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ZERO WASTE CONCEPT FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF THE REGIONS

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КОНЦЕПЦІЯ “ZERO WASTE” ДЛЯ СТАЛОГО РОЗВИТКУ РЕГІОНІВ

Zero waste (ZW) according to the Zero Waste International Alliance is an ethical, economical, effective and forward-thinking concept whereby people can change their lifestyles and habits to one that mimics natural cycles, where all discarded materials are designed to become resources that can benefit others.

The aim of the collective study was to determine the knowledge of the Zero Waste problem (subject of the study) by respondents in selected Central and Eastern European countries, including Poland, Slovakia (EU countries) and Ukraine (EU associated country), as well as to verify whether the Zero Waste rules are known and implemented in sustainable activities of residents in the studied countries [1]. The key issue was to determine the degree of awareness of the ZW problem among the respondents. The analysis of the collected research material from three countries of Poland, Slovakia and Ukraine allowed for the formulation of the following conclusions.

Legislative activities, both at the national and community level, are in line with the postulates proposed by ZW, which mean they consider it as the most important to take actions which match with the waste management hierarchy, starting from: (a) waste prevention, (b) preparation for re-use, (c) recycling, (d) other recovery operations and (e) disposal. Additionally, it should be noted that ZW, as a trend, relates to a greater extent to the everyday life of citizens as entities responsible for the production of municipal waste and encourages them to make more pro-environmental decisions related to everyday functioning, which may contribute to the improvement of the functioning of the entire municipal economic system.

The analysis of data from the surveyed countries showed that the knowledge of the ZW concept was related to the elements of the daily functioning of households, such as waste segregation, reducing plastic consumption, donating clothes to others instead of throwing them away and not wasting food, which is related to with reasonable purchases. The respondents largely identify the above-mentioned activities with ZW theory. In addition, significant relationships between individual countries were demonstrated. It is essential and may constitute the basis for further activities, not only legislative but also educational, in the surveyed countries. The conducted research showed a significant relationship between economic, social, ecological and ethical goals within the ZW concept. Importantly, the analysis of the research results showed that among the respondents of the surveyed countries the environmental goal is the most important, then the social and ethical one. It should be emphasized that the economic goal was usually indicated as the last one. The respondents do not connect activities that fit in the ZW with the economic aspect. As a part of educational activities, the economic aspect should be emphasized as the one that may be a priority in the activities of societies and will shape other elements related to ZW, including social, ecological and ethical elements.

Literatura

1. Bogusz, M.; Matysik-Pejas, R.; Krasnodebski, A.; Dziekanski, P. The Concept of Zero Waste in the Context of Supporting Environmental Protection by Consumers. *Energies* 2021, 14, 5964. <https://doi.org/10.3390/en14185964>