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Reuse, Repair, Share:

Elements of a New Economy

Moving away from the dependency on economic growth, protecting the foundations of our lives – biodiversity and the climate – more togetherness and solidarity, promoting the common good... all these positive goals are closely linked to promoting the 'Reuse – Repair – Share' approach.

The Mouvement Ecologique is therefore strongly committed to this topic, often in collaboration with the Oekozenter Pafendall and thanks to a convention with the Ministry of the Environment on the 'Rethink' project.

TRANSFORMING "RECYCLING CENTERS" INTO FULL-FLEDGED "RESOURCE CENTERS"

Today's recycling centres must become part of a new economic and resource policy. They are a linchpin of a new waste management policy: instead of just 'recycling', we should be reusing, sharing and reusing more!

This transformation of the recycling centres is provided for in the new waste law. However, the provisions in the law itself are still formulated rather vaguely; the details are to be laid down in Grand Ducal regulations. A corresponding draft has been prepared by the ministry, but, in the opinion of the Mouvement Ecologique, it has a number of key weaknesses.

This motivated the Mouvement Ecologique to present specific proposals for a better implementation of this extremely central requirement of the new waste law and amendments to the draft in a statement in February 2024.

For example, there is currently no overall strategy in place to regulate the key aspects of future centres from a 'repair, reuse, share' perspective. For example, how the various stakeholders (waste syndicates, municipalities, solidarity economy) should work together, which basic criteria the centres must meet (especially how recycling is ensured), to what extent regional priorities are set (e. e.g. one centre is investing more in the valorisation of furniture, another in clothes, etc., so that different centres can provide different services in a region).

In addition, the Mouvement Ecologique is calling for standards to be applied to all resource centres in order to ensure a nationwide quality of service for all citizens. These framework conditions should promote repair, reuse and sharing and include clear guidelines on organisation, awareness-raising and monitoring. The possibility of creating synergies with social and solidarity economy actors should also be established by setting up collection points for reusable items in the centres, which are managed by these actors.

Additional state financial aid should be granted for measures that go beyond minimum criteria. For example, if a municipality sets up 'antennae' of the resource centre within its localities, where equipment can be shared, repaired, etc. These centres could also take on a social function in the municipality, in connection with social activities. Regional cooperation between the centres should also be encouraged.

Close cooperation between all stakeholders is crucial for the successful implementation of the new waste management policy and the creation of sustainable resource centres.

The detailed statement entitled 'Reorientation of recycling centres to become resource centres: coherent overall strategy and clear guidelines in the implementing regulations for the law are needed!' can be found at www.meco.lu. It has been sent to all municipalities. It would be positive if numerous municipal councillors, but also active members of environmental commissions, etc., were to get involved in this process.

CAMPAIN "FIXIT! FLÉCKEN. LÉINEN. NOTZEN."

In 2024, Mouvement Ecologique and Oekozenter Pafendall carried out the 'fixit! Flécken.Léinen.Notzen.' campaign thanks to financial support from the Ministry of the Environment.

The aim of the campaign is to encourage individuals to repair, reuse, share and thus support the economy of the common good by providing specific tips. The campaign not only advocates less consumption and more protection of resources, but also a different economic model.

In this context, a flyer was created to introduce the campaign, a corresponding poster was distributed to all stakeholders and model advertisements were provided to the municipalities for their 'Buet'. It has been shown time and again that municipalities are happy to make use of such services.

In addition, tips were regularly published on social media and on the special 'fixit' page on the homepage.

During the course of 2024, the following content was shared, among other things:

An overview of open workshops where people can repair things together. Open workshops offer a valuable alternative to buying new by enabling people to repair broken items themselves or with the help of others. In addition to the environmental aspect, they also promote the exchange of knowledge and manual skills in the community.

A tip on the importance of high-quality tools and how they contribute to sustainability. Durable and well-maintained tools prevent the need to quickly dispose of low-quality products and save resources in the long term. In addition, high-quality tools can often be used for generations or shared with others, instead of buying new products for every small repair.

A call to reuse school supplies that are no longer needed in order to conserve resources. Many school supplies, such as notebooks, pens or folders, are left over at the end of the school year and often end up in the trash unused. These materials can be reused in a meaningful way by collecting or passing them on, instead of buying new ones – a simple measure that benefits both the environment and your wallet.



A REPAIR BONUS – MUNICIPALITIES AS PIONEERS FOR THE GOVERNMENT

Not replacing items with new ones even when they have minor defects is particularly important and a very simple way to conserve resources. Unfortunately, however, depending on the device, repairs often seem quite expensive compared to buying a new one, which is why people quickly react by ‘throwing it away’. Or the cost estimate for the repair already costs money, so people shy away from the repair.

This is exactly where the repair bonus comes in!

The idea is simple: the municipality contributes to the cost estimate / repair costs or the cost of the required spare part (if you want to repair an appliance yourself or go to a ‘repair café’).

Every year, each resident is entitled to a fixed amount of money (Mouvement Ecologique / OekoZenter Pafendall proposes €200) for repair services, which the municipality will reimburse. This reduces the cost of repairs for individuals, conserves resources and also supports local businesses.

Mouvement Ecologique and OekoZenter Pafendall, with the financial support of the Ministry of the Environment, have therefore formulated recommendations for the introduction of such a repair bonus in a detailed statement.

In 2024, the government examined the possibility of introducing a national bonus, which would certainly make the most sense. However, municipalities can take a pioneering role by directly introducing a municipal bonus, thus possibly accelerating a nationwide introduction.

That is why Mouvement Ecologique and OekoZenter Pafendall have formulated a series of concrete recommendations for municipalities (and accordingly for a national bonus) on how the repair bonus can be designed: Who should it be awarded to? What exactly should be subsidised (repairs, spare parts and cost estimates for various items)? How much should the amount be? The motto: ‘Your community is in demand: make repairs more attractive - introduce a municipal repair bonus!’

The following documents were created as part of the campaign:

- presentation of the concept
- proposals for criteria to promote repairs
- decision-making aids from Oekotopten: overview of possible criteria to promote repairs
- document explaining the objectives and structure of the Oekobonus
- proposal for municipal funding regulations.

The opportunity was also taken to raise awareness in municipalities of the fact that they should increasingly draw attention to assistance for low-income households when purchasing new household appliances.

For households in a situation of ‘précarité énergétique’ and supported by an ‘Office social’, the replacement of inefficient household appliances is supported with a high co-financing contribution from the Ministry of the Environment (MECB) on the basis of specific advice from the Climate Agency. Unfortunately, this instrument is not well enough known. It is therefore important that the municipalities help to ensure that this aid is better publicised.

EXCHANGE WITH THE MINISTER FOR CONSUMER PROTECTION

As a consequence, Mouvement Ecologique and OekoZenter Pafendall had an exchange with Minister Martine Hansen and representatives of the Directorate for Consumer Protection about the ministry's understanding of consumer issues in general (e.g. regarding pesticide pollution) and the possible introduction of a national repair bonus.



EU ANCHORS RIGHT TO REPAIR – WHAT DOES LUXEMBOURG SAY?

In 2024, the EU institutions agreed on new rules to promote repairs, which are praised as a significant step for climate and resource protection. These include a requirement for manufacturers to provide spare parts at reasonable prices to facilitate access to affordable repairs. This development is to be seen in a positive light. The ban on practices that make it difficult to use reused spare parts is also to be welcomed.

Mouvement Ecologique was a member of an alliance that campaigned for these rules and, together with these actors, is calling for the right to repair to be extended to other products.

Luxembourg must also implement this directive in the next few years. In a letter to Consumer Minister Martine Hansen in May 2024, the Mouvement Ecologique asked, among other things, what measures to promote repairs are planned and in what timeframe, and what additional priorities the ministry has set itself in the context of this directive.

RENOVATE INSTEAD OF REBUILD!

The theme of this year's national energy weeks was ‘Climate neutrality in the building sector by 2050: building on existing structures’. The weeks' motto was “renovate instead of rebuild”, and visitors were able to see positive examples of renovated houses. The campaign kicked off with a highly praised conference organised by the OekoZenter Pafendall in collaboration with the Mouvement Ecologique on the topic of ‘Existing buildings as innovation: the new circular conversion and repair culture’ in October. The conference featured the President of the German Sustainable Building Council (DGNB), Prof. Amandus Samsøe Sattler.