

# Last year the waste sorting has saved inhabitants of Riga 14 million EUR

Published: 02.02.2023.

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Over the past year, the share of sorted waste has increased in Riga, which not only helps to protect the environment, but also allows considerably saving the inhabitant's resources. Last year, because of the waste sorting, waste transportation expenses for inhabitants decreased by approximately 14 million euros.

In 2022, 29.2% of waste was collected separately in Riga, which is about 50% more than in 2020, when 19.9% of sorted waste was collected. In 2021, 24% of waste was collected separately. The fastest increase has been in the volume of lightweight packaging and glass waste collected separately.

By sorting lightweight packaging and glass waste, in total, inhabitants of Riga have saved more than 14 million euros in 2022. It's the money that inhabitants would have paid if the sorted waste had been transported and managed as unsorted household waste. Compared to the previous year, almost five million euros were saved.

Riga Municipality reminds that the installation of packaging and glass waste containers and the collection of this separately collected waste is free of charge, unlike the collection of unsorted household waste containers, for which inhabitants must pay. Each large packaging container properly sorted and disposed of as a packaging container in 2023 will reduce household waste management costs by around €24 to €27, depending on the waste manager's tariff.

"Riga's experience shows that it is possible to change people's habits if infrastructure is easily accessible. By continuing our work, we can reach and exceed the EU average level of separate waste collection—around 50%—and significantly reduce our environmental impact," says Mairita Lūse, Member of the Riga City Council and Head of the Waste Reduction and Sorting Working Group.

"Over the last few years, we have increasingly noticed that people are willing to change their habits and less and less unsorted household waste is going to the "Getliņi" landfill. 14 000 tonnes less unsorted household waste was sent to landfill if we compare

it to 2021. The work that we have started to educate the people about waste reduction, smart shopping, and waste sorting in cooperation with Riga City Council is the basis for further reducing the amount of waste sent to landfill," says Imants Stirāns, Chairman of the Board of "Getliņi EKO" Ltd.

## Riga Municipality makes sorting of lightweight packaging and glass waste more accessible

Over the last few years, Riga Municipality has taken a number of measures to promote waste sorting. House managers are obliged to ensure, in cooperation with waste managers, that lightweight packaging and glass waste are separated at apartment buildings by placing appropriate containers, while businessmen must ensure that waste containers are separated for people at market places, service stations and self-service car washes, offering at least separate collection of lightweight packaging and glass waste.

Riga Municipality and three waste management companies have jointly set up a common guideline for the convenience of inhabitants, which helps to focus more easily on waste sorting. Guideline is available at the [Riga Municipality website](#).

Eight sorted waste collection sites are currently being designed, work is ongoing to expand the network of public waste sorting points and to review the network of mobile hazardous waste collection points.

## Riga extends possibilities for separate collection of textile products

Also, starting from this year, the opportunities for textile recycling in the capital have been expanded by adding 65 new specialised containers in different neighbourhoods, many of which are already in place.

Textile sorting containers are available to the public and can be used for all types of clothing, shoes, and home textiles. Minor defects such as small stains, small holes or frayed hems are also acceptable. In order to be suitable for re-circulation, including recycling and secondary use, it is essential that sorted textiles have not been in contact with any chemicals, including motor oils, and have not been shredded. They must be dry and mould-free. Wet and mouldy clothing and fabric scraps should not be disposed of in the container. Such textiles must be disposed of in a household waste container.

Sorted textiles must be placed in a tightly closed bag. Other materials, such as plastic ski boots and soft toys, cannot be disposed of together with textiles. It is forbidden to dispose of other types of waste in these containers.

## Bio-waste containers will also become a mandatory requirement for certain homes

In Latvia, biodegradable waste sorting will be compulsory from 2024, so Riga Municipality plans to continue promoting the separate bio-waste collection this year by making these containers compulsory for certain homes.

Following the experience of other countries in successful waste sorting, Riga Municipality launched the #biovaig pilot project in autumn last year to test a new approach to bio-waste sorting. The project is implemented by Riga Municipality, "Rīgas namu pārvaldnieks", "CleanLiving", "Getliņi" landfill, waste management companies "CleanR" and "EcoBaltiaVide", as well as the supermarket chain "Maxima". The aim of the project is to promote waste sorting in Riga by offering convenient methods to make it a daily practice in apartment buildings.

Since autumn, several customers of the municipal company "Rīgas namu pārvaldnieks" have received a special bio-waste sorting kit, which includes a sorting container and biodegradable bags to make daily waste sorting more convenient.

Last year, the Riga City Council also invited supermarkets to participate in the project, and supermarket chain "Maxima" responded to the initiative by introducing a new design of paper bags in its stores for a certain period, informing and educating shoppers about the possibilities of sorting organic waste.

The design of the paper bags includes information about the types of bio-waste that can be disposed of in the bio-waste

containers and other designated areas. Organic waste includes fruit and vegetables, cores, peelings, raw and cooked eggs, coffee and tea grounds without bags and filters, bread and farinaceous products, fresh and cooked meat and meat products, fish leftovers, etc. Garden waste and house plants are also organic waste.

### Inhabitants also actively hand in hazardous waste

Last autumn, a mobility campaign organised by the Riga City Council took place in 11 neighbourhoods of the capital, during which 52.6 tonnes of hazardous household waste were collected.

Household hazardous and environmentally hazardous waste such as oil, oil filters, varnish and paint, mercury waste, fluorescent light bulbs, organic solvents, unused medical products, chemicals, used batteries, used printer and copier cartridges, contaminated packaging, etc. were received from inhabitants.

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