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#circular #waste

Promoting the circular economy and other solutions for managing waste and our planet s valuable resources

Structure : ZeroWaste Europe



Waste is merely a symptom of a much deeper problem that affects us humans. Zero waste is a philosophy aimed at eliminating the root causes of waste entirely.

Our planet has always followed zero-waste principles. For thousands of years, up until the industrial era, waste was not a developed concept because most discarded materials from civilizations were used as inputs for other processes, retaining their value in a circular way, just as nature does. But what nature has achieved through evolution, humankind must now achieve through design.

We have now come to realize that we need to rethink the way we produce and consume in order to create these ecosystemic relationships, which preserve the value and energy embedded in resources while enabling civilization to flourish and prosper. Zero waste is not only about decoupling economic activity from environmental destruction—it is, above all, about building resilience and natural capital for future generations.

In the 20th century, the purpose of waste management was to minimize immediate environmental damage through waste collection and disposal in the least environmentally harmful way possible. Zero waste brings us into the 21st

century by shifting the focus away from waste management and toward the proper management of our Earth's valuable resources.

A zero-waste Europe is no longer seen as a visionary project to escape a dystopian future. Instead, today the concept has taken hold: the question is no longer "if," but rather "how" and "when" policymakers and influencers will accept it as a legitimate and desirable goal for our society.

What is the circular economy?

The circular economy is a means to achieve a zero-waste society. It is an economic model of production and consumption that involves sharing, leasing, reusing, repairing, refurbishing, and recycling existing materials and products for as long as possible, while also addressing the presence of hazardous chemicals throughout the entire value chain.

As a result, the lifecycle of products is extended in a toxic-free environment. In practice, this means designing safe and sustainable products, implementing circular systems, and adopting demand-side measures that minimize waste and reduce the need to extract new materials. When a product reaches the end of its life, its materials are kept within the economy wherever possible. This way, materials can be productively used over and over again, creating further value without environmental destruction. Ultimately, the circular economy must support well-being for all within planetary boundaries.

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