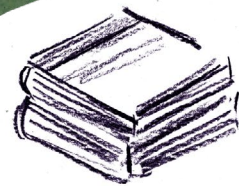


rrreuse

# ACTIVITY REPORT 2020



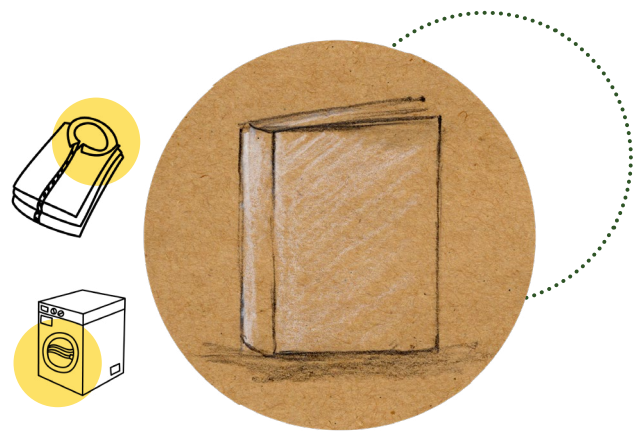
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## **BUILDING ON RESILIENCE, INNOVATION AND CIRCULARITY AMIDST GLOBAL PANDEMIC**



2020 was a relentless year, marked by global fear, uncertainty and instability. For social enterprises active in circular services, COVID-19 severely disrupted existing activities, placing immeasurable strain on many of the most vulnerable staff, trainees and volunteers. The crisis also exacerbated discrepancies in fiscal and political support for social enterprises throughout Europe. In spite of their evident community-oriented services, numerous social enterprises were denied access to COVID support schemes, simply due to their legal status.

Yet in the face of such adversity, remarkable stories of resilience emerged. Many operations were re-oriented at the flick of a switch, fuelled by the drive to help those in need. Support services for the elderly and furloughed staff were created; essential refrigeration equipment was redirected to new medical facilities; masks were sewn on mass; refurbished laptops were donated to children from low-income families; bicycles were given to frontline workers – and the list goes on.



In times of such disrupted global trade chains, making used goods available and affordable for all people not only reduces resource consumption, waste and CO2 emissions, but provides an essential contribution to making local economies more just and resilient, which should serve as the driving force for business models of tomorrow.

Throughout the year, RREUSE rallied to support its members. RREUSE leveraged a two-way channel of real-time communication between its members and the European institutions, calling for swift financial measures, including the EU's Recovery and Resilience funds. RREUSE was invited to voice its concerns at the highest political levels in Brussels, including a high-level roundtable with EU Commissioner for Employment, Nicolas Schmit, as well as organising workshops on social enterprise resilience during crises at the European Social Economy Summit.

All our individual and joint actions contributed to official recognition of the social economy as a key sector having been hard-hit and eligible for potential direct future financial support.

Moving forward, RREUSE has cause for cautious optimism regarding a green and social recovery. One of RREUSE's biggest achievements in 2020 was having the EU Commission's Circular Economy Action Plan recognise social enterprises as *pioneers* in the circular economy. Not only does this provide a sense of true validation and appreciation for the role of social enterprises in the green transition, it opens the door for future targeted political and legal support for their development, including through the upcoming Action Plan for the Social Economy, to be published at the end of 2021.

Thank you for your interest in our work and for taking the time to read a snapshot of the RREUSE network's achievements in 2020.

Matthias Neitsch  
President of RREUSE



SOCIAL  
INCLUSION



Innovation



CIRCULAR  
ECONOMY



COOPERATION



RESILIENCE



## ..... ABOUT RREUSE

**RREUSE** is an international non-profit network representing social enterprises active in the circular economy. Specialising in the field of re-use, repair and recycling, RREUSE members provide local and inclusive employment as well as a strong sense of belonging for the most vulnerable in our societies. In 2020, RREUSE federated 31 members across 26 European countries and the USA.

Since 2001, RREUSE exists to support and champion the development of social enterprise in the circular economy through innovative policies, partnerships and best practices.

### **RREUSE network activities include:**

- Advocacy at local, regional and national levels and sharing of best circular practices
- Collection, sorting and redistribution of used textiles and clothing
- Collection, repair and re-use of electronics, furniture and bulky items
- Re-use of other household items such as bric-a-brac, books, toys and paint
- Operating second-hand retail outlets
- Collection and recycling of paper, cardboard, wood, plastics and metals
- Home, community and cooperative composting
- Food distribution services and management of food banks
- Awareness raising campaigns, local and international projects and business support

## 2020 IN NUMBERS

4

Involvements in  
European Commission  
Expert Groups and  
Platforms

33

Position papers, reports  
and reactions  
to Commission  
consultations

41

Thematic webinars,  
working groups  
and internal meetings

4

International  
events organised

22

Speaking engagements

16

Original news items  
shared

12

Media outlets  
mentioning RREUSE

### SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOWERS



+45%



+16.5%



+9%





PUT  
SECOND HAND  
FIRST

## ..... EU ADVOCACY 2020

Throughout 2020, RREUSE made great strides in promoting a stronger supporting policy framework for social enterprises active in the circular economy, notably within the re-use and repair sector. Through its policy and advocacy activities, RREUSE continually encouraged greater interlinkage between social, economic and environmental EU policy files. In particular through its [Social and Circular Outlook 2020 – 2025](#), RREUSE outlined eight key policy priorities to help ensure a fair, inclusive and circular transition in Europe by 2025.

Coupled with regular high-level EU meetings and engagement, recommendations and official letters calling for greater support to social enterprises across Europe, RREUSE published position papers, provided feedback to public consultations and monitored implementation of the following EU files:



## Environmental and Circular Policies



Circular Economy  
Action Plan



EU Strategy  
for Sustainable  
Textiles



EU Circular  
Electronics  
Initiative



Waste Framework  
Directive



Ecodesign  
Directive



Renovation Wave

## Social Policies



European Social  
Economy Action  
Plan



European Social  
Fund (ESF)



EU Pact for Skills



EU Pillar of Social  
Rights



European  
Semester

## Economic Policies



VAT Directive



Public  
Procurement  
Directive



Multi-Annual  
Financial  
Framework and  
Next Generation  
EU

### **RREUSE is a member of:**

- European Commission's Expert Group on Social Economy and Social Enterprises
- European Commission's Ecodesign and Energy labelling Consultation Forum
- European Innovation Partnership on Raw Materials High-Level Steering Group
- European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform Coordination Group
- European Commission's Expert Group on Textile Names and Labelling

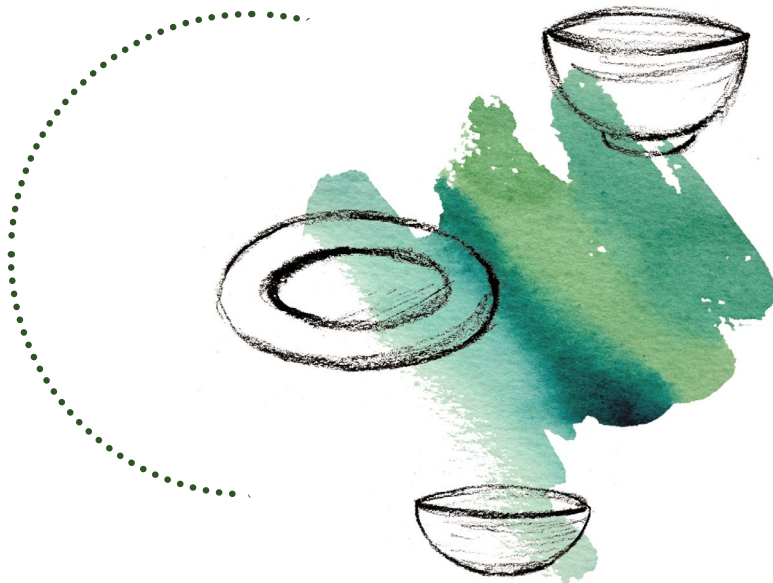
# ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY HIGHLIGHTS

## Social enterprises to help put the new EU Circular Economy Plan into action

In March, the European Commission published one of the main pillars of its Green Deal: the Circular Economy Action Plan (CEAP). By referring to the social economy as “a pioneer in job creation linked to the circular economy”, the CEAP implicitly commended RREUSE’s relentless advocacy for official recognition of the role played by social enterprises.

To further help EU institutions build a resilient social and circular economy, RREUSE [recommended measures](#) such as quantitative re-use targets, improved product design and collection models as well as increased support for social economy actors in the circular transition.

Subsequently, MEPs expressed their views on the CEAP, praising the capacity of repair and maintenance services to “generate job opportunities”, encouraging greater support for the “community repair initiatives, co-operatives and social enterprises” and highlighting the need for separate targets for preparing for re-use and recycling. Member States also called for an EU-wide discussion on the need to strengthen re-use and repair systems in Europe.

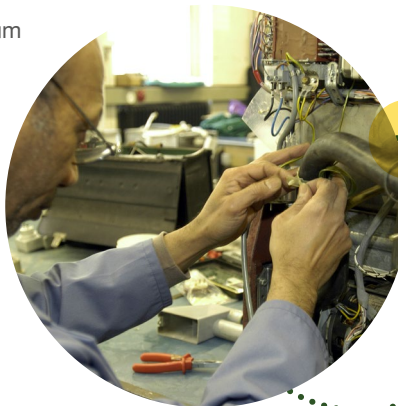




## Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) and the role of social economy re-use operators

Following the updated Waste Framework Directive and its entire section on minimum requirements for EPR, various EU countries started discussing the development of EPR schemes, particularly for textiles. However, practical implementation of EPR often conflicts with the waste hierarchy when recycling is prioritised over re-use, thereby limiting the role of social economy re-use operators.

Through a horizontal approach, RREUSE published key policy recommendations to ensure that EPR both respects the waste hierarchy and fosters cooperation between Producer Responsibility Organisations and social economy re-use operators.



## Joint NGO Strategy for Sustainable Textile, Garments, Leather and Footwear

The Commission's CEAP highlighted textiles as a key priority requiring fundamental change through an EU Strategy for Sustainable Textiles. Ahead of its publication, RREUSE and 64 NGOs [published a comprehensive textile strategy](#) to help ensure more circularity, environmental protection as well as inclusive, safe and fair working conditions for all individuals across the value chain.

As a result, over 50 MEPs [co-signed a letter to the European Commission](#) in support of the coalition's joint vision. In addition, the Commission referenced the strategy as an input to the roadmap, with some of the coalition's views reflected in several paragraphs.



# SOCIO-ECONOMIC POLICY HIGHLIGHTS

## Evaluation of the European Social Fund (ESF)

In December 2019, the European Commission launched a public consultation to evaluate the ESF's support to education and training for the 2014 – 2018 period. RREUSE [provided input](#) in order to further capitalise ESF+ investments and increase support for social inclusion and 'green skills' within the circular economy.



Based on experiences and observations from its membership base, RREUSE called for additional financial support, extra resources in addressing (digital) skills and social inclusion as well as recognition and certification for quality management among social enterprises.

Thereafter, as the ESF+ agreement was reached, the Commission stated that the fund would promote social inclusion, create more equal opportunities and focus on developing the skills needed for a digital and green transition.



### **RREUSE urges immediate Government support for Social Enterprises: Breaking point for the Environment and Local Jobs**

The COVID-19 pandemic severely affected essential community services such as re-use, repair, recycling, food redistribution and social services. Despite their flexibility and viability as economic and social partners, social enterprises were disadvantaged, unable to stop because of their social mission, yet suffering economic consequences.

RREUSE [urged national governments](#) to implement a set of key measures for social enterprises active in environmental services, giving them appropriate support as essential service providers and social employment enablers.

## ..... EUROPEAN PROJECTS

In 2020, RREUSE continued its involvement  
in three European projects:



.....  
In 2020, two EU projects in which RREUSE was involved ended:



ReWEEE (Life+)



SURFACE  
(Interreg Central Europe)

# MEMBERS

**Austria**  
• RepaNet



**Belgium**  
• HERWIN  
• RESSOURCES



**Bosnia and Herzegovina**  
• Association Citizens "Hands"



**Croatia**  
• Humana Nova



**Estonia**  
• Uuskasutuskeskus



**Finland**  
• Tramel  
• Kierrätyskeskus Oy



**France**  
• Emmaüs France  
• Envie



**Germany**  
• Fairwertung  
• Wird



**Greece**  
• Ecological Recycling Society  
• Klimax Plus



χημικαλικά σκουπίδια (παλιοχρώμ)



**Hungary**  
• Humusz Szövetség



## Pan-european Networks

- Emmaüs Europe



## Italy

- Associazione Orius Insieme
- Cooperativa Sociale Insieme



## Lithuania

- Circular Economy Lithuania



## Netherlands

- Branchevereniging Kringloopbedrijven Nederland



## Poland

- EKON



## Slovenia

- Dobrote z.b.o



## Spain

- AERESS



## Sweden

- Macken



## United Kingdom

- Community Resources Network Scotland
- Now! Charity
- Reuseful UK



## Ireland

- Community Reuse Network Ireland
- RECOSI
- Rehab Recycle



## USA

- donateNYC



## MEMBERS



## MEMBER HIGHLIGHTS

In 2020, RREUSE welcomed four new members, bringing the total count to 31 members across 26 countries in the EU and the USA.



**FairWertung** is the German umbrella organisation focusing on the collection of used clothing for the benefit of social projects, counting over 130 non-profit organisations. Collecting over 42.000 tonnes of clothing a year, it also runs a quality label making non-profit collections and sorting identifiable.



**WIRD** is the German umbrella brand for cooperation and guaranteed quality in resource conservation through re-use, repair and upcycling in second-hand stores. Handling about 15.000 tonnes of textiles a year, it represents the label for socially oriented re-use and repair facilities.



**Now! Charity** is a UK community-led charity collecting about 580 tonnes of goods each year. It is dedicated to providing essential re-used household items and community experiences to help deprived and marginalised people escape poverty.



**Circular Economy Lithuania** is an NGO organising volunteer work in re-use centres to treat particular waste streams and repair items such as furniture, home appliances, toys and electronic equipment among others. Pictures of all reusable items are published online, making it accessible to a wide-ranging audience.





## 2nd place for Humana Nova at the WISE Manager Awards 2020

Humana Nova won second place in the Work Integration Social Enterprise (WISE) Manager Awards organised by ENSIE. The jury of experts from the social economy sector, the European Parliament and Commission evaluated the transferability of WISE practices, their innovation and adaptability as well as impact on workers. Humana Nova employs and trains people with disabilities (22/38 employees) and other marginalised groups (11/38 employees), continually promoting social inclusion while developing and validating work integration models and preserving the environment.

## Online platform to help citizens locate donation points

RepaNet and Tchibo started a partnership to raise awareness on the re-use of textiles and social enterprise collection of used clothing. Their online platform sachspenden.at serves as the go-to guide for citizens wishing to donate textiles to social enterprises. The three main goals of the platform are to create greater awareness regarding textile recycling and re-use opportunities, promote social and charitable clothing collection as well as improve recycling management in the textile industry.



## Emmaüs Connect promotes digital inclusion during Covid-19

As global lockdowns further isolated people in social and digital precarity, Emmaüs Connect partnered with SFR (a French mobile communications company) and the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation to help those in need. Through Emmaüs Connect's mission to fight social and digital exclusion, the partnership donated 19,500 second-hand equipment such as laptops, smartphones and keyboards as well as 1 million GB of data and 123,000 prepaid top-ups for the most vulnerable.

# COMMUNICATION AND EVENTS

## RREUSE Innovation Forum #1

In October, RREUSE organised its first ever Innovation Forum, open exclusively to RREUSE members and social enterprises from its wider network. During the event, four panellists from Emmaüs France, Cooperativa Sociale Insieme, Kierrätyskeskus and Uuskasutuskeskus shared their innovative practices. This open space enabled discussions regarding social enterprise activities and their resilience, all the while triggering new ideas and stimulating collaboration.



## Recovery Strategy for Europe: Building a Resilient and Sustainable Economy

In November, RREUSE held its [first of three workshops](#) as part of the European Social Economy Summit. Speakers from Ateliers du Bocage, Klimax Plus and the Bike Station shared inspirational experiences about their actions, practices and initiatives in promoting the resilience and sustainability of the social economy. The panel discussed topics such as circular businesses, the role of policy, partnership and inclusion, feeding into the post-covid recovery strategy of Europe and the European Action Plan for the Social Economy.

## Green Friday

In November, [RREUSE joined the Green Friday Campaign](#) as an official member, along with its Belgian member RESSOURCES and French member ENVIE, co-founder of the movement. Created in 2017 as a reaction to the consumer event 'Black Friday', Green Friday promotes ethical consumption through re-use and repair practices all the while emphasising the importance of social inclusion. Each year, numerous social and solidarity enterprises participate in this initiative and provide valuable training and employment opportunities for people at risk of socio-economic exclusion.

TOGETHER, LET'S TAKE BACK OUR PURCHASING POWER. **GREEN FRIDAY** IS THE ANTI BLACK FRIDAY. IT'S OUR WAY OF PUTTING A STOP TO UNREASONABLE AND OVERPRODUCTION.

**STOP** PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION CHAINS THAT INCREASE GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS. production patterns which deplete our planet's resources, production practices responsible for exploiting human beings, the manipulation of consumers towards over consumption.

TOGETHER, LET'S REDEFINE THE MARKET RULES. You decide which brands are in line with our time and which brands should change or disappear. You decide how the people who produce your future purchases will be treated. You decide what impact brands will have on the planet. **YOU DECIDE.**

TOGETHER, SAY YES TO ALTERNATIVES THAT BENEFIT EVERYONE. Yes to ECO-RESPONSIBLE raw materials. Yes to fair salaries for all. Yes to safe and healthy working conditions. Yes to LOCAL and ORGANIC production. Yes to production and consumption patterns you define the rules for.

**SAY YES TO SECONDHAND. REPAIR. REUSE. RECYCLING.**

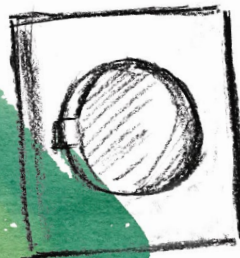
TOGETHER, LET'S GIVE OURSELVES A CHANCE. Let's privilege RESPONSIBLE brands. Let's buy SECONDHAND. Let's REPAIR broken items. Let's DONATE what we don't use anymore. Let's RECYCLE products and give them a SECOND LIFE. LET'S POSITIVELY INFLUENCE THOSE AROUND US BY INSPIRING THEM TO DO THE SAME.

EVERY ACTION, NO MATTER HOW SMALL AND HUMBLE, CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE. BECAUSE THERE ARE NO **7 BILLION** ACT.



### Re-use & Repair Online Study Tour for Municipalities and Public waste companies

In December, RREUSE organised its first two-day [Online Study Tour](#) on re-use and repair for local, regional and national authorities, municipalities and public waste companies across Europe. The event welcomed over 30 participants from 14 different countries. Discussions revolved around ways in which public authorities can support re-use organisations and activities from a legal, economic and partnership perspective. Through an interactive video site visit and direct exchange with practitioners from the field, participants gathered information and created strategies to put EU green and social objectives into action at local level.



# BOARD AND SECRETARIAT

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RepaNet, Austria



**Honorary President and  
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Ecological Recycling  
Society, Greece



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Community Reuse  
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Kelly Piron



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Social Affairs (until  
12/2020)**  
Elaine Hanlon



**Policy Officer –  
Social Affairs**  
Julija Kekstaite



**Policy Officer  
– Environment**  
Mathieu Rama



**Research Assistant**  
Oscar Plannels




# ..... FINANCIAL REPORT 2020

## EXPENDITURE

| Consultants | Office costs | Travel-Subsistence | Conference-seminars | Staff     | Depreciation | Interests/<br>Bank charges | TOTAL            |
|-------------|--------------|--------------------|---------------------|-----------|--------------|----------------------------|------------------|
| € 20.582    | € 44.201     | € 6.708            | € 656               | € 249.497 | € 1.401      | € 714                      | € 323.759        |
|             |              |                    |                     |           |              | Exceptional charges        | € 6.892          |
|             |              |                    |                     |           |              | <b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>   | <b>€ 330.651</b> |

## INCOME

| Conference Fees                | Membership fees | European Commission | Other private contributions | Other income        | TOTAL            |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| € 3.500                        | € 60.500        | € 262.409           | -                           | € 2.109             | € 328.518        |
|                                |                 |                     |                             | Exceptional income  | € 492            |
|                                |                 |                     |                             | <b>TOTAL INCOME</b> | <b>€ 329.010</b> |
| <b>END OF YEAR RESULT 2020</b> |                 |                     |                             |                     | <b>- € 1.641</b> |



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**RREUSE** is a member of ECOS and the Social Platform.



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You can view our entry on the European Commission Transparency Register.  
Transparency Register: 05052317999-60

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**LET'S KEEP IN TOUCH!**

**[www.rreuse.org](http://www.rreuse.org)**



**@RREUSE.RREUSE**



**RREUSE\_Brussels**



**RREUSE**



**RREUSE**



**SIGN UP**

to our newsletter for concise and neatly  
packaged information on what's new in  
the world of re-use!



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