerbside collection in the close future?*	Yes 20%		<b>No</b> 64%
Are you planning any changes regarding informal bulky waste collection in the close future?*	Yes 0%		<b>No</b> 67%

#### 4.10 Used items-market stands

The Devecser vendors do not have their own shops, except 2 people. They rent a part of the hutment, which is the market area and it is also what the lomis use for storage and shop. In the big part of the cases the lomis people check the collected goods only at home. At this time they find out whether the electronic equipment works or not. Some people check the goods in Austria, because they don't want to bring wrong equipment. Many of them sell only in Devecser. The other markets are in Észak-Dunántúl (North -Transdanubium): in Celldömölk, Pápa, Veszprém, Ajka, Tapolca city and some people travel to the Alföld (Great Plain). The lomises sell different kind of goods or some lomis specialised only on certain items. In many cases the electric/electronic goods (TV, computer, hi-fi, etc.) are broken. The most common goods are: lawnmower, bicycle, clothes, tyre, chairs, skating, ski things, toys, etc.

At this amount, we have to consider that 10 lomises stated that they don't bring in any waste. Some of them don't bring broken items from Austria; the other part gives their unmarketable things to the beggars or patrol services. According to lomises, from every van (11 m<sup>3</sup>) 1 m<sup>3</sup> of goods will be waste. Usually the simpler goods are repaired (bicycle, maybe lawnmower) by lomises (in most cases). They rarely pay for the repair, because this amount would be higher than the sale price. In their opinion the Austrian residents don't get their things repaired due to the high repair costs and the favourable prices of new products. On the other hand, the German people are saving more; they use their things for a longer period and give up theirs more difficultly. Most of them, 15 out of 26 transport the waste to the right places. Many of them know only MÉH (waste collector firm) as a selective collecting point. The vendors of Devecser earn

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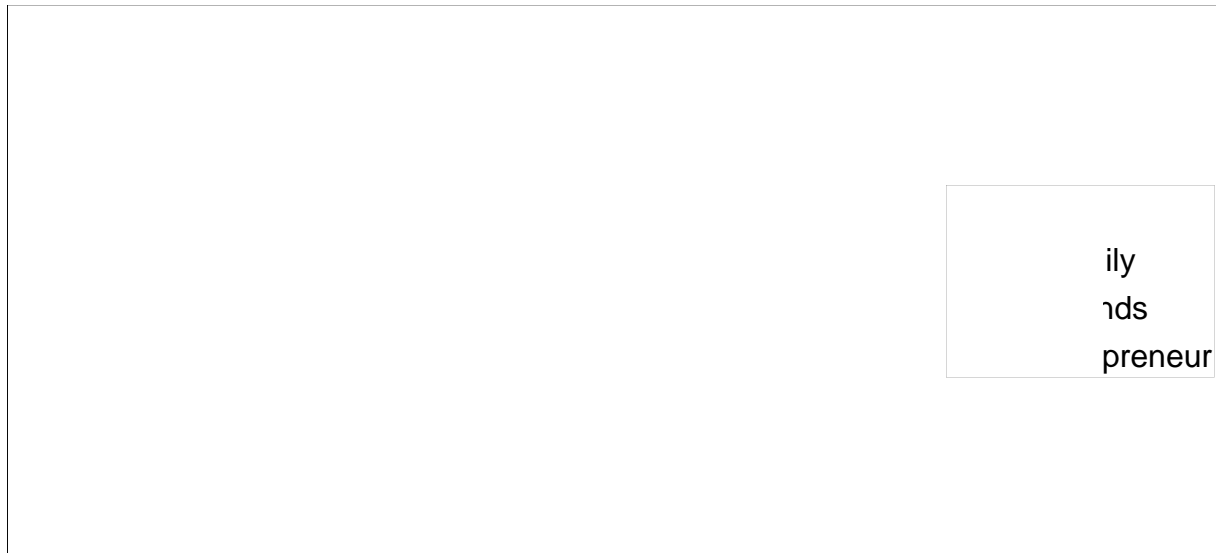


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money from this activity. Usually they don't find job in their profession or they inherit this lifestyle. Some lomis work under trading concern (they have licences and give bill after the shopping), many lomis work to survive their every-day-life (they are selling the goods in exchange for any goods (vegetable, potato, flour, etc. - barter). They good contact with other bulky waste collectors, if it is necessary they help each other, and they only sometimes have conflicts with each other. In general there was no conflict. The most significant is the family collaboration, see on the 2<sup>nd</sup> figure.



**Figure 4.4: Cooperation between bulky waste collectors**

Most of the vendors already met resellers, who sell in Devecser or come from the East part of Hungary or from eastern countries. Calculation of the amount of these goods is very difficult, which is according to the lomis about 20%.

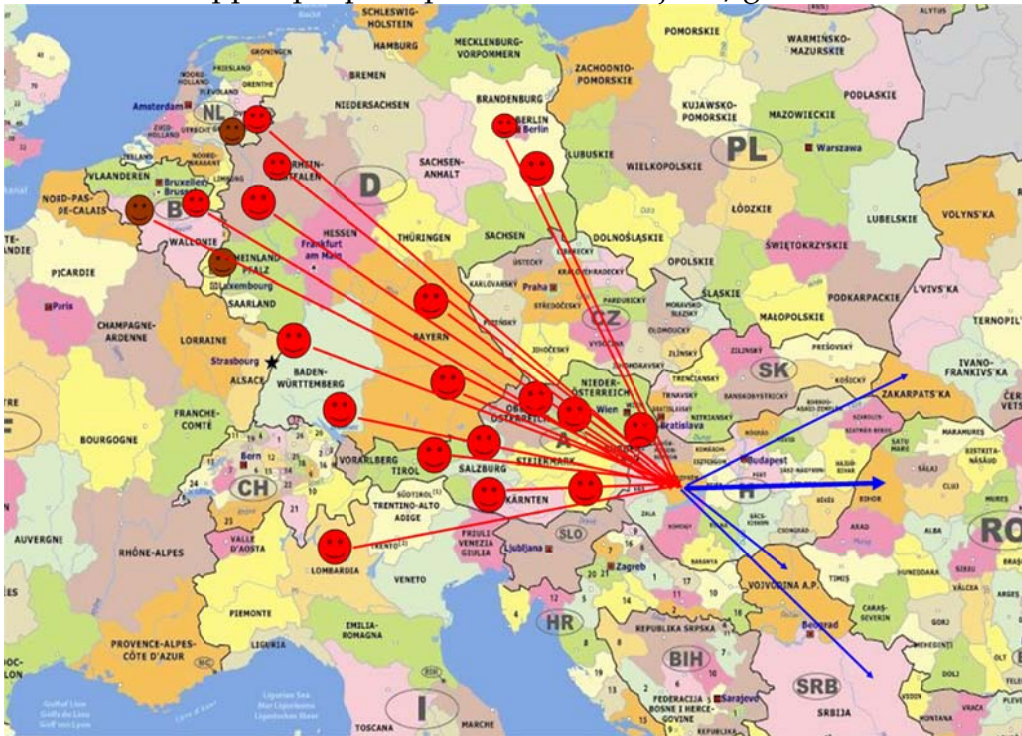
From the neighbouring settlements, from the Balaton and from Keszthely, Dombóvár, Székesfehérvár From Hungary: Pécs, Szeged, Siófok, Nyíregyháza, Kecskemét, Budapest, Alföld. From abroad: Romania, Ukraine, Serbia, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Germany, Netherland and Austria. Austrians often purchase goods to their residencies at the lake Balaton and to the neighbouring settlements. Most often Romanian and Ukrainian customers were indicated.

While the tax agency keeps random controls in Hungary every year, in Austria the police control. The number of positive answers indicates how serious the problem is. Some mentioned that he is being stopped by every fifth route. Fines can be from a few hundred even up to 1200 Euros. The main reasons are overloaded vehicles, engineering problems, speeding, banned collection of wastes, etc. For the question: what should be done to improve the bulky waste collection activity, the followings were often mentioned: to stop being blamed for theft in Austria and to know sources for goods, reducing control by the Austrian police, reducing the number of lomis. Some agreed to have a common central facility, but some see it as a new source of problems and conflicts in the lomis community. They would like to have a licence to do this activity in the future. Most of them mentioned the spring and autumn as the best season to get junks. Winter is clearly the worst; usually no collection is done in this season.

The average prices are indicated in the table. Prices differ significantly, depending on quality, usability, brand, etc. Selling price for some goods:

## 4.11 Used items-transporters

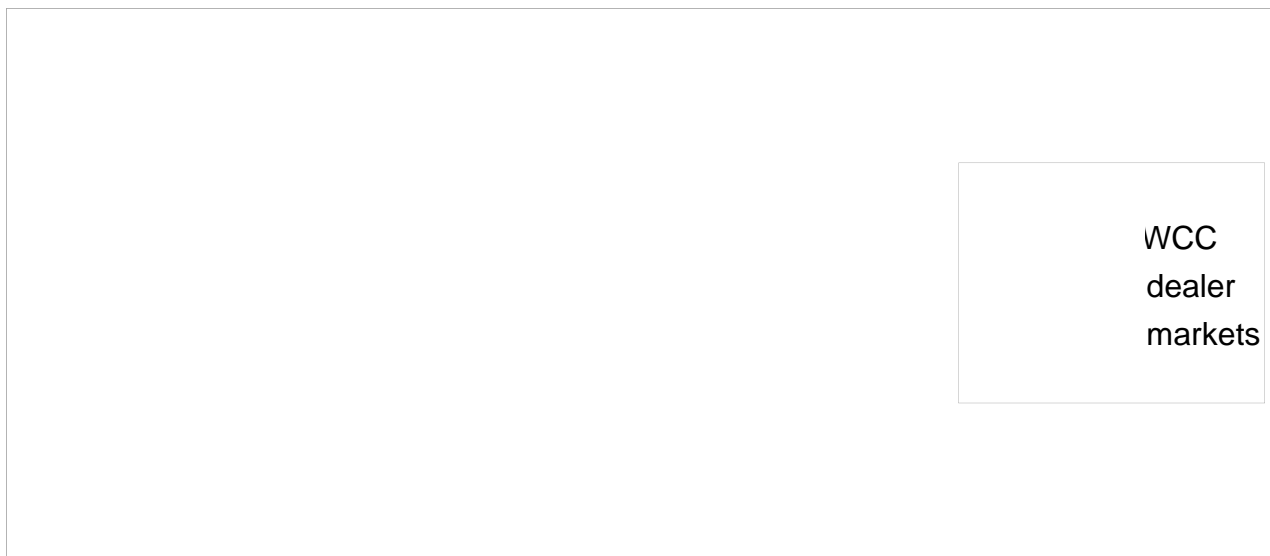
Regarding the destination for bulky waste collection the frequent provinces are marked on the map below. One lomis travels for goods to Nederland; there he seeks the used items markets. In these markets, handicapped people repair and sell the junk/goods.



**Figure 4.5: Destination for bulky waste collection**

Based on the answers, the poorer bulky waste collectors go to the nearest provinces of Austria, while the better exchequer bulky waste collectors go further (Germany, Nederland...), but the number of these people is less. The brown points show the destination for furniture. The great parts of the responsive collect the goods from private houses and in front of junkyards. A number of persons, who go to Austria, noticed that forceful sanction was in Burgenland provinces against Hungarian lomises recently. For example: waste management companies (Firman Ltd., etc.) forbid the lomi act, prohibited collection in front of junkyards and private houses (in this case, the Austrian residents have to pay fine: about 500€).

Many of lomises go to given address for the goods, in front of fixed junkyards or private houses. Along the way, if they have luck, they are able to find other goods or addresses. They don't give anybody their own address list.



**Figure 4.6: Place of bulky waste collection in Austria**

We met the following possibilities for getting information:

- The lomises (in this case 2 people) ask certain items from residents by leaflets
- Advertisement (2 lomises)
- Information from Internet
- Getting an own address list
- Questioning
- Austrian acquaintance helps them (3 lomises)

10 out of 26 people can speak German well. The rest know only the bases of the lomise words. Those lomises, who go to private house or junkyard for goods, ask the citizens of find them themselves when they want to get in contact with them.

In average they have been doing this work for 6,6 years.

The age group of the people that have been asked was mixed. It covers the whole scale of earning residents. Some people from the senior lomises do this act for more than 20 years. In case of more families the work is inherited from generation to generation.

The big parts of lomises go to abroad for goods once or more per week. Some of them come back right away, some of them – who live further – stay there even 1 week or two.

Greater part of lomises transport by van (they called it “bus”). 5 people of respondents rent a van or trailer per way (the trailer rental fee: 9€/day without bill). Some people lease the van.

More and more people have to buy the goods from used item dealers, markets or private houses. In some cases, they have to bargain with the owner. 2 people answered that they pay money to employees, who helps them or drives the car.

The fuel cost/way to Austria: 150-220€; to Germany: twice this amount, plus 180€ goods buying/way.

(Every time they have to spare money for the accidental fine of police.)

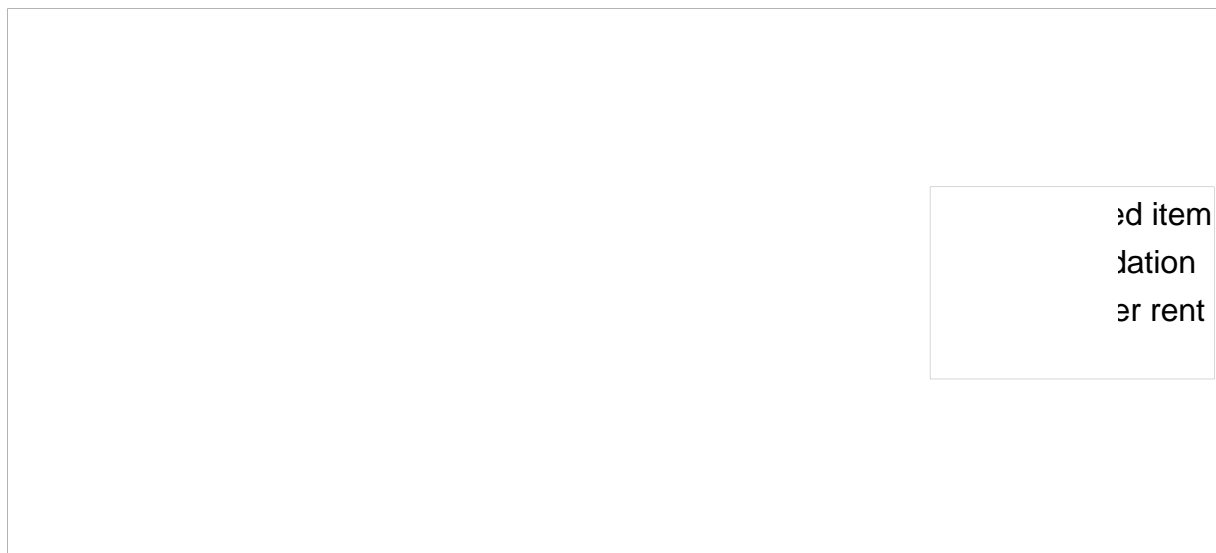


Figure 4.7: Spent money by bulky waste collection

## 4.12 Non governmental organisations

The Association of **Hungarian Roma Independent Lobby** tries to represent the Roma bulky waste collectors' interest. They are a great contact to those Roma people who live from bulky waste collection, but it is important to mention, that it is not a Roma issue.

Besides the authorities, civil organisations have an important role as well. In Százhalombatta there is a **Social Scout Service** and they call themselves **Waste commando** (Hulladékkommandó). 19 of them were watching the bulky waste collectors for 2 weeks and they had positive experiences with them, because they could cooperate with them and they listened to the social service when they asked them not to leave a mess behind them. They – as it was mentioned many times – build upon trust. Hereby the public services were satisfied because they could carry away the waste much easier. It is important not to prohibit, but to control:

- If they leave a mess, they should get a fine
- If they select, they could to that

What the Waste commando does:

- They are not authority, they do not discipline
- They try to hunt up the offender
- Hidden watch
- Education – competition for children
- 35 volunteers work there (teachers, engineer, mother, etc,)

## 4.13 Conclusions for Hungary

### Formalisation possibilities:

The condition of the establishment and the function of the Association of Hungarian waste collectors' interest group (initiated by Mr. Kozák with 100 members) is still under

Formalisation. The constitution of the Association was developed concerning the types of activities avoiding the word waste. The main aim of the Association is to help the people who currently “work” as waste collectors on the Hungarian-Austrian border with trainings and with development of refurbishing centres and further the aims are the following:

- Professional interest protection – as main aim
- Environment protection
- Waste management activities
- Social and Cultural aims – in behalf of training
- Economic aims
- Rural development

The Association will take practical steps in the future towards the following:

- Individuals and Ltd can be members of the Association who can do economic activities because the Association is “only” capable to protect the waste collectors’ interests.
- Lobby activities for the waste collectors
- Submit project proposals (local and EU funding)
- Environment protection related solution toward used items, toward unnecessary items, toward items which are out of use and toward items which are working but are out of use.

The only way to handle this issue is if the collected items are considered **used items** or **gifts** instead of waste.

The waste pickers should keep a contract with them for items they want to bring over the border. This contract should be used if the waste collectors buy certain items and also when they receive these items as gift. This contract/application should contain the types of items, the amount and the price in German with the Austrian or German citizens’ personal information and signature which would prove the origin of the item. In Hungary it should also stand for a delivery note if the police stop them and for voucher when they want to resell it in Hungary.

There should be a service with a head-quarter which is licensed. It would have its own internet website and could advertise in each Austrian province. They could advertise in local newspapers, radios, and also in local television. The proper marketing “*environment conscious used item buy up*” is necessary and if it works well, the Austrian citizens will get to know it and use it as a service. The used item commercialism can be done by an Ltd. A call centre could be also set up which would provide Austrian addresses, so it would be between the Hungarian waste collectors and the Austrian citizens so the employees would speak fluent German.

### Long term aims:

- Refurbishing centres
- Establishment of tester units (technical tester)
- Education (environment protection, waste handling, commercialism, German language, etc.)

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- Directing waste handling around (used item) markets

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## 5 Slovakia

### 5.1 Introduction

Based on our cross-border cooperation, we decided to consider only the south and west border area of our country as a substantial. That means, that we have kept interviewing overall 248 stakeholders for research in cooperation with The Ministry of Environment of Slovak Republic, waste management company Enviwork and the national magazine 21 storočie, as an experts in this field of research. Cooperation with previously listed organizations have gave us complex picture about the situation around waste collecting in Slovakia. As well, we had the opportunity to questioned all of WCC for WEEE in our country.

In our research we have asked all questioned stakeholders this main questions, that are:

- Where they see problems of an informal collections , and what that means for them?
- Where can they see solutions, whats theirs ideas?

### 5.2 Waste management associations (WMA)

#### 5.2.1 Facts and figures

We questioned 9 of 15 collective system organizations for waste collecting , that is all WMA from our country. The organizations are: SLOVMAS, ELECTRO LOGOS, NATUR-PACK, ELKOMIN and ELKOMIN -EEE producers association, LIMIT RECYCLING SLOVAKIA, SEWA, ENVIDOM.

#### 5.2.2 Problems and difficulties

In our interviews with collective system associations, we have found out , that they are not affected by informal collectors as much as waste processing companies. However representatives of collective system ENVIDOM warn , that the quality of waste of the collection is still threatened by thieves. In Slovakia there is a main problem not only with collection points for waste but mainly with mobile collections of waste. The informal collectors are watching, where are organized collections of waste, and soon as ,they know where, they come first before the collection is done ready to go for processing and they picked up everything they want from the electro equipment (for example- compressors of refrigerators and motors from washing machines)that are components that are most valuable. The worst is that the rest of the electro equipment, they throw somewhere to the black landfills.

There has been noticed cases, where the employees of collecting companies where threatened by informal collectors .

#### 5.2.3 Solutions and ideas

Reasons why collective systems has to cooperate closer with municipalities and urban areas new way for mobile collection of waste. The new system is being done as follows >at first the inhabitants of certain municipality make a report to the municipal authority the address and type of waste they want them to collect. Several days ahead of planed collection the municipality authority give us the list of addresses, where the waste need to be collected. After



that the inhabitants at a specified time, lay out their electro equipment that need to be picked up in front of their houses or in the case that inhabitants are living in the block of flats, they lay out the waste in their common entrance. The only negative output is there always must be somebody from the house, who opens door.

## 5.2.4 Conclusion

This way, there is less possibilities for informal collectors to know where the collections are happening. This leads to statistics where the number of stolen electro equipment or its valuable parts, could keep falling. Of course, because this new created solution is in process only with some municipalities its not so effective as it could be.

## 5.3 Authorities-local/regional

As mentioned above, some of the municipalities are in process of cooperation with collective systems and waste processing companies, some are going to be. There have been questioned 41 municipalities from the area of research. All of them reported occurrences of informal collectors in less or more cases. They have noticed illegal landfills close to their areas, and had reported them to Regional Office of Environment or Slovak Inspectorate of Environment

## 5.4 WCC/Waste processing companies

### 5.4.1 Facts and figures

We had opportunity to interviewed all WEEE processing companies that means 22 of 22 from Slovakia. They all managed the nearly same answers on problem with informal collectors/pickers. As well we had questioned 10 of 33( amount of all companies for this type of waste) waste processing companies for old automobiles.

### 5.4.2 Problems and difficulties

Problems lays in two dimensions. The first is that these devices that they withdraw, are taken by them somewhere to be processed, so they are basically rip-off for profits from the materials that are withdraw and the company is is loosing this profits.

The second thing is that the waste has got to go processing plants and had been receive and recorded into the system, but then while this electro equipment had been separated had to be noticed there are missing all the valuable components and materials that are important for business, so that means again loosing profits plus storage of the electro .equipment anyway so additional financing needed..

The third problem is that when informal waste pickers stealing and pick the materials that interest them so they must get rid of. And that usually leads to the fact that this waste ends up in rivers, forests, fields, just thrown anywhere in the uninhabited parts of the country. Even makes it so well known "wild dumps" of waste.



They actually don't remove/ steal the waste from the collection plants as in the Austrian, although illegal, in Slovakia there is no re/used items market system so stealing this WEEE mainly only for profit from materials within the equipment, after they got what they want the equipment is for them priceless, so they need to get rid of it.

Another problem lies in the fact that these collectors are not stealing from the collections points, but in the villages just before the legal collection are organized, directly in front of the houses of citizens. In some cases, those informal collectors knock on inhabitants doors directly, in some cases they identify as official collectors, and other cases they even threatening those inhabitants. As was researched, questioned inhabitants didn't inform authorities about these incidents.

However, some people from staff of collecting organization said, that they had a situations when Hungarian speaking pickers have stopped by their collecting point, and we have been asked to let them batteries from cars and to pay them for the collection.

In some of these waste processing organization, were problems with internal staff, that is working in separating process. They noticed theft from them, in small amounts but regularly. They said its because they employ staff with social difficulties..

### 5.4.3 Solutions and ideas

The waste processing organization Enviwork, s.r.o. proposes an effective solution.

The so-called "electro-folk collection" brings negative impact not only on the statistics of waste management, economic entities engaged in collecting and assessing this type of waste, but particularly on the environment. Given the fact that unauthorized collectors are interested only in lucrative part of EEE, which can sell for a profit, when there is improper handling of WEEE to release hazardous substances into the air, contaminating soil, water resources, and also to the degradation of valuable secondary raw materials. Moreover, the electro-equipment collecting activity of "folk collectors" is not illegal. Informal collectors of WEEE defending themselves, that they do not collect waste, but still functional appliances, but later they dismantled it, collected valuable material and sell it. That part of their activities is illegal. Other unnecessary parts either are taken to a disposer, or - at worst - mostly end up in illegal landfill.

Profitability and efficiency of processing plants are built on the electrical business with recyclable materials. But the ever-increasing percentage of delivered, but "gutted" electrical equipment, negatively affects their economic performance. And also distort the data in the statistics.

The principle of operation of the new model is as follow  $\neg$ , On the basis of the "polluter pays" are producers and importers of electrical and electronic equipment legally responsible for managing of waste, that is becoming of products after the end of lifecycle. The costs, that are made by producers, while taking care of the waste, are covered by recycling fee.. That has been paid by consumers in the same time of purchasing products. The recycling fee will generate the resources to waste producers to meet the commitments set out in the collection and evaluation of electrical quantities provided under the applicable European directives. This obligation shall be mainly provided through collective systems that funds from recycling fees used to finance collection and recycling of waste by specialist firms - contract partners (private, if appropriate, public companies, which are involved in collection and recovery of WEEE). This scenario, however, undermine the informal, amateur collectors, for which the whole chain is followed by suffer from a lack of all those profiting from their activities. The situation came to the stage, that are not mentioned entities from which to finance their business activities. The new deal

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proposes to create a central storage of WEEE, in which waste could also be brought by citizens, and informal collectors. They would be rewarded for "the collection and transportation" to the central warehouses, in the form of a fee (the amount of the fee is not yet set). There is one main condition, that the electrical and electronic equipment brought by those collectors must be in a complete state.

#### 5.4.4 Conclusion

The first step in resolution, is the mutual cooperation of all actors. Basic roots to the implementation of the proposal are already established in Slovakia. From this year - 2011 - were opened three central warehouses in Bratislava, Záhorská Bystrica, Rohožník and the other are in state of preparation. Before the implementation of the proposal will be running in full swing, there still needs to be find answers to the following questions: „How will citizens and informal collectors be informed with such a possibility? Will the system of legal recovery of WEEE enough incentive to at least partially reduce the percentage of "illegal landfills"? What is the fee? Will be set up fee sufficient enough to informal WEEE collectors drove into central warehouses? ". To answer these questions Slovak team is currently working on and already in the near future should be known the answers. According to preliminary expectations, the first results could already be seen after a year of beginning the idea.

### 5.5 Non governmental organisations

#### 5.5.1 Facts and figures

Non governmental organization - Regional association of municipalities Danube area has been interviewed during research. There has been found common point for project TransWaste - problem with illegal waste dumps - partially caused by informal waste collectors.

#### 5.5.2 Problems and difficulties

Project "Tackling illegal waste dumps in the region of the Danube" is implemented with the support of the European Community.

Creating illegal dumps (hereinafter abbreviated as CSS) is now a general problem across the country, which necessitates acute solution. NSO (Illegal waste dumping sites) only back around the village and surrounding countryside, but also threaten soil and groundwater.

Risk of NSO in our existence The area aware of mayors and therefore initiated a solution to the problem through the project.

The general objective of the project is to reduce the negative impact on the environment and raise awareness of the population.

Project summary:

The project will address the problem of illegal waste dumps, which occur in almost each and every village. It is mainly to reduce the negative impact of consumption of the population on the environment. Austrian partners have more experience of waste that mediate the workshops to be organized primarily for the mayors and representatives of local governments.

It is necessary to remove the existing landfill and provide an alternative waste disposal and separate collection to re-create any fly-tipping. It is necessary awareness of the whole



population, whether at schools and pupils in them, but for all people through posters, leaflets, radio programs and meetings.

Description of activities involved in the project:

Determining the amount of landfill - is the first important activity which has occurred. It is necessary to know why the views of the region's population tipping arise, what do these people think, how they could be addressed by them.

Workshop on problem solving - the workshop will be presented information on the scope of landfills. Austrian partners describe the system, what works for them, such as providing separate collection, disposal and waste treatment. Which suggest ways to help them, and to be avoided. Explain the motivation of people for their behavior and conduct public education and how they ran. The workshop will propose a way forward in the preparation of the following activities, education and waste disposal.

Raising awareness of the population - the population to provide sufficient information about the project through general radio, websites, flyers, posters. It is necessary to increase awareness of the environment, explain the significant negative impact on nature around them, if you throw away the waste to the countryside. It is important to know the concept of "Sustainable Development (SD), which does not mean that we have inherited the earth from our parents, but means that we have borrowed it from our children."

Alternative waste disposal - that the NSO not make again, it is necessary to provide citizens with the possibility of disposing of waste legally. It should be in sufficient quantity to procure containers for separate waste collection, as well as alternatives for the disposal of electronic waste and bulky, either the regular collection, or the creation of transitional space (Harvesting Justice), which will be free of bulky, construction and electronic waste snitch.

### 5.5.3 Solutions and ideas

Project evaluation - after the removal of existing NSO during the first weeks has to be monitored the former landfill site. Hold a meeting where we will evaluate the success of the project under study on the extent of entry of illegal landfill space, track the number of schools and children in them, which participated in expanded environmental education, number of children participating in tours in Austria, the success will be measured amount of education waste is collected at collection points or in one-off bulk waste removal.

mapping the current state of illegal dumps

### 5.5.4 Conclusion

Proposals for solutions

- 1, Basic Principles - Disposal of waste treated comprehensively detailed inventory of its sites throughout the village time consistency in the disposal of landfill
- 2, Prevention of re-NSO within the boundaries in rural.

## 5.6 Governmental organisations

The Ministry of Environment of Slovak Republic in cooperation with organizations working on the field of waste management preparing a new decree law about waste management. There should be included some of new principles and definitions of aspects in waste management in accordance with EU legislative.



## 5.7 Final Conclusions

The main problem are occurring for the waste processing organization, as they are loosing profits for business, and for the environment too. There has been developed strategy and possible solutions of these problems mentioned. There are still several open questions:

How to effective motivate informal sector for cooperation?

Ways to inform informal sector and public about new possibilities more effective?

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## 6 Poland

### 6.1 Introduction

For Poland the Transwaste project has a two-fold focus:

1. local waste picking
2. trading & transport of cross-border waste picking

The **local waste picking** aims at three waste streams: metal scrap (including bulky material as well as cans), bulky waste (or used goods) and WEEE. Especially the informal collection of metal scrap is omni-present. As the local waste-picking is an all-over Poland phenomenon, one Voivodeship (administrative region, comparable to a province) was selected for further analysis: Lower Silesia. Reason for this choice lies in the geographic location (the researchers live there, which makes the very labour-intensive field-work easier to organise).

The **waste picked abroad** and transported into Poland naturally passes the border. Because of a complete lack of data on this topic from the side of the local, regional and national administration a region was to be found along the border with a country with a more developed economy and waste management system (i.e. the German border). Considering the fact, that the waste picking in Germany was observed mainly in the Bundeslaender Saxonia, Bavaria and Berlin, the Voivodeship of Lower Silesia is the best fitting area for further research. Additionally it has a border with the Czech Republic. The latter has a comparably developed economy, but a far better organised waste management system. Lower Silesia is as well the Polish region closest to Austria, so that eventual informally collected waste flowing to Poland will be detected as well.

In Lower Silesia, there is only one Waste Collection Centre, located in Jelenia Góra. At this centre there is no activity of informal waste collectors. The local waste picking focuses mostly on metals, hence a considerable number of metals pickers and metal shop owners was interviewed.

Environmental and social local authorities in and around Milicz, Wrocław, Święta Katarzyna, Polkowice, Zgorzelec, Dzierżoniów, Lubin, Legnica and Jelenia Góra were interviewed.

The national ministry of environment as well as regional ministries have been contacted. Governmental organisations like the environmental inspectorate, the road inspection, the border guards, customs both on regional level, but also on national and sometimes local level were interviewed. The contacted non-governmental organisations were the Organisation of Polish Roma, the charity Brata Alberta, social initiatives for re-use and recycling, this kind of organisations turned out to be difficult to contact.

Both private (Alba, Sita) and municipal waste management companies (Jelenia Góra, Milicz, Legnica), landfills (Poznań, MUNDO, Chemeko Systems), secondary materials traders (Surmet, Centrozłom, Papermet) were visited.

The used-item traders were met at second hand markets, whereas the transporters, which are closely related, were contacted during border control actions in co-operation with the customs.



## 6.2 WCC-workers/managers

In Lower Silesia there is only one Waste Collection Centre operated in Jelenia Góra. The management of this centre declared that there is no activity of informal collectors at or near the centre. During a visit this was confirmed. Hence, no interviews with WCC workers and managers, as well as visitors and informal collectors were conducted in order to investigate their standpoints.

## 6.3 Metal shop-owners

In August, September and October 2009 owners of metal shops in Wrocław, Jelenia Góra and Zgorzelec were interviewed. Goal of the interviews was both to get acquainted with their points of view and to determine the amounts of metals collected by informal collectors. These collectors are collectors that operate locally. They are distinguished from the cross-border collectors, both in activity type, geographical range and focussed upon material.

### 6.3.1 Facts and figures

In total, 29 shop owners were interviewed. However, not all answered all questions. Shops are generally operated all year round, but the owners claimed the months March/April until September/October the better season. In some occasions however, lower activities in the summer months were reported.

The shop owners were asked explicitly to their yearly amounts of traded metals. In general they were not open to answer this question, claiming this to be 'company secret'. Alternatively the data in the table below was obtained, which was apparently not confidential.

**Table 6.1: Interview results of metal shop owners and operators**

	number of informal collectors (no./day)	delivered by collectors, average (kg/day)	delivered by collectors, maximum (kg/day)
Total	871	16.701	20.701
Average	35	726	1.218
Median	25	300	375
Maximum	150	3.000	5.000
Minimum	3	0,8	0,8
Responses	25	23	17

As the stated amounts for the metals received from waste pickers show a very large spread and it cannot be excluded whether this number as well included private people delivering metals, it was decided to base the amounts of collected materials on the results from the interview with the informal collectors themselves. In Deliverable 3.1.1 the calculation method and results thereof are provided.

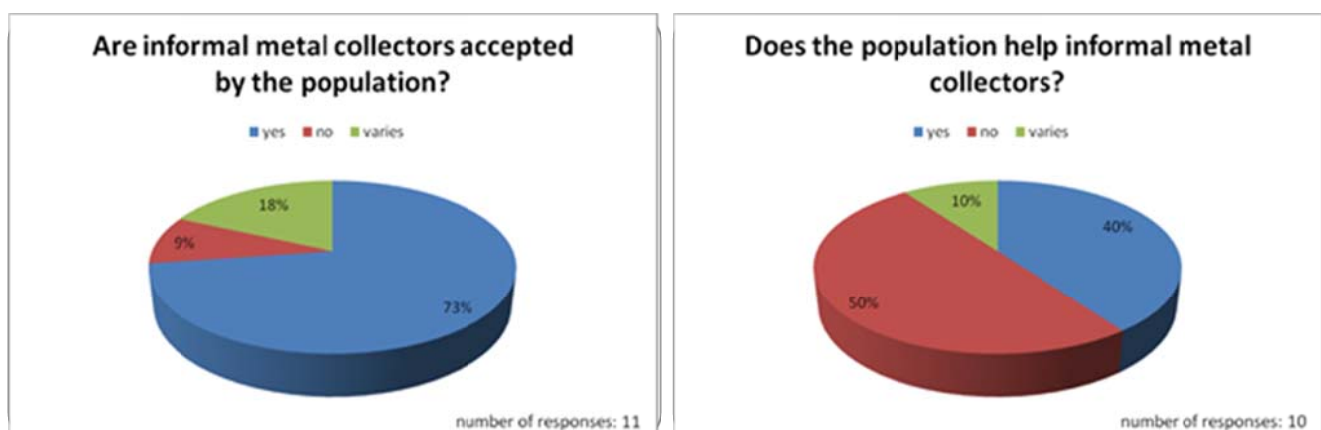
The clients of metal shops are provided in the figure below. In the given percentages are overlaps, many shops mentioned that they have more than one type of client.



**Figure 6.1: Overview of different types of clients delivering metals to metal shops**

The overview shows that most metal shops have private persons, companies and informal collectors as customers. The shop owners tend to distinguish between homeless people and informal collectors (in most cases where homeless people are mentioned, also informal collectors are mentioned). The term private customer may as well include informal collectors.

The metal shop owners were also asked about the relation between inhabitants and informal collectors. In the figures below the results thereof are provided.



**Figure 6.2: Relation between population and informal collectors as perceived by metal shop owners**

Metal shop owners perceive the population to accept informal collectors. Up to 40% of the shop owners considers the inhabitants to help (e.g. in form of keeping aluminium cans separate next to waste containers) the informal collectors.

### 6.3.2 Problems and difficulties

The main problem of the consulted metal shop owners are the dropped prices for metals. The interviews were taken in fall of 2009, in the middle of the financial crises. A minority also linked the crisis to worsened sales options.

### 6.3.3 Solutions and ideas

Apart from demands for higher market prices, no ideas for solutions were provided by the metal shop owners. In the run of the project the metal prices have returned to pre-crisis levels however.

### 6.3.4 Conclusion

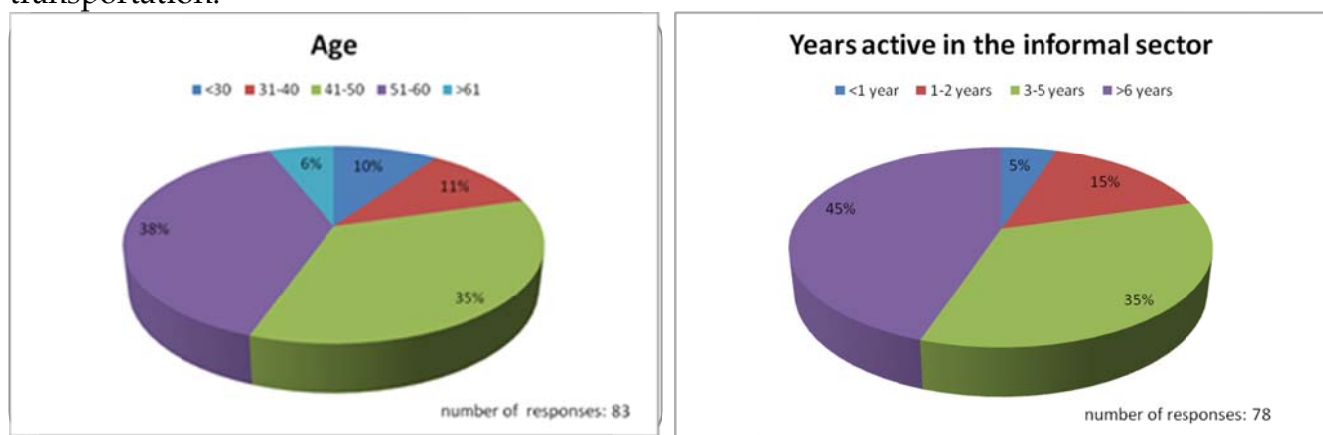
The main problem of the metal shop owners were the low metal prices at the time of the interviews. By then, the market has regained. The shop owners are satisfied with the informal collectors.

## 6.4 Metal shop - informal collectors

Together with the metal shop owners also the informal collectors visiting these were interviewed. Aim was to get to know their point of view and problems, as well as to determine the amount of metals they collect. In fall of 2009 in the cities Wrocław and Jelenia Góra a total of 83 informal collectors were interviewed.

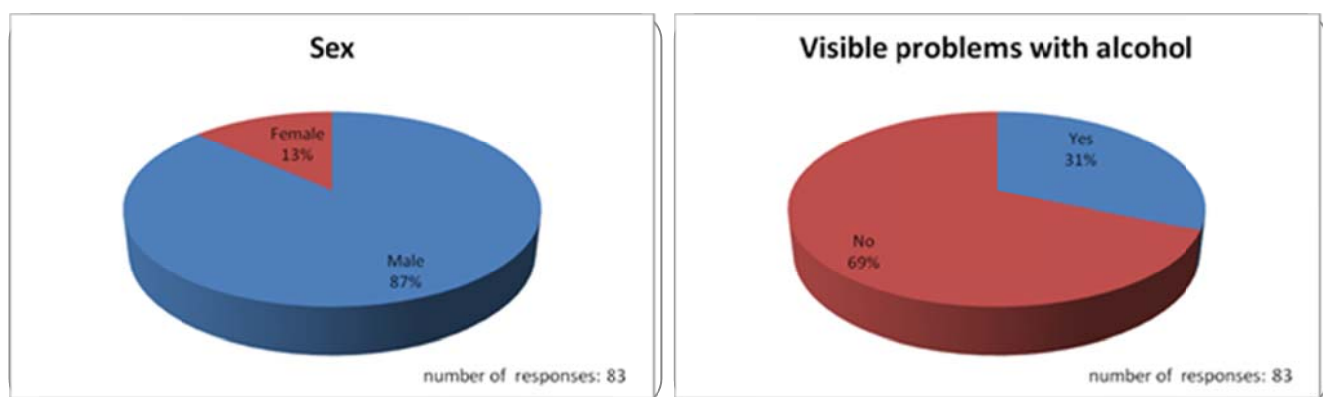
### 6.4.1 Facts and figures

In the following figures the informal collectors that were met during the interviews are characterised according to age, sex, time they are in the business, alcoholism and means of transportation.



**Figure 6.3: Age and time of being active in the informal metal collection sector**

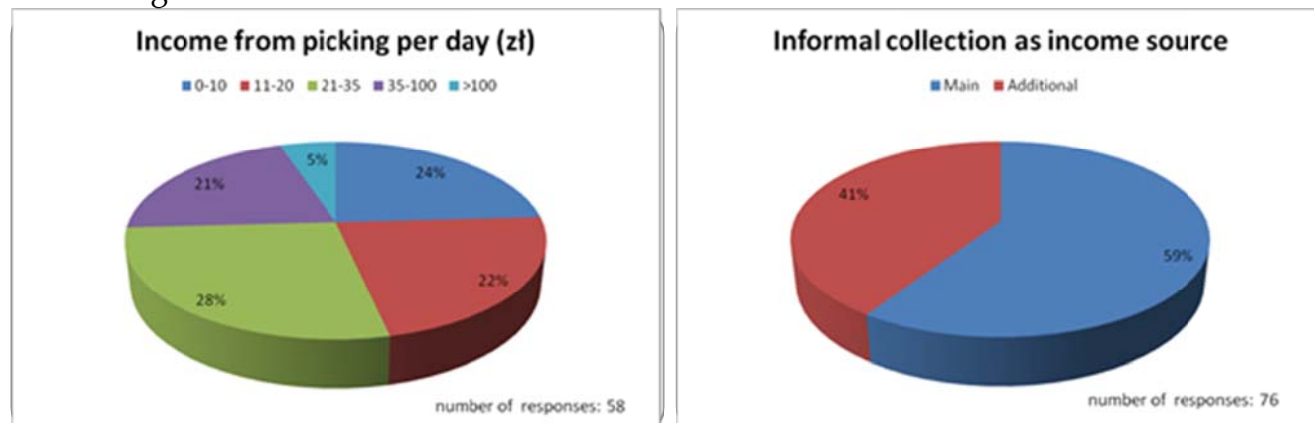
The figures above show clearly that the average informal metals collector is relatively old, with almost 80% being over 40 and 44% over 50. On average a Polish informal waste collector is 49 years old. Out of all collectors 80% of is already 3 years or more active in the informal sector. On average they started collecting 5,9 years ago.



**Figure 6.4: Sex and apparent problems with alcohol of the interviewed informal metal collectors**

Informal collectors are mainly men (87%). During the interviews visual observations were made concerning alcoholism. In some cases this was also brought up by the collectors themselves. It

turned out, that about one out of three informal collectors has problems with alcohol. This will make integration measures more difficult to undertake.



**Figure 6.5: Financial status of the interviewed informal metal collectors**

The majority of the informal collectors has the metal selling as his main source of income. Some declared to just earn a little on top of their elderly pension or to be able to afford themselves a beer. About half of the collectors earn less than 20 PLN (about 5 Euro) per collecting day. A minority earn over 100 PLN (about 25 Euro) per day. On average the income from metals collecting is 30 PLN (7,5 Euro). For the collector without a car the average comes to 25 PLN (6,25 Euro). These daily incomes mentioned by the collectors fits well with the claimed amounts of collected metals and the metals prices at the times of the interviews.

**Figure 6.6: Means of applied transportation by the interviewed informal metal collectors**

The vast majority of the informal collectors operates some kind of means of transportation. The typical picture of a Polish metals collector is a person going around the streets with a hand cart. In the research area over half of the collectors have such a hand cart. About a quarter has a big bag to collect mainly cans. Smaller proportions were found for pickers with cars and bikes.

The means of transportation has a clear influence on the amount of collected metals. Informal collectors using a car collects over eight time more per collection day than a collector without a car (316 vs 38 kg/day). The estimations of the car owners however seem to be very high for an average daily value (up to 2.000 kg/day). For good days these values are attainable, but on a daily basis it seems to be an overestimation. Also some of the car owning collector were actually working for construction companies and took their materials from construction sites. For these reasons, the calculations of the total amount of metals collected by informal collectors is based on informal collectors without cars only. In the table below an overview of the claimed amounts of collected metals is provided.

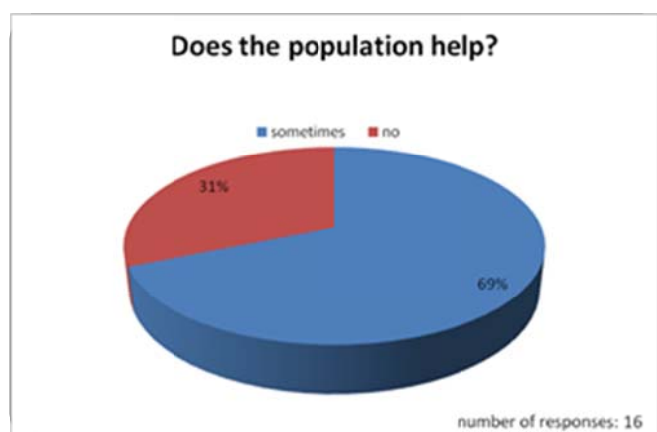
**Table 6.2: Interview results of informal metal collectors**

	All collectors		Collectors without a car	
	amount (kg/day)	earnings (PLN/day)	amount (kg/day)	earnings (PLN/day)
Total	4.979	1.692	1.849	1.250
Average	87	30	38	25
Median	30	25	20	20

Maximum	2.000	150	250	70
Minimum	0.5	2.0	0.5	2
Responses	57	57	49	51

In Deliverable 3.1.1 the calculation method and results thereof are provided. For the whole of Lower Silesia the above numbers lead to an amount of 34 kg/inh.yr. of informally collected metals. The montly earnings are around 600 PLN or 150 Euro per collector.

In the later phase of the interview also the interaction with the population was asked for. In the following figures the results thereof are given.



**Figure 6.7: Informal metal collectors' experiences with the population**

Based on a small sample it can be concluded that the vast majority of the informal collectors has no negative experiences with the population. Over two thirds of them is sometimes helped by inhabitants.

## 6.4.2 Problems and difficulties

Even more than the shop operators the informal collectors suffered from the crisis induced price drops of metals at the time of the interviews. This was also considered the main problem. Another important problem was the sometimes fierce competition amongst collectors. Although they were not explicitly asked, it may be concluded, that informal metal collectors do not have problems with police or city guards, as this was never mentioned talking to them (it was asked for formulating their problems however). Apart from the problem of alcohol relatively many informal collectors are ill or disabled. Two of them admitted that they sometimes have to steal to survive. In one case there were problems with narcotics.

## 6.4.3 Solutions and ideas

Also for the informal metal collectors, the problem of the low prices has been solved by increasing world market levels. Although no interviews were made in times of higher metals prices, it may be assumed that also the competition has decreased a little by the price increases. The majority of the informal collectors does not consider formalisation (understood as doing more or less the same work, but in an organised manner, rather as an employee) feasible for themselves. Some would not want to lose the freedom they have now. For others the dependence of alcohol makes it difficult to work to a fixed schedule. Nevertheless there were

some of the collectors that would be interested in a formalised way of working. Especially the inclusion into the social and health security system would be a positive point.

One informal collector would like to 'grade up' and work in a group, driving around a van. Another made plans for a form of formalisation, but did not find support from the side of the local government.

A health insurance is wanted and lacking for a fair share of the interviewees.

#### 6.4.4 Conclusion

Informal local metals collectors collect app 87 kg of metal per day, earning about 30 PLN (7,5 Euro). Per month this amounts to 600 PLN (150 Euro). The total amount informally collected metals related to the population of Lower Silesia is 34 kg/inh.yr.

Most informal collectors are socially deprived, having e.g. alcohol problems, ill, disabled or are unemployed. For many it is an additional source of income, with which they are satisfied. Also the acceptance under the population is good.

The main problem were the low metal prices, which in the mean while has solved itself.

Formalisation in form of an employment relation is not sought by most. Some however would like to work in a more formal manner.

Health insurances would be an asset for this group of informal collectors.

## 6.5 Authorities-local

### Local environmental authorities

First information about informal collectors was collected in spring 2009. Environmental authorities in and around Milicz, Wrocław, Świeta Katarzyna, Polkowice, Zgorzelec, Dzierżoniów, Legnica and Jelenia Góra were interviewed. The local waste picking focuses mostly on metals. The general problem the municipalities have with informal collectors are illegal dismantling of WEEE for metals and parts and the illegal dumping and burning of wastes and cables. They would like to prevent pollution but lack means and methods of how to. In fall 2010 a questionnaire was directed to municipalities where used items markets are operated (Lubin, Jelenia Góra, Milicz, Dzierżoniów, Zgorzelec, Wrocław). Generally, the main problem with the open market are illegal dumping, but it is difficult to prove the relationship to the activities of the used-items sellers. There is a number of other sources of illegal dumping: direct dumping by individuals (households have direct contracts with collection companies, the municipalities often do not make them comply with the obligation to have such a contract), dumping of German waste close to the border (this lucrative business causes big problems in the Görlitz-Zgorzelec area), dumping by waste collection companies or their workers. Currently, the amounts of collected waste are of no financial interest for the municipalities. In the near future, the municipalities will gain financial control over the household waste collection. In that case, the additional amounts will cause higher waste taxes, which may be an incentive to act from the side of the municipalities.

Representatives of local authorities believe that the solution would be to legalise the activities of the collectors. If there would be an organisation of local collectors, the municipalities would like to cooperate with them. Currently it is difficult to contact the collectors.

### Local social authorities

The local social authorities know informal local collectors as part of them are clients of the social welfare programmes. Many of them have an elderly pension and they collected to earn a little



on top or to be able to afford alcohol. Homeless, alcoholism and disability are the main problems in this group. They are very distrustful and do not want to change his life. Local social authorities help financially and are working with them to change their life in the direction of regular work, but it is very difficult.

The situation is different for informals who transported used items from Germany and other countries. These people now do not need help but when the situation will change probably financial support will be necessary in the future.

## 6.6 Authorities-regional/national

The main national authority that was contacted was the ministry of environment. Mrs. Majewska was contacted on several occasions and invited to both the 2nd national and 2nd international workshop. Unfortunately her attendance was cancelled due to lack of time and obligatory presence at the ministry during the preparation of the new waste management act.

As the ministry is rather limited in the number of personnel, they are not actively seeking for new areas of activity; they focus rather on their legal obligations and 'fire extinguishing'.

When it comes to the Transwaste area of interest, the informal collection and transport of used items, this is clearly not seen as an high priority area. Rather the 'grey area' in the WEEE and iron scrap management is where the ministry sees problems. It is estimated that up to 40% of the WEEE is collected illegally (as metals). Moreover large amounts exist only on paper (trade of receipts, especially in scrap trading). Several measures are taken to overcome these difficulties, so far with changing success.

At a conference on WEEE on April 11th in Warsaw it was finally possible to meet personally with Mrs. Majewska. When asked on the ministry's viewpoint concerning the then discussed Transwaste formalisation ideas for Poland the following was replied:

- introduction of used product corner during the planning of new waste collection centres: no legal objections, but there are also no legal drivers to support such an initiative. The idea itself is OK though.
- WEEE shops: nothing against from ministry's point of view. If Transwaste wants to set up such shop, they should do so. There may be difficulties in the area of accounting and taxes though.
- the founding of an informal collector's association: the ministry does not see the direct need, but would not oppose such an organisation.

## 6.7 WM companies

### 6.7.1 Facts and figures

In different phases of the project contacts were set-up and maintained with a number (14 in total) of waste management companies via visits, conferences, the national Transwaste workshop and telephone and email contact. Both private (Alba, Sita) and municipal waste management companies (Jelenia Góra, Milicz, Legnica), landfills (Poznań, MUNDO, Chemeko Systems), secondary materials traders (Surmet, Centrozłom, Papermet) WEEE and bulky waste collectors/recyclers (Remondis, Wastes Services, MP2) were visited.



## 6.7.2 Problems and difficulties

Some collection companies consider informal collectors as illegal competitors (as they as well pick from containers for mixed household waste, bulky waste and separately collected recyclables). The secondary materials traders are satisfied with the current situation. The informals are the main source of their materials. However, they consider formalisation of the informal collectors in sense of formally employing them as not feasible, because of the social problems of the group (alcoholism).

The WEEE collectors have difficulties in retrieving WEEE from the inhabitants. Much stays unused at attics and in cellars. The equipment that is disposed of lands often at the street side or next to collection containers, from where it is taken by informals. After wild dismantling the metals are sold to the metals shops. Thus, the WEEE collection companies lose a lot of material, especially the economically most interesting (e.g. TV sets tend to remain). Also the wild dismantling causes environmental problems. There are allegedly also a number of 'black sheep' amongst the collection companies, boasting high collection results, that are unlikely to be achieved with the limited efforts invested.

## 6.7.3 Solutions and ideas

Suggested solutions by the waste management companies were:

- consider metal picking from containers illegal. However this was not supported by other participants of the first national workshop. Moreover the activity of informals seems to be well accepted within society. Closing containers by locks is sometimes practised.
- forbid metals shops to collect WEEE or WEEE parts or metals stemming from WEEE. On a governmental level (Ministry of Environment) there are ongoing discussions with the sector to deal with these difficulties.

On other occasions two formalisation ideas were discussed with waste management companies:

- the inclusion of a **used-items corner** in the planning of Waste Collection Centres. A difficulty is, that the bulky waste is dismantled manually and much the materials are being sold, rather than being disposed of at high costs. Thus the used-items corner should enable at least the same profit for these items in order to make it feasible. This can be either achieved by external funding (e.g. to achieve re-use targets) or by selling the items, rather than to give them away for free. Discussion on these options will be continued.
- WEEE shops. In analogy to the metals shops in WEEE shops inhabitants and informal collectors could dispose of WEEE by selling it for a limited price. This would also open opportunities for the further selling of re-useable WEEE. However, apart from the expected legal and bureaucratic efforts, the trading with informals is considered an obstacle for further developing this option. WEEE collection and recycling companies have to precisely record all their materials flows. Their customers and trading partners must be operating fully legal, having all necessary permits. It is thought that informal traders would not fit into this picture.

## 6.7.4 Conclusion

As some waste companies are collecting metals (either directly or by later sorting operations) the competitions by the informals is not always appreciated. The employing of informal local collectors is not considered feasible.



WEEE collected by informal collectors often does not land at recycling companies, but is rather dismantled in a non-authorized manner. Restriction of this practice is wanted and being considered by the ministry.

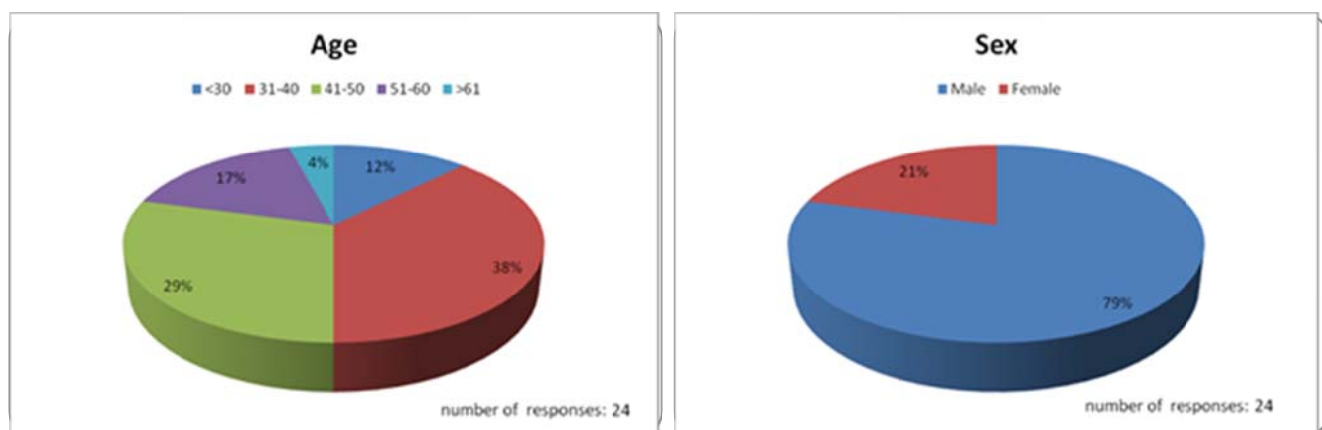
Used-items corners in Polish WCC are an interesting options, but will have to be economically feasible. WEEE shops are for the time being considered very difficult to realise due to legal and 'paperwork' obstacles.

## 6.8 Used items sellers

Used items-market stands owners have been consulted on several occasions. In autumn 2009 stand holders in Jelenia Góra were interviewed. In spring 2010 the remaining main markets were covered, being Milicz, Lubin and Wrocław. Also the sellers around Dzierżoniów, having their own, permanent premises for sales, were visited in December 2009. The main goal of these visits and interviews was the determination of the amount and composition of sold items. Apart from that also opinions on difficulties and solutions were gathered. In a new round of interviews, aimed at the determination of social effects, additional opinions were obtained in spring 2011. At this time the markets in Wrocław, Lubin, Milicz and Jelenia Góra were visited.

### 6.8.1 Facts and figures

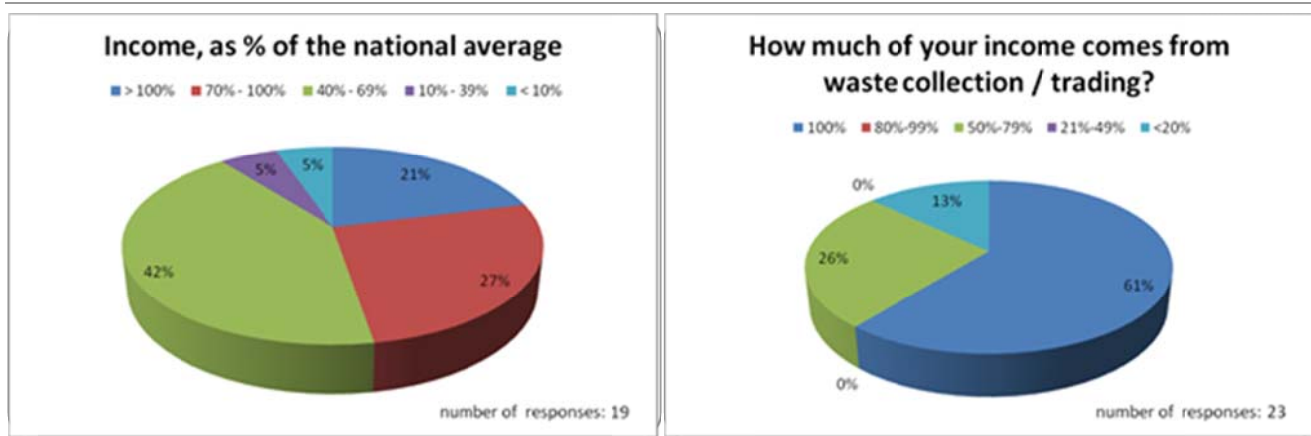
In the following figures the used items market stand owners that were met during the interviews are characterised.



**Figure 6.8: Age and sex of the used-item market sellers**

The sellers on the used-item markets, which are mostly also collecting these items abroad, have an average estimated age of 44. This is five years less than the local informal collectors. Over half of the used-items sellers is younger than 40 years. For the local collectors this figure is only 20%. Although the vast majority of the used-items collectors is male, the share of women is significantly higher than in case of the local metals collectors.

In the following the financial situation of the traders is shown.



**Figure 6.9: Income from and dependency on used items collection and trading**

Of the interviewed sellers, about one-fifth earn more than the Polish national average income, which amounted to 3.203 PLN (app. 800 €) per month in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2010. In total, almost half earns over 70% of the average, whereas 10% has an income below 40% of the average. The interviewees were first asked to estimate their income in exact numbers, but less of them were willing to do so. The average income amongst these amounts to 2.778 PLN, which is 87% of the national average. In this number however one well doing collector is included (12.000 PLN). The remaining incomes vary from 1.000 to 2.250 PLN (8 collectors).

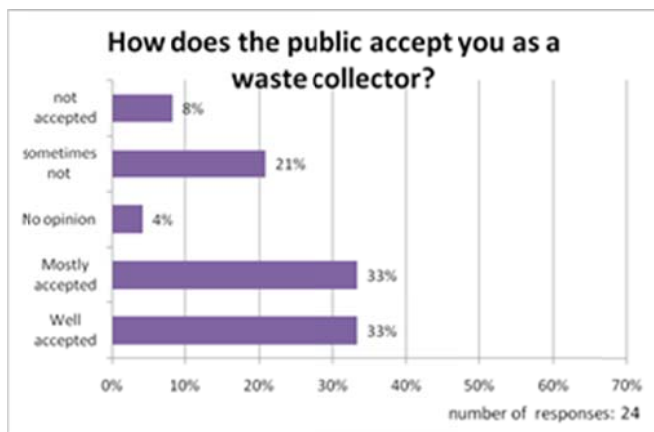
The majority (over 60%) of the traders have an income that is based on used-item collection and trading only. For another quarter over half of their income stems from these activities. For a minority of 13% these activities have a less significant contribution to their total income.

Compared to the local metals collectors, the income of the used-items collectors and traders is significantly higher (30 PLN/day, or 600 PLN/month vs. 2.800 PLN/month). Also for more used-items traders it is their main source of income (87% vs. 59%). Several local metals collectors mentioned to earn some money additional to their elderly, unemployment or disability allowances. When asked the used-items traders, all claimed not to receive any social benefits at all (24 interviewees).

In order to find out where the problems and difficulties, that the informal collectors are facing, are lying, several other aspects were inquired for. These can be found in the following figures.

**Figure 6.10: Stress and health problems of the used-item market sellers**

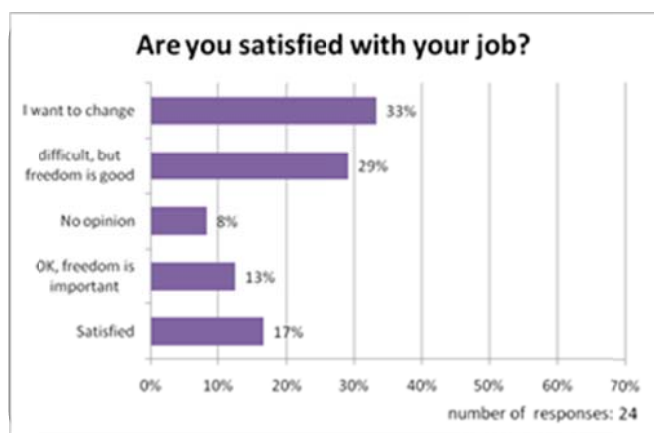
On the question, whether their activities cause stress, one quarter of the interviewed used-items sellers stated that they do not experience stress. Three quarters consider it stressful, over half of the sellers even very stressful. Virtually all interviewees consider the collection, transport and sale of used items having an influence on their health. The predominant problems are back pain, being cold/catching a cold, bad/unhealthy/fatty food, uncomfortable sleeping (in vans), arthralgia (joint pain) and danger for injuring hands and fingers.



**Figure 6.11: Treatment by the police and acceptance by the public of the used-item market sellers**

The vast majority of the traders are being treated well or acceptable by the police. About 8% of them have had very negative experiences in contacts with the police. One collector mentioned that the police in Germany treats them better than in Poland, another however claimed the opposite. To avoid problems with the police, some collectors keep their petrol receipts, in order to be able to show some sort of evidence supporting their story of the origin of the items they are transporting. Also this may encounter accusations of petrol theft. Apart from inquiries about the origin of items one collector told that the police often makes very thorough checks on the vehicle, which can lead to fines.

About two-third of the collectors feels accepted by the public. Most of the others feels not accepted at times. One mentioned that the acceptance was well in Germany, but less in Poland. Another, that the acceptance in the former DDR is less than in the rest of Germany.



**Figure 6.12: Job satisfaction and interest in a waste collector's association of the used-item market sellers**

From all the interviewed traders, about 30% is satisfied. Another 30% considers their activity as hard, but sees the freedom (being their own boss) as an advantage. A third of the traders would like to change for something else.

A two-third majority of the sellers that were met on the markets would be interested in becoming a member of a waste collector's association. So far, the collectors and traders are not organised in any way. Inquiries about certain leaders amongst themselves did not lead to mentioning of such persons.

## 6.8.2 Problems and difficulties

On several occasions, the used items sellers were asked about the problems they have in doing their job. The complaint, that things used to be better and that earlier on there were more and

better items to be collected abroad and more interested customers as well, could be heard more or less generally.

Virtually all traders consider their activity to be endangering their health. The health dangers are present both in the sales activities at markets (cold, long standing) and above all in the collection activities (back problems, danger of injuring fingers/hands, unhealthy sleeping and food conditions). As most of the sellers are either themselves going abroad for collecting used items or have relatives doing so, their answers also covered this part of their joint activities.

The majority of the interviewees considers their activity as stressful. Also here, the most stressful part of their activities is the cross-border collection and transport of the goods.

One third of the traders would like to change their occupation. However, as one of the reasons why people became involved in these activities was the lack of jobs, it may be clear that most do not have a plan B.

While speaking to one seller at the market at Milicz, another told him not to speak to the Transwaste team, because: "they record interviews and show them on German TV". Also from other sellers it was heard, that on another occasion a German television team had been recording on the market. Some made the broadcasting of this material responsible for the worsening situation (closing of the street-side collection of bulky waste in several communes).

In earlier conversations at the markets (spring 2010) it was mentioned often, that the situation in general was better in the past. Competition has become more fierce, sales on the Polish side have fallen and the supply on the other side has decreased. Also it has become more common, that people rather want to sell their goods than give them away for free.

Problems with police or other controlling institutions like the customs, could not be confirmed on a regular basis. In some cases problems with either the German or Polish police were mentioned, as well as the existence of fines. In response to the general question about problems this was rarely mentioned however. Particularly asked about problems with the police the vast majority replied that the treatment was acceptable.

### 6.8.3 Solutions and ideas

The sellers themselves seem to be taking changes as they come. Circumstances forced them into the situation where they are now and they try to make the best of it. One of the most often heard solutions was to start their own revolution, probably inspired by the then ongoing uprising in Cairo. Two sellers mentioned that the collecting of the goods by driving around at times of street-side bulky waste collection is really not a pleasure for them. If they could have access to used-items concentrated on one location, this would be favourable for them. Paying for the second-hand goods in this case would not be a problem. Such a solution fits to the idea of a used-item corner in waste collection centres.

Also other sellers mentioned that they would prefer not to have to collect goods or to be able to collect or buy them closer, preferably in Poland.

On the question whether they would join a waste collector's association almost all seller replied positively. Some mentioned that it would depend on the costs of such an association. The expectations of a waste collector's association were varied: some were rather sceptical, doubting that membership ID's would improve the contact with the police. Others expected rather practical benefits from an association, like lodging and protection abroad, access to information and goods, tax exemptions, cost reduction, less stress and easier operation. The meeting of colleagues and exchange of experiences was also once mentioned.

To participate on this information, a meeting was organised for the sellers, adjacent to and directly after the closing-time of the largest market in Lower Silesia: Lubin. Goal of the meeting



was to inform about possibilities of an association and to initiate the founding of it. However, none of the sellers showed up.

None of the sellers claimed to have a problem with the disposal of non-sellable items. Many stated that the selection is already undertaken during the collection process: it is too costly to transport non-useable goods. Others leave after several price-reducing rounds, the leftovers on the market terrains, where they are quickly taken by local informal collectors. This was also observed by the Transwaste team. The amount of goods left on the market terrains however seem to be very limited.

#### 6.8.4 Conclusions

The sellers of used items at markets, the same persons as or closely related to informal collectors, have an average income of 2.800 PLN (app. 700 Euro) or 87% of the national average (based on a limited data-set). In majority they are not very satisfied with their activities.

The collection and sales of the used items has significant impact on the informals' health. Problems with the police do occur, but are not experienced widespread. The public rather accepts them, although negative experiences do also exist. Bad experiences occur both in Germany as well as in Poland.

Mentioned solutions:

- informal collectors' association. Theoretical support, but in praxis no willingness to contribute.
- collection at centralised points, as opposed to picking on the street side collection routes for bulky waste. E.g. (paid) access to halls where reusable goods are stored by the waste management association/municipality. An used-items corner at WCC's would comply with this wish.
- having the waste sources closer. With the continuing introduction of separate bulky waste collection in Poland this will be partly achieved.
- organisational support: lodging, cost saving, better access to materials and information.
- tax reduction/exemption.

#### 6.9 Used items-transporters

Used items transporters are informal collectors transporting their collected goods over the border. During the vehicle counting activities in co-operation with the customs and the border guards, which were mainly focused on determining the amount of transported goods, some conversations were undertaken with the informal transporters. However, the presence of the official controlling agencies (which enabled the opportunities for meeting with the transporters in the first place, since only they have the authority to stop them at or near the border crossings), intimidated the interviewees. Moreover time was generally too short and the main focus was on obtaining information on the collected materials. Hence no useable results were obtained in these border control actions. However, since the used items transporters are the same persons or at least closely related to the used items sellers of the previous section, their opinions, problems and suggestions were by and large captured.

#### 6.10 Governmental organisations

The National and Regional Environmental Inspectorate, National and Regional Road Transport Inspectorate, the Border Guards and the Customs are all more focussed on the illegal transports of waste. A clear difficulty they meet in practice is the judgement of used items and materials into waste or not-waste (e.g. useable).

This project is implemented through the CENTRAL EUROPE Programme co-financed by the ERDF



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## 6.11 Non-governmental organisations

The contacted non-governmental organisations were the Organisation of Polish Roma, the charity Brata Alberta and social initiatives for re-use and recycling. The latter kind of organisations turned out to be difficult to contact. The Organisation of Polish Roma stated that it is forbidden for Polish Roma to deal with waste picking. Moreover during the field work no Roma were met that were involved in informal collection. Brata Alberta is an organisation providing shelter for homeless people. They consider informal local metals collection not as problematic.

## 6.12 Conclusions for Poland

In Poland the Transwaste project has a two-fold focus:

1. local waste picking, mainly metals
2. trading & transport of cross-border waste picking

The main problem in for the informal **local metal collectors** and metal traders were the low prices for metals in the years 2009-2010. In the meanwhile the market situation has improved. Both groups are satisfied with the current situation and do not see a need for formalisation measures. Some however would like to work in a more formal manner, especially health insurance coverage is sought for. Others would have difficulties to undergo the requirements of regular work. This is also confirmed by the local governments.

The contribution to the overall municipal waste collection is significant at an estimated 34 kg/inh.yr. The wild dismantling of WEEE for metals and parts does however cause environmental problems.

Some collection companies consider informal collectors as illegal competitors (as they as well pick from containers for mixed household waste, bulky waste and separately collected recyclables), however it seems to be generally accepted that waste metals in public space end up at the informal collectors. The employing of informal local collectors is not considered feasible.

The **cross border** informal collection of used items is not considered problematic by the governmental organisations and the national and regional authorities. Their focus is on illegal imports and illegal trading activities inside the country (especially WEEE and metals).

The informal used-items collectors/traders are not very satisfied with their activities. It is considered bad for their health and stressful. The majority does not have negative experiences with the police and is rather accepted by the public. Nevertheless there are several exceptions, occurring on both sides on the border. The earnings are significantly higher than for the local metals collectors (700 resp. 150 Euro/month) but still below the national average of 800 Euro/month.

The amount of waste generated by the transport of non-sellable items is claimed to be marginal. Municipalities do not know whether and to which extend illegal dumping is caused by in transport of used-items from abroad. The lack of organisation of the informal collectors makes it difficult to contact them.

Solutions that were mentioned by the traders and discussed with them are:

- informal collectors' association. Theoretical support, but in praxis no willingness to contribute.

- collection at centralised points, as opposed to picking on the street side collection routes for bulky waste. E.g. (paid) access to halls where reusable goods are stored by the waste management association/municipality. An used-items corner at WCC's would comply with this wish.
- having the waste sources closer. With the continuing introduction of separate bulky waste collection in Poland this will be partly achieved.
- organisational support: lodging, cost saving, better access to materials and information.
- tax reduction/exemption.

WEEE collected by informal collectors often does not land at recycling companies, but is rather dismantled in a non-authorized manner. Restriction of this practice is wanted and being considered by the ministry.

Used-items corners in Polish WCC are an interesting options, but will have to be economically feasible. WEEE shops are for the time being considered very difficult to realise due to legal and 'paperwork' obstacles.



## 7 Overall Conclusions

In the first half of the Transwast project a great number of stakeholders was contacted in various ways in all considered countries.

In **Austria**, one of the generating countries, the stakeholder conceiving the largest negative impacts by informal collection are the Waste Management Associations (WMA). The informal collectors take valuable materials, which' revenues are consequently lacking for the WMA's. The municipalities however also observes the avoided disposal costs of informally collected materials. Most difficulties are caused by informals not obeying the rules.

Amongst WCC workers and inhabitants there are supporters and opponents of informal collection. Aspects that were mentioned by both groups are:

- littering
- fear of theft (in case of informal collector induced collection)
- hostility against foreign informal collectors, especially Roma, leading to conflicts
- re-use of goods wasted by society
- support for the socially deprived
- longer lasting experiences show less conflicts

The Austrian authorities state that informal collectors deal with waste and operate therefore illegally and should have collection permits.

Solutions at WCC's aiming at excluding informal collectors are mostly worked around by the informals. It does not keep them away. For Austria it is better to aim at solutions including informal collectors in a set framework. The little experience of doing so shows that it works.

In **Germany**, the other generating country, it is similarly experienced that strict prohibition of informal activities does not make them stop, but show up in a changed form or location. Waste picking is assessed in a divers manner by the stakeholders, although a negative attitude prevails. As in Austria the missing of valuable materials for the WMA's and littering are the main negative aspects of informal collection.

The main underlying reason for leaving used items to the informals are not so much altruistic, but rather down to earth: it is a practical way to get rid of things. For the public the further fate of their disposed goods is often not considered important.

Both the informal collectors and the formal organisations as well as the general public should be informed and educated about the negative and positive aspects of both their own and the handling of their counterparts.

Integrating informal collectors through socio-economic enterprises is only considered feasible for handling of used-items, thus contributing to re-use targets. Any dealing of waste would cause an large bureaucratic burden.

The countries on the receiving end are Hungary, Slovakia and Poland. The **Hungarian** informal collectors, or lomis, have severe problems with intensive police controls and accusations of theft. Also the current competition between themselves is problematic for them. They would like to obtain better access to information of where goods can be found and would be interesting in joining a common organisation.



The amount of non-marketable goods that is transported across the border is estimated at app. 9% by some informals. Others however claim not to take anything not useable. Part of the waste material is given away.

It is generally stressed, that any formalisation solution should focus on used items, not on waste. As it is in the other countries also in Hungary the definition of what is waste is not clear. The Hungarian ministries recognise that the informal collectors problems have both environmental and social aspects. The state is losing money because taxes are often not paid.

As a respond to the problems existing amongst informal collectors the Association of Hungarian Informal Collectors was founded. Its structures are being formalised. Its main current and future goals are:

- representation of the interest of its members
- improving the social and economic situation of its members
- providing with relevant education
- lobbying
- managing of non-marketable goods and other joint services
- searching for funding opportunities
- establishing of refurbishing centres and testing units

Members of the Association can be either persons or companies. They should be dealing with used items only, which should be bought or received for free. Of these transactions a receipt should be made, which will prevent problems during controls of the Austrian and Hungarian authorities (police, tax office etc.).

In **Poland** two types of informal collection can be differentiated: local metal collection and cross-border used item collection & trade. The **local metal collectors** are generally satisfied with their activities, making a little additional earnings. Except for some competing waste management companies they are well accepted by all stakeholders. A problem however is the collection and wild dismantling of WEEE to sell as metals and parts.

The **used item collectors** are not very satisfied with their activities, they find it stressful and bad for their health. They have limited problems with the police and the general public, at both sides of the border. The authorities and governmental organisation are mainly focused on illegal waste activities, imports and dumping. As long as the informals do not act against the law any solutions is fine with them.

The amount of waste generated by the transport of non-sellable items is claimed to be marginal. It is hard to prove whether these waste land on wild dumpsites (which are a large environmental problem in Poland).

In the course of the discussions with the stakeholder the following formalisation options were consulted for Poland:

- informal collectors' association. Theoretical support, but in praxis no willingness to contribute.
- Centralised collection points for used goods in Germany, to avoid street-by-street collection. A used-item corner would fit for this purpose.



- Used-items corners in Polish WCC. will have to be economically feasible.
- WEEE shops. Difficult to realise due to legal and 'paperwork' obstacles.

The acceptance of informal collectors in the generating countries varies from mixed with more outspoken supporters and opponents in Austria to rather indifferent in Germany. The Polish informals, mostly active in Germany, feel themselves better accepted than the Hungarians in Austria. This may be a reason for the apparent unwillingness of the Polish informals to organise themselves, whereas in Hungaria an informal collectors association has already been founded.

Cooperation to come to joint solutions has better chances for success than a strict prohibition policy. Education and information is needed at both sides of the borders. Any workable solutions should focus on the handling of used-items rather than waste.

