

SUMMARY OF AN OPINION POLL ABOUT WASTE SEPARATION IN THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC

An opinion poll about waste separation was done in the Slovak Republic as two parallel surveys:

1. Public opinion survey - the main aim of the survey was to find out:

- attitude of the public to waste separation
- contentment of citizens with level of waste separation systems in municipalities
- perception of presence of the Recycling Fund (RF) as a tool to support waste recycling in the Slovak Republic, perception of recycling issues through Slovak media
- awareness of the 2nd year of expo called “Recycling of wastes”, which took place on 2nd - 5th May 2006 in Banská Bystrica, Slovakia

The survey was carried out on a random sample of 1051 citizens from 235 various towns and villages of Slovakia from 15th May to 30th June 2006.

2. Survey for municipalities – the main aim of the survey was to find out:

- level of waste separation in municipalities
- attitude of municipalities to the Recycling Fund (RF) as an important tool to support waste separation and recycling in the Slovak Republic
- problems of municipalities with paperwork of RF
- awareness of the 2nd year of expo called “Recycling of wastes”, which took place on 2nd - 5th May 2006 in Banská Bystrica, Slovakia

The survey was carried out on a random sample of 133 municipalities of Slovakia from 15th May to 30th June 2006. The sample contains 55.6 % of villages and 44.4 % of towns. In these municipalities, 1.82 mil. inhabitants live (33.8 % of Slovak population).

Results of the public opinion survey

The waste separation is important for 95.2 % of respondents. 82.1 % of respondents sort at least 1 kind of waste in their households and 17.7 % do not separate waste at home. Paper, plastics and glass are the most often sorted commodities. Biowaste is sorted in 23.3 % respondents' households. 72.6 % of respondents consider the waste separation issue as important and sort at least 2 commodities in household. 5.0 % of respondents do not sort waste in household due to indifference or lack of time.

88.5 % of respondents have stated that there is a waste separation system in the municipality where they live. The most often sorted commodities are paper, plastics and glass. 52.9 % of respondents are not satisfied with the level of separation system in their municipality. 39.9 % of respondents have lack of information about separation (what and how), 70.1 % of respondents are not satisfied with distribution and number of containers for sorted commodities (either there are not enough containers or there are no containers). Fully satisfied are 18.6 % of respondents (enough information, sufficient access to the containers). On the other hand, there are 28.6 % of respondents unsatisfied with the level of separation system, feeling lack of information and containers. Despite of it, 59.0 % of respondents think that separation system in their municipality have improved for last 4 – 5 years. The most positive changes are perceived during last 2 – 3 years.

87.3 % of respondents try to decrease waste production, mostly by waste separation and composting of biowaste.

57.3 % of respondents are willing to sort biowaste, either as a part of the municipality waste separation system (23.8 %) or to compost it directly in a respondent's garden (33.5 %). 27.8 % of respondents feel a

lack of information about biowaste issue. 7.1 % of respondents think that biowaste is non-problematic constituent of waste because it decomposes at landfill. This attitude proves also lack of information about biowaste. Only 4.5 % of respondents are not willing to sort biowaste due to indifference.

Decreasing of waste charge (the charge is paid by citizens to municipalities to treat waste) would be motivating to sort waste for 85.0 % of respondents. 30 % reduction was the most preferred. 9.6 % of respondents would sort waste without the charge reduction. 81.6 % of respondents, which don't sort waste, would start separation, if the charge decreased.

41.4 % of respondents have stated they know the Recycling Fund, 57.5 % of them do not know it. 85.3 % respondents think that presentation of waste separation and recycling in media is not sufficient. 10.2 % of respondents have heard about the expo called "Recycling of wastes", mainly from the TV, radio, press and internet.

Results of the survey for municipalities

96.2 % of municipalities have already established waste separation system. The most often sorted commodities are paper, plastics and glass (87,2 % of municipalities). 78.9 % sort car batteries, 69.5 % sort other commodities as textile, electronic waste, tires and metals. 47.7 % sort composite drink containers (paper + polyethylene foil with or without tin foil). 46.1 % of municipalities compost biowaste from public vegetation maintenance.

Efficiency of 54.8 % separation systems is between 5 – 30 %. 16.1 % of municipalities have systems below 2 % efficiency and 7.3 % of municipalities can sort out by separation system more than 30 % of municipal waste. One third of municipalities can sort out annually up to 10 kg per inhabitant, 34.7 % can sort out 10 – 25 kg per inhabitant.

21.9 % of municipalities have saved no costs by separation system, 46.9 % have saved by separation only 0,1 – 10 % of municipal waste disposal costs. It means that municipalities need more financial support (e.g. increasing of allowance, which municipality can obtain for separated commodity) to make waste separation more interesting. Despite, 10.1 % of municipalities can save by separation more than 20 % cost on previous waste disposal. It is concerned with smaller municipalities up to 10,000 inhabitants, with relatively efficient separation system (above 10 %).

73.4 % of municipalities spread information on separation and make public education at least twice a year. Efficiency of separation of most of them (55.6 %) is between 5 – 30 %.

The Recycling Fund (RF) helps to enhance the level of separation at least partially in 80.4 % of municipalities and 84.9 % of them think that RF is big or partial asset in separation and recycling in Slovakia. On the other hand, amount of an allowance per 1 t sorted commodity that municipalities can obtain is for 74.5 % of municipalities not sufficient or covers only a small part of costs (In Slovakia, there is a system of separation and recycling support. Producers and retailers have to pay recycling levy into RF per kg of defined commodities brought to the market and RF pays to the municipalities the allowance per t of the sorted commodity. RF also supports development of separation systems in municipalities and recycle capacity building). The role of the recycling levy should be to cover all real costs of municipalities of establishing and realization of waste separation system. Only for 0,8 % of municipalities (1 municipality), current allowance is fully sufficient.

31.5 % of municipalities have problems with obtaining subsidies from RF for developing separation system. 17.3 % have partial problems with paperwork, filling in amount of forms, slow handling of applications and communication with a lot of sectors of RF (RF has 12 sectors for each supported commodity – paper, plastics, glass, tires, car batteries, electronic devices etc. Municipality have to ask for financial support each sector separately). In this context, a challenging request was noticed to establish a superior sector for development of separation systems in municipalities. Finance would be flowed from other sectors according to current demands and municipalities would communicate only with this sector. This approach would make communication between municipalities and RF easier.

Municipalities miss financial support for separation such commodities as textile, shoes, wood and biowaste (support of these commodities is currently not solved in Slovakia). 42.8 % of municipalities would welcome establishing of new textile sector of RF.

39.8 % of municipalities have no problems with subsidy obtaining and 60.2 % have no problems with RF

paperwork and filling of forms. 59,4 % of municipalities consider information activities of RF as sufficient, however, there is still something to improve. 8.3 % of municipalities want establishment of an existing sector (electronic waste, tires, metal containers), what bespeaks an insufficient awareness.

54.9 % of municipalities have heard about the expo called “Recycling of wastes”, mainly from press, radio and internet. 97,0 % of municipalities consider taking place expos, such as this one, important and 82.0 % would visit this kind of expo in the future.

Conclusion

In general, it is possible to say that Slovak citizens have positive attitude to the separation of waste and majority of them is also willing to separate biowaste. However, they miss information on separation and appropriate economic stimulation. It would be necessary to enhance work with public, e.g. leading to separation already on elementary schools, public information campaigns, highlighting of waste separation issue in media and publicity of results of waste recycling in Slovakia as well.

Another serious problem is insufficient infrastructure of waste separation systems. More than half of citizens is not satisfied with the level of waste separation systems in municipalities, 70 % miss separation containers, despite there is already established a waste separation system in 96 % of municipalities.

Recycling fund is consider to be an important tool to support and enhance waste separation in the Slovak Republic, but its current financial support is not sufficient for municipalities and do not cover basic separation and collection costs. Municipalities expressed a need of financial support for separation of commodities as textile, wood and shoes. Support for these commodities has not been solved yet.

It could be possible to substantially enhance waste separation and recycling efficiency in Slovakia by enhancing of public education simultaneously with improving of separation infrastructure (containers, collecting and recycling points in municipalities, increasing of sorted kinds of commodities), and with more intensive financial support of separation from the point of view of the Recycling Fund (e.g. increasing of allowance for separated commodities) and from the point of view of state authorities (support of biowaste composting). Enhancing of separation efficiency would lead to decreasing of landfilled and incinerated wastes improving the environment in the Slovak Republic.