



# Reuse and Recycling European Union Social Enterprises

Preventing Waste – Strengthening Communities  
Conference Dublin 7/10/2010



## RREUSE at European level

- RREUSE is a young EU federation...
  - Representing social enterprises active in reuse and recycling at EU level
    - Founded in 2001 by 4 national networks
    - Brussels-based secretariat since 2003
    - Goal: have re-use addressed by EU legislation
  - Developing projects to professionalise the sector
    - Harmonised testing / refurbishment procedures
    - Trained personnel, quality and licensed management
    - Exchange experience and best practice
    - Warranty, insurance to cover liabilities

# RREUSE MEMBERS

- 10 EU Member States AT, BE, FR, DE,NL, SP, UK, FI, GR, IRL
- 20 national or regional networks (FRN, CRN, LCRN, CRNS, Cylch, Association of Charity Shops, CCN, Arge, Komosie, Ressources, Emmaüs France, ENVIE, Ressourceries, Bag Arbeit, ReUse Computer Association, NetSer, ECOREC, BKN, AERESS, Rehab Recycle)
- SE network which promote a sustainable development model (environment protection, social equity and economic viability)
- 42, 000 FTE jobs
- 120, 000 volunteers and trainees
- A total of over 150, 000 people across Europe
- A total of over 710, 000 tonnes materials diverted from landfill to be reused or, when impossible, recycled



# REUSE ACTIVITIES IN PRACTICE

- Waste prevention, used materials collection and sorting
  - 265,000 tons furniture / bulky items collected yearly
  - 170,000 tons WEEE
  - 146,000 tons clothing / textile
  - 113,000 tons organic waste
- Reuse, refurbishment and recycling activities, employing in total 150,000 people across Europe
  - In total over 700,000 tonnes materials are diverted from landfill to be reused or, when impossible, recycled
- Second-hand shops to sell these to disadvantaged communities but also anyone looking for cheaper goods
- International projects with public and private bodies



## OUR OBJECTIVES AT EU LEVEL

- Lobby EU Institutions for social and ecological objectives
- Promote the development of Social enterprises and projects in the environmental field
- Waste reduction, promotion of sustainable production and consumption patterns
- Organise awareness-raising and PR campaigns / events
- Participate in EU wide projects funded at EU/national level

# OUR ACHIEVEMENTS SO FAR

- Combining social and environmental objectives with economically viable activities
- At political level: participating in development of EU legislation
  - Com documents / thematic strategies
  - Framework legislation: WFD, Sustainable Consumption and Production
  - Sectoral legislation: WEEE, Bio-waste, Ecodesign...
- Awareness-raising / PR activities
  - Greenweek in the CEC (5th participation)
  - European Week for Waste Reduction
- EU projects: management or technical partnership

# FUTURE PROJECTS

- Image building to the greater public
  - European Week for Waste Reduction (2009-2011)
  - Website and communication tools
- Information exchange
  - Targeting political, economic and NGO actors
  - Bottom up information events towards policy-makers
  - Dissemination of best-practices across Europe
- EU Projects
  - Approved re-use networks as foreseen in the WFD
  - Transfer of know how to Central Europe: CERREC
- Studies / Research



# ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS

- Repair and reuse avoid/delay products and components to become waste and reduce their overall impact on the environment
  - Reuse diminishes the need for producing and consuming new products and thereby wasting valuable energy / natural resources
  - Repair to reuse is less energy and resources demanding than recycling
- **sustainable use of resources + reduction of water and air pollution (incl. greenhouse gases)**
- **reuse = preferred waste management method after prevention (see hierarchy established by WFD in 2008)**

# SOCIAL BENEFITS

- Social enterprises **create jobs and training** for people at risk
    - long-term unemployed, disabled, youngsters, ex-offenders ...
    - leading to both social and professional reintegration
  - Reuse activities **provide essential household items for people with low income** but also for the wider public
    - 16% (80 million) European population live under poverty level, 8.9% unemployed (21.5 Million)
    - second-hand is increasingly accepted by all segments of society
- **there is a market for second hand products nowadays and that alternative economy also leads to social benefits for society**

# TO CONTACT US



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## Sustainable Development in Practice