

***REPORT***

***FOR EVALUATION OF THE EFFICIENCY OF  
THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A SOCIAL  
COOPERATIVE ENTERPRISE IN THE FIELD OF  
THE USE OF "GREEN WASTE"***



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**BLAGOEVGRAD, JANUARY 2020**

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## I.ΠΕΡΙΟΧΗ

The current study of the social impact assessment since the establishment of the social enterprise in the field of waste management has been developed within the project: *“Green” employment in the management of biowastes (Green\_Crew) project, under Priority Axis 4: “Social inclusive Cross-border area”, Thematic objective 09: Promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination, Investment priority 9c: Providing support for social enterprises, Specific objective 9: To Expand social entrepreneurship in the cross-border area, under the Cross-border Cooperation Program INTERREG VA “Greece-Bulgaria” 2014-2020.*

The main objective of the Report is to promote social entrepreneurship as a model for local development and decentralization by informing and raising public awareness about the implementation of the concept of biodegradable waste at the local level. Through it, the Municipality of Blagoevgrad will present its priorities, goals and commitments to promote the ability of companies to integrate their socially responsible practices in their activities, in order to increase competitiveness, business sustainability and support the realization of sustainable development goals.

The report complies with the requirements set out in the strategy papers and EU legislation in the field of waste management, regional and social policy. The document outlines guidelines regarding the correlation of planning documents developed and implemented at local level with the general European context of the policy for balanced and sustainable development of the regions and local communities in the EU. In general, the strategic objectives of this policy are aimed at reducing economic, social and territorial imbalances and improving living standards. In addition to the harmonization of objectives and priorities in the context of EU regional policy, the report aims to provide guidelines for the efficient use of local resources and sustainable waste management. In the Republic of Bulgaria, incl. and in the Municipality of Blagoevgrad there is a significant potential for improving waste management, better use of resources, opening new markets and creating new jobs, while reducing the harmful effects of waste on the environment.

## II. LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED

ABBREVIATION	FULL NAME
<b>EBRD</b>	THE EUROPEAN BANK FOR RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT
<b>EIB</b>	THE EUROPEAN INVESTMENT BANK
<b>EC</b>	EUROPEAN COMMISSION
<b>EU</b>	EUROPEAN UNION
<b>ESIF</b>	EUROPEAN STRATEGIC INVESTMENT FUND
<b>EPL</b>	ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION LAW
<b>WMA</b>	WASTE MANAGEMENT ACT
<b>LTS</b>	LAW ON TERRITORIAL STRUCTURE
<b>DEEE</b>	DISCONTINUED ELECTRICAL AND ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT
<b>ELMV</b>	END-OF-LIFE MOTOR VEHICLES
<b>LESSE</b>	LAW ON ENTERPRISES OF THE SOCIAL AND SOLIDARITY ECONOMY
<b>MSDSS</b>	MUNICIPAL STRATEGY FOR DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL

SERVICES 2016-2020

<b>SS</b>	SOCIAL SERVICES
<b>SE</b>	SOCIAL ENTERPRISES
<b>MBT</b>	MECHANICAL-BIOLOGICAL TREATMENT
<b>SME</b>	SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES
<b>NWMP</b>	THE NATIONAL WASTE MANAGEMENT PLAN
<b>EIA</b>	ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT
<b>OIP</b>	MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN
<b>EMEPA</b>	ENTERPRISE FOR MANAGEMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ACTIVITIES
<b>RWMA</b>	REGIONAL WASTE MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION
<b>PCB</b>	POLYCHLORINATED BIPHENYLS
<b>SS</b>	SOCIAL SERVICE
<b>SE</b>	SOCIAL ENTERPRISES

### III. РЕЧНИК НА ИЗПОЛЗВАНИТЕ ТЕРМИНИ

**Bio-waste** is part of biodegradable household waste, in particular waste from parks and gardens, food and kitchen waste from households, restaurants, catering establishments and shops, as well as similar waste from the food industry.

**Biodegradable waste** is all waste that has the ability to decompose anaerobically or aerobically, such as food and vegetable waste, paper, cardboard and others (§ 1, item 3 of the Additional Provisions of the WMA).

**Waste management hierarchy** - describes a desired priority in the different ways of waste management according to how and what they contribute to the environment.

**Compost** is a humus-rich product containing at least 15% and no more than 50% dry organic matter of the total weight obtained as a result of the composting process.

**Composting** is a process of controlled aerobic, exothermic, biological decomposition of separately collected biowaste in order to obtain compost.

**Separate collection** is the collection in which a stream of waste is divided by type and nature of waste in order to facilitate specific treatment (§ 1, item 34 of the Additional Provisions of the WMA).

**Regional Association for Waste Management - Blagoevgrad** is an independent, voluntary, non-governmental organization, uniting on a regional basis the municipalities of Blagoevgrad, Simitli, Rila, Kocherinovo and Boboshevo in their efforts to provide investments for the implementation of their management responsibilities related to environmental protection. from the harmful effects of waste.

**A social and solidarity economy** is a form of entrepreneurship aimed at one or more social activities and / or social objectives pursued by enterprises, including through the production of various goods or the provision of services, in cooperation with state or local authorities or independently..

A **social enterprise** is an enterprise which, regardless of its legal organizational form, has as its object activity production of goods or provision of services, combining economic results with social goals, achieving measurable, positive social added value, managed transparently with the participation of members, workers or the employees in making management decisions, carries out their economic activity, as part of the average number of staff are persons under Art. 7, item 4 and / or as the profit is mainly spent for realization of social activity and / or social goal, according to the constituent contract or statute. (§ 1, item 5 of the LESSA).

A **cooperative enterprise, as defined by the International Cooperative Union (ICA)**, is "an independent association of people who voluntarily come together to meet common economic, social and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly owned enterprise and democratic governance."

**Social entrepreneurship** is a form of entrepreneurship that combines economic activity with the pursuit of social goals, as a result of which social added value is produced. (§ 1, item 6 of the LESSA).

**Social added value** is the achieved social effect for the target group as a result of the activity performed by the social enterprise, taking into account both positive and negative changes and the accompanying effects as a result of other actions or lack of actions by the social enterprise. (§ 1, item 7 of the LESSA).

**Vulnerable groups** are all those who fail to gain access to or take advantage of the opportunities offered by society and the economy and fall victim to or are at risk of social exclusion. They usually qualify as vulnerable groups:

- young people: due to the lack of professional experience and the difficulties in combining work and education;
- people with disabilities: due to lack of accessible environment and objective restrictions on possible employment options;
- minorities: due to public prejudices and negative attitudes;
- people living in remote areas: due to the limited choice of employment opportunities, especially in difficult times for the local economy;



**Social services** are activities in support of people for social inclusion and independent living, which are provided in the community and in specialized institutions.

**Sustainable development** is achieving a balance between social and environmental principles, such as socially justified and environmentally friendly economic development.



## IV. INTRODUCTION



## **1. GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF BLAGOEVGRAD MUNICIPALITY**

Blagoevgrad Municipality is the largest in population and the third in territory within Blagoevgrad District (with an area of 621 sq. km). It is located in southwestern Bulgaria, in the westernmost part of the Rila-Rhodope massif and consists of 26 settlements (with a total of 77,441 inhabitants - data from February 2011). The municipal center of Blagoevgrad is located in the valley of the river Struma, at 360 m above sea level near the southwestern slopes of Rila, on the main road E-79, 100 km south of Sofia. The city is 27 km from the border with the Republic of Macedonia, 80 km from the border with the Hellenic Republic and 200 km from Thessaloniki. The river Blagoevgradska Bistritsa passes through the town.

The region borders with two neighboring countries (Greece and Macedonia), while the municipality only with the Republic of Macedonia, which is a prerequisite for the effective development of cross-border cooperation. The connection with Macedonia is through Zlatarevo border checkpoint and Stanke Lisichkovo border checkpoint.



*Fig. 1. Territorial scope of Blagoevgrad municipality*

Characteristics and specificity of the geographical area, indicated in the annual report for 2014 of RIEW Blagoevgrad on the state of the environment are determined by: Strategic location in the directions of the European transport corridors, border with the well-developed network of regional and local transport infrastructure; The built Struma Motorway; Accessibility to railway transport and the presence of four border crossings for the district and 2 for the municipality. The transport connections are mainly on the main road E-79 and the electrified railway line CE-855, which are part of interstate corridors; The gas supply infrastructure under construction is a major factor for sustainable development of the region. A main gas pipeline to Greece passes through the territory; The diverse climatic, geological and hydrological conditions, the unique flora and fauna, the rich diversity of species, communities and natural habitats, as well as the fact that the territory includes National and Natural Parks of great importance.

The economy of the municipality is relatively diverse, with no brightly dominant industries. The region is characterized by a diversified economic structure. The larger operating sites are in the field of food and processing industry, textile industry, wood processing and furniture industry, metalworking.

On the one hand, the demographic trends in the municipality are identical to those for the country - relatively low birth rate, high mortality, unfavorable age structure. These processes are more pronounced in the villages of the municipality.

On the other hand, the demographic situation in the Municipality of Blagoevgrad is a result of the action of factors specific to the municipality and determined by its demographic, historical, cultural and socio-economic development. Birth and death rates, marriage, divorce, migration, gender, age, ethnicity, religion and education have a significant impact. They influence the formation of human resources in the municipality, both quantitatively and qualitatively.

According to NSI data, the population of Blagoevgrad municipality as of 31.12.2018 is:

(Number)

Areas	Total			in the cities			In the villages		
	everything	men	women	everything	men	women	everything	men	women
Total for the country	<b>7000039</b>	<b>3395701</b>	<b>3604338</b>	<b>5159129</b>	<b>2481128</b>	<b>2678001</b>	<b>1840910</b>	<b>914573</b>	<b>926337</b>
Blagoevgrad	<b>305123</b>	<b>148542</b>	<b>156581</b>	<b>183143</b>	<b>87609</b>	<b>95534</b>	<b>121980</b>	<b>60933</b>	<b>61047</b>
Bansko	12827	6222	6605	11695	5687	6008	1132	535	597
Belitsa	9316	4590	4726	3024	1472	1552	6292	3118	3174
Blagoevgrad	<b>75329</b>	<b>35944</b>	<b>39385</b>	<b>69178</b>	<b>32796</b>	<b>36382</b>	<b>6151</b>	<b>3148</b>	<b>3003</b>
Gotse Delchev	29859	14487	15372	18353	8703	9650	11506	5784	5722

Garmen	14793	7322	7471	-	-	-	14793	7322	7471
Kresna	5143	2626	2517	3286	1657	1629	1857	969	888
Petrich	49530	24210	25320	27039	12899	14140	22491	11311	11180
Razlog	19294	9364	9930	11423	5489	5934	7871	3875	3996
Sandanski	37400	18074	19326	25091	11963	13128	12309	6111	6198
Satovcha	14263	7104	7159	-	-	-	14263	7104	7159
Simitli	13249	6605	6644	6334	3179	3155	6915	3426	3489
Strumyani	5053	2489	2564	-	-	-	5053	2489	2564
Hadjidimovo	9178	4642	4536	2481	1245	1236	6697	3397	3300
Yakoruda	9889	4863	5026	5239	2519	2720	4650	2344	2306

*Table 1. Population of Blagoevgrad municipality*

According to data of GRAO-Blagoevgrad, as of 15.12.2019 the number of the population at a permanent and current address in the municipality of Blagoevgrad is 72 435 people. Of these, in the town of Blagoevgrad are 67,341 people and 5,094 in the small settlements in the municipality.

As a result of the temporary migration / residents without permanent address registration, a large number of students studying at SWU "Neofit Rilski", the American University and specialized high schools in Blagoevgrad, as well as the tourist flow there are periods of temporary population growth. These are some of the reasons for the discrepancy in the number of residents of Blagoevgrad municipality with a permanent and current address. As of December 15, 2019, the residents of Blagoevgrad Municipality at the current address are 81,228.

Populated place	Permanent address total	Current address total	Permanent/current address in the same place
<b>ГР. БЛАГОЕВГРАД</b>	<b>82643</b>	<b>74696</b>	<b>67341</b>
С. БЕЛО ПОЛЕ	11986	645	589
С. ВИСТРИЦА	573	68	26
С. БУЧИНО	132	47	30
С. БЪЛГАРЧЕВО	614	322	215
С. ГАБРОВО	796	44	15
С. ГОРНО ХЪРСОВО	594	131	82
С. ДЕВОЧИЦА	42	30	11
С. ДЕЛВИНО	594	91	30
С. ДРЕНКОВО	53	42	36
С. ДЪБРАВА	628	127	35
С. ЕЛЕНОВО	519	194	183
С. ЗЕЛЕНДОЛ	229	202	159
С. ИЗГРЕВ	734	588	478
С. КЛИСУРА	18	13	6
С. ЛЕШКО	1301	218	124
С. ЛИСИЯ	8	7	5
С. ЛОГОДАЖ	4601	317	170
С. МАРУЛЕВО	554	84	19
С. МОЩАНЕЦ	26	46	23
С. ОБЕЛ	38	25	19
С. ПАДЕШ	537	561	441
С. ПОКРОВНИК	3462	910	791
С. РИЛЦИ	5495	827	752
С. СЕЛИЩЕ	262	294	168
С. ЦЕРОВО	734	699	687
<b>Всичко за общината</b>	<b>117173</b>	<b>81228</b>	<b>72435</b>

*Table 2. Population at permanent and current address of Blagoevgrad municipality*



## 2. OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE OF THE REPORT



The main goal of the project "Green employment in biodegradable waste management" (Green\_Crew) is to promote social entrepreneurship as a model for local development and decentralization by informing and raising public awareness about the implementation of the concept of biodegradable waste at the local level.

The Municipality of Blagoevgrad is a project partner with the Municipality of Serres (Greece), the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (Faculty of Chemistry) and the Municipality of Nstos (Greece).



The activities set out in the project are related to the promotion and presentation of alternative ways of composting biodegradable waste, social entrepreneurship and exchange of experience and good practices in the field of composting "green waste".

**The report aims to assess in the following directions:**

- Increasing the quantities of recycled and recovered biodegradable waste by creating conditions for building a network of facilities for treatment of the entire amount of generated waste, which will reduce the risk to the population and environmental protection.
- Creating conditions for the development of social enterprises in the municipality of Blagoevgrad and their recognition by the local community as an opportunity to solve social problems, create sustainable jobs, facilitate social and labor integration, fight poverty and social exclusion.
- Optimization of the system for separate collection and disposal of waste on the territory of Blagoevgrad municipality.
- Effective and sustainable management of biodegradable waste by stimulating and introducing home composting.
- Reducing the amount of generated and disposed biodegradable waste on the territory of Blagoevgrad municipality by preventing their formation and encouraging their reuse.
- Directing social entrepreneurship on the territory of Blagoevgrad municipality in the field of waste management
- Raising public awareness on the recycling and recovery of biodegradable and green waste.

The development of this report for evaluation of the effectiveness of the establishment of a social corporate enterprise in the field of waste management in the municipality of Blagoevgrad

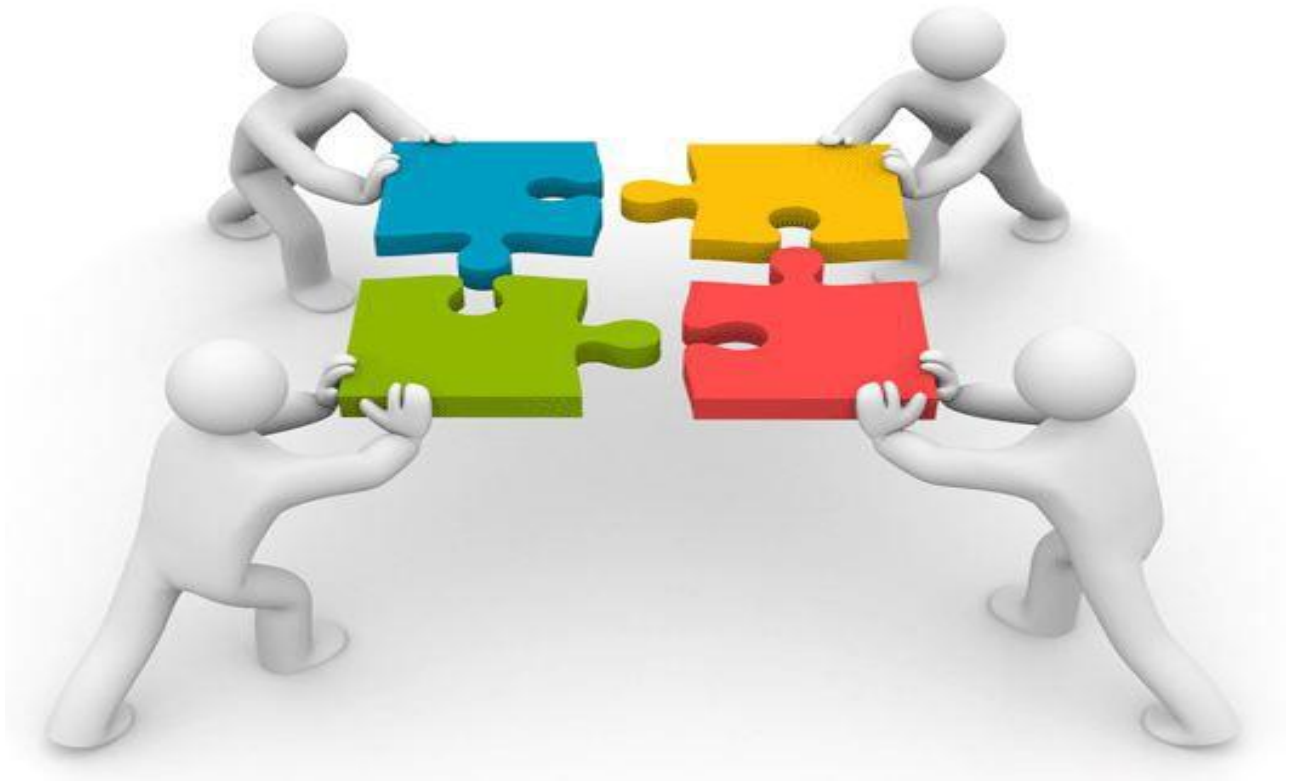
aims to promote social inclusion, the fight against poverty and discrimination, to provide support to social enterprises and to expand social entrepreneurship in the cross-border area.

The report clearly shows the social nature of the project, which is crucial for the growth of the local and regional economy through an integrated framework for waste management in the municipality of Blagoevgrad, which will reduce the environmental impact caused by the generated waste, improving the efficiency of resource use, increasing the responsibilities of polluters, stimulating investments in waste management.

The report includes a description and analysis of existing national, regional and local documents in the field of waste management, social services, social entrepreneurship. The aim is to prepare an in-depth analysis of the available conditions (legislation, practices, local policies and resources) for the establishment and development of local social enterprises, including those aimed at waste management as part of the regional and local economy. In this way the possibility for the real application and implementation of regional and local strategic, tactical and operational documents in the field of waste management and social entrepreneurship will be assessed.

The report focuses on the prerequisites and opportunities for the establishment of social enterprises in the field of waste management in the municipality of Blagoevgrad.

### 3. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH



Representatives of the non-governmental sector, existing social enterprises in the municipality, institutions, people from vulnerable groups were involved in collecting some of the information included in this report. Their inclusion was entirely voluntary, guided by the understanding of the importance of the topic and the opportunities that the creation of social corporate enterprises in the field of "green waste" would provide to the local community.

The following methods and approaches were used in the preparation of this report to collect, analyze and evaluate effectiveness:

- **Cabinet study** - review and analysis of existing documents from official and other sources, which give a detailed picture of the situation regarding waste management, including biodegradable waste in the municipality of Blagoevgrad and provides an adequate content framework in which to the

evaluation will be carried out, especially in the part for the sustainability of the project.

The desk study covers:

- Project documents;
- Databases from the National Statistical Institute;
- National Waste Management Plan 2014-2020;
- Municipal Development Plan of the Municipality of Blagoevgrad 2014-2020;
- Waste Management Program Blagoevgrad Municipality 2015-2020;
- National strategic plan for gradual reduction of the quantities of biodegradable waste intended for landfill 2010-2020;
- EU Europe 2020 strategy;
- Pre-investment studies for a composting plant for separately collected biodegradable and / or green waste, a pre-treatment plant for mixed municipal waste and an anaerobic plant for separately collected biodegradable waste;
- Other public documents related to waste management and social entrepreneurship;
- Law on Environmental Protection;
- Law on Waste Management;
- By-laws related to waste management;
- Law on Enterprises of the Social and Solidarity Economy;
- Municipal strategy for development of social services 2016 -2020;

- National Strategy for Poverty Reduction and Promotion of Social Inclusion 2020;
  - National concept for social economy;
  - National Youth Strategy 2010-2020;
  - Long-term employment strategy for people with disabilities 2011-2020;
  - Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee on "Cooperatives and Restructuring".
- **Working meetings with stakeholders** - during the period of performance evaluation regular working meetings with stakeholders are organized in order to discuss issues related to the prerequisites and opportunities for the establishment of a social cooperative enterprise in the field of waste management in the territory of Blagoevgrad Municipality. The report presents and takes into account the views of all participants in the workshops regarding the development of the local economy.
- **A survey through a survey** was conducted among employees in social services in the municipality of Blagoevgrad and other institutions, serving mainly representatives of vulnerable groups. The survey is aimed at obtaining additional information about the attitudes and the level of awareness among vulnerable groups about the perception of social entrepreneurship / participation in a social enterprise, as an opportunity for professional realization and social inclusion.
- **In-depth interviews** - during the evaluation period, in-depth interviews were conducted with stakeholders and various social groups.
- **On-site visits (operating social enterprises on the territory of Blagoevgrad municipality)** - to prepare an assessment of the effectiveness of the establishment of a social cooperative enterprise in the field of waste

management on the territory of Blagoevgrad municipality, several on-site visits were carried out in order to obtain visual idea.

## V. LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK, POLICIES AND PRACTICES IN THE FIELD OF SOCIAL ECONOMY, SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND WASTE MANAGEMENT



### *Law on Enterprises of the Social and Solidarity Economy*

The Law on Enterprises of the Social and Solidarity Economy defines the social and solidarity economy as “... a form of entrepreneurship aimed at one or more social activities and / or social goals carried out by enterprises, including through the production of various goods or services, in cooperation with the state or local authorities or independently.” According to Art. 5 of the Law on Enterprises of Social and Solidarity Economy “Subjects of social and solidarity economy are cooperatives, non-profit legal entities for carrying out public benefit activities and social enterprises.” Within the meaning of the Law “Social Enterprise” is an enterprise which,



regardless of its legal form is aimed at producing goods or providing services, combining economic results with social goals, achieving measurable, positive social added value, being managed transparently with the participation of members, employees in management decisions... and / or the profit is mainly spent for social activities and / or social purpose according to the memorandum of association. ”The definition of a social enterprise in the Additional Provisions of the Law also includes a requirement for the staff of the respective enterprise..

The Environmental Protection Act (EPA), the Waste Management Act (WMA), the Spatial Planning Act (SPA) and the Act on Ratification of the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal, together with the relevant by-laws normative acts are the main rule-making in the field of waste management in Bulgaria.

### ***Environmental Protection law***

The general requirements for the protection of all components of the environment (air, water, soil, subsoil, biodiversity) and the management of factors that have a detrimental effect on it (waste, noise, chemicals and anthropogenic activity) have been introduced in the EPA. The law outlines the principles for the protection of environmental components - such as "sustainable development", "priority of prevention over disposal", "polluter pays" and the integration of environmental policy into sectoral and regional policies. In addition to framework provisions on the principles to be observed for environmental protection (and in particular waste management) and the general obligations of persons and competent authorities, the law also regulates the procedures for carrying out environmental assessment, impact assessment on environment (EIA) and issuance of complex permits or licenses.

### ***Waste Management Act***

Until the adoption in September 1997 of the Law on Limiting the Harmful Impact of Waste on the Environment in Bulgaria, there is no special legal regulation in this area. For the first time, the law regulates public relations in the waste management sector and introduces a number of fundamental requirements of the Waste Framework Directive 75/442 / EEC, incl. obligations of the persons performing waste activities, information about the waste activities, programming through national, municipal and company programs for waste management, permitting and control

of the waste activities; import, export and transit, fines and penalties for non-compliance. For the first time, the terms "waste", "causer" and "holder" of waste are defined. This law also introduces the principle of "extended producer responsibility" by requiring producers and importers of products that generate hazardous or widespread waste in the course of their production or after their final use to pay product charges. In order to detail the provisions of the law, a number of by-laws have subsequently been approved. The Law on Waste Management, adopted in September 2003, further develops the philosophy of the law of 1997 and fully transposes WFD 75/442 / EEC and together with the regulations to the law the requirements of all European directives in the sector "Waste Management" are introduced. . At the time of Bulgaria's accession to the EU in 2007, the legislation in the sector was harmonized with European law. The amendments to the law in 2010 introduce economic incentives for local authorities to take real action to reduce landfilled waste, as well as to move to a regional principle of municipal waste management. The Waste Management Act introduces the requirements of WFD 2008/98 / EC, including the principles of "polluter pays", "extended producer responsibility" and the waste management hierarchy. It introduces for the first time specifically addressed operational objectives for recycling of household and construction waste, requirements for waste facilities and installations, introduces economic and regulatory mechanisms and tools for law enforcement; rules for widespread waste management; regulates the approach to "end of waste" and "by-products", defines in detail the control functions of the institutions and the specific fines and sanctions for non-compliance with the law.

**The key provisions deriving from the WMA are:**

- Quantitative targets for preparation for re-use and recycling of waste materials, including at least paper and board, metal, plastic and glass from households and similar waste from other sources to reach municipalities, within the following timeframes and quantities:
  - until January 1, 2016 - at least 25 percent of their total weight;
  - until January 1, 2018 - at least 40 percent of their total weight;
  - by January 1, 2020 - at least 50 percent of their total weight.

- Introduces requirements by the end of 2020 at the latest for the municipalities to limit the amount of landfilled biodegradable municipal waste to 35 percent of the total amount of the same waste generated in Bulgaria in 1995;
- Introduces phased targets for reuse, recycling and other recovery of construction waste and demolition of buildings, for which the contractors of construction activities, both public authorities and businesses, are responsible.:
  - o by January 1, 2016 - at least 35 percent of the total weight of waste;
  - o by January 1, 2018 - at least 55 percent of the total weight of waste;
  - o by January 1, 2020 - at least 70 percent of the total weight of waste.
- The mayors of municipalities to organize systems for separate collection of household waste from paper and cardboard, metals, plastics and glass and to provide conditions for separate collection of packaging waste for all settlements with a population of more than 5000 inhabitants and for the resort settlements.
- The mayors of municipalities to provide by mid-2014 sites for free delivery of separately collected waste from households, incl. bulky waste, hazardous waste and others in all settlements with a population of more than 10,000 inhabitants and, if necessary, in other settlements.
- The users of commercial sites, production, economic and administrative buildings in the settlements with more than 5000 inhabitants and in the resort settlements are obliged from the beginning of 2013 to collect separately the waste from paper and cardboard, glass, plastics and metals in accordance with the regulations. of the municipalities under Art. 22 of the WMA. The ordinances should be adopted by the municipal councils by the middle of 2014.
- Introduces detailed rules and requirements for association of municipalities in regional associations for solving the management of municipal waste at the regional level through regional facilities and organization.
- Introduces economic instruments to cover future costs for closure and post-operational care at the landfill site and to stimulate the prevention and recovery of waste before landfilling.

- Defines the national competent authorities under Regulation (EC) (1013/2006, the requirements for financial guarantees for cross-border transport, as well as possible cases of restrictions. It is prohibited to transport waste to the Republic of Bulgaria, intended for incineration or co-incineration with energy recovery for each installation, in quantities for the respective calendar year, exceeding in total half of the annual capacity of the installation. In cases where the National Waste Management Plan sets out specific measures for the management of a given waste or waste stream, the Council of Ministers may restrict the import of such waste..

### **Waste management hierarchy:**

The Waste Framework Directive introduces a new hierarchy of waste management. It is firmly entrenched in waste legislation and policy. This sequence prioritizes what constitutes the best environmental option in waste legislation and policy. EU Member States, in strict compliance with the waste management hierarchy, ensure the highest level of compliance with European resource efficiency documents and should therefore be encouraged in every way.



*Fig. 2. Waste management hierarchy*

The waste management hierarchy consists of five possible ways for waste management institutions and businesses in the following sequence:

- 1) Prevention of waste generation.
- 2) Preparation for reuse.
- 3) Recycling.
- 4) Other recovery, such as energy recovery.
- 5) Disposal (landfilling, incineration without energy recovery).

**"Prevention" of waste** is defined in the Directive as measures taken before substances or objects become waste, which reduces:

- generating the amount of waste involved by reusing products or extending their life cycle (quantitative prevention);
- the content of harmful substances in materials and products (quantitative waste prevention).

**"Preparation for re-use"** includes the cleaning, inspection and repair of used products that have become waste so that they can be reused. Preparation for reuse is a type of waste recovery.

**"Recycling"** - the approach to recycling is that a material is processed in order to change its physicochemical properties and to be reused for the same or other purposes. The main goal of the Waste Framework Directive is to make the population of EU countries a "recycling society" that seeks to avoid the generation of waste and to use waste as a resource.

Specific waste management activities that are classified as recycling under the Waste Framework Directive include:

- recycling of materials: for example of plastic products or components in plastic materials; melting of waste glass in glass products; use of paper waste in paper mills, etc. Recycling of materials: eg plastic granulated and pelleted for extrusion or molding, crushed glass waste, sorting of paper waste meeting the end-of-waste criteria;

- production of compost that meets the quality requirements of the products.

Recycling is a type of waste recovery.

**“Other recovery”** means any activity that meets the definition of 'recovery' in the Waste Framework Directive that does not meet specific requirements for preparation for re-use or recycling. Examples of "other recovery" activities:

- incineration or co-incineration, when the main use of the waste is as fuel or other means of obtaining energy.
- bulk activities meeting the definition of recovery.

**"Disposal"** - this activity means the disposal, incineration or co-incineration that does not meet the criteria to be defined as recovery, bulk activities that meet the definition of recovery.

**Separate collection schemes** work successfully in many countries, especially for green waste. Food waste is more often collected and treated as part of mixed household waste. The benefits of separate collection include the diversion of biodegradable waste from landfills, increasing the calorific value of other municipal solid waste and the creation of a cleaner fraction of bio-waste from which high-quality compost can be produced and which facilitates biogas production.

**Landfilling** is the worst option for waste recycling according to the waste management hierarchy, but it is still the most commonly used method for solid waste disposal. Landfills must be constructed and managed in accordance with the EU Landfill Directive to avoid environmental damage from methane and wastewater generation..

**Incineration** - biowaste is usually incinerated as part of municipal solid waste. Incineration can be considered as energy production or as waste disposal, depending on the energy efficiency of this process. The incineration of biowaste as a "renewable" non-carbon fuel within the meaning of the Renewable Electricity Directive and the proposed Renewable Energy Directive.

**Biological processing** (including composting and anaerobic digestion) can be classified as recycling when compost (or residue from decomposition) is used in agriculture as a soil improver.



Anaerobic digestion (resulting in the release of biogas for energy production) should be considered as the recovery of energy from waste.

**Composting** is the most commonly used option for biological processing. It is best suited for green waste or wood waste.

**Anaerobic digestion** is particularly suitable for the processing of wet biowaste, including fats. The decomposition process produces a mixture of gases in controlled biogas reactors.

**Mechanical-biological treatment** - is a system of waste processing facilities, which combines mechanical sorting with a technique for subsequent biological treatment such as composting or anaerobic digestion. These facilities are designed for the treatment of mixed municipal waste as well as commercial and industrial waste.

The terms "mechanical-biological treatment" and "mechanical-biological pre-treatment" refer to a group of solid waste treatment techniques that allow the recovery of materials from mixed waste and facilitate the stabilization of biodegradable components.

The sorting system is a facility similar to material recycling systems. It separates separate fractions from the waste for recycling and others - for the production of RDF, which is used for electricity production. The components of the mixed waste stream that can be recovered and reused after recycling are ferrous and non-ferrous metals, plastics, glass and others.

RDF fuel itself can be used in cement kilns or thermal power plants and is most often made from plastics and biodegradable organic waste. A common misconception is that all MBT processes produce RDF. This actually depends strictly on the configuration of a system and the nature of local markets.

### **By-laws on the implementation of the WMA:**

The current by-laws, which detail the requirements of the WMA, can be divided into four groups:

- *By-laws defining requirements for facilities and installations*
  - Ordinance on the sites for placement of waste treatment facilities;



- Ordinance for construction and operation of landfills and other facilities and installations for recovery and disposal of waste;
- Ordinance on the construction and operation of installations for incineration and co-incineration of waste;
- Ordinance for treatment and transportation of industrial and hazardous waste;
- Ordinance on installations producing titanium dioxide.
- *By-laws regulating the management of specific waste streams:*
  - Ordinance for utilization of sludges from wastewater treatment through their use in agriculture;
  - Ordinance on construction waste and on the use of recycled construction materials;
  - Ordinance for separate collection of biowaste and treatment of biodegradable waste;
  - Ordinance on PCBs;
  - Ordinance on packaging and packaging waste;
  - WEEE Ordinance;
  - ELMV Ordinance;
  - Ordinance on waste from unusable batteries and accumulators;
  - Ordinance on waste oils and waste oil products;
  - Ordinance for treatment of obsolete tires.
- *By-laws containing regulations on waste management through economic instruments:*
  - ○ Ordinance for calculation and determination of the amount of collateral and deductions required for waste disposal;

- ○ Ordinance for determining the order and amount for payment of product fee for products, after the use of which widespread waste is generated (ELMV, WEEE, tires, packaging, oils, unusable batteries and accumulators, plastic bags);
- ○ Ordinance for calculation of the amount of the financial guarantee or equivalent insurance and for submission of annual reports-declarations for transboundary shipment of waste.
- *By-laws with horizontal provisions for all types of waste, installations and facilities for waste within the scope of the WMA:*
  - Ordinance on the classification of waste;
  - Ordinance for providing information on waste activities, as well as the procedure for keeping public registers.

#### **Framework national documents related to waste management:**

**The National Waste Management Plan 2014-2020** is the fourth programming document at the national level for waste management activities in the Republic of Bulgaria. The main goal of the plan is to break the link between economic growth and waste by improving the hierarchy of waste management by developing for the first time a sub-program and measures to prevent waste generation, set specific quantitative targets for preparation for reuse, recycling and more. utilization of specific waste streams.

Within the scope of the national system of programming documents in the analyzed area are two more national plans, setting goals and defining measures to address two specific areas of waste management.

**The National Strategic Plan for Gradual Reduction of Biodegradable Waste Intended for Landfill 2010-2020** is the first plan for the country, which systematically conducts an in-depth analysis of environmental problems resulting from the disposal of biodegradable waste, defines the problems and identifies necessary measures. (administrative, regulatory, financial, etc.) to overcome the problems and to meet the objectives of gradually reducing the disposal of this waste and increase their recycling and recovery. It is expected that as a result of the implementation of

the plan by 2020 the disposal of over 5 million tons of biodegradable waste will be prevented. An additional effect is achieved by replacing phosphate fertilizers in agriculture with compost. The measures of the plan are set as key to achieving the objectives of the Third National Action Plan on Climate Change 2013-2020 to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the waste sector.

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**National Concept for Social Economy**, adopted by a protocol decision of the Council of Ministers under item 2 of Protocol № 13 of the meeting of the Council of Ministers on April 4, 2012 is a basic strategic document that defines the policy framework for social entrepreneurship and social economy in broader plan. It is supplemented by Action Plans for different periods (the last of them is for the period 2018 - 2019), adopted by Decision № 151 of the Council of Ministers of 15.03.2018. The National Concept for Social Economy provides the following definitions related to social enterprise:

- social enterprises may be cooperatives, enterprises and organizations duly registered under national law, whose activities are aimed at social and humanitarian effects, and which reinvest their profits for social causes for the benefit of the community;
- the social enterprise is an enterprise with leading social goals, the surplus of which is reinvested in the same business or in the community;
- the social entrepreneur is a person who mobilizes resources and uses opportunities to meet existing social needs, build strong and sustainable organizations created as social enterprises;

- social entrepreneurship is a business that develops, finances and implements solutions to social, cultural or environmental problems, so the main priority is people and their needs.

**The National Strategy for Youth 2010-2020**, adopted by the Council of Ministers, which states that the Republic of Bulgaria must improve the economic activity and professional development of young people and promote social entrepreneurship among them. Since 2014, the leading priority for the EC has been the fight against youth unemployment. Bulgaria is taking continuous measures to support the creation of jobs for unemployed youth and to subsidize temporary employment for young people from regions where unemployment is high and at the same time the economic (public and private) infrastructure is underdeveloped. In this sense, social enterprises can be supported as employers who hire young people for temporary work in community service activities, thus acting as a tool for sustainable integration of young people in the labor market by combining temporary employment with the provision of incentives and opportunities. for education.

**National Strategy for Poverty Reduction and Promotion of Social Inclusion 2020**, whose priority is to provide opportunities for employment and income growth through active participation of citizens in the labor market. Among the key proposed measures is the promotion of entrepreneurship, including social entrepreneurship initiatives. The focus is on flagship initiatives related to innovation, in particular with regard to the contribution of social enterprises to social innovation. The establishment in 2013 of an EU program for employment and social innovation) (EU Regulation 1296/2013 of the European Parliament) makes it possible to provide targeted funding for social enterprises that have a huge capacity for social innovation and generate social capital.

**Long-term employment strategy for people with disabilities for the period 2011-2020**, National strategy for employment of people with disabilities 2016 - 2020, which aims to provide opportunities for people with disabilities of working age to effectively exercise their right to free choice for career development, improving the quality of life and achieving full inclusion in public life.

## **Framework documents and acts at local level related to waste management:**

**The Municipal Waste Management Program of the Municipality of Blagoevgrad 2015-2020** has been developed in accordance with the laws and regulations, the national waste management plan 2014-2020 and the guidelines of the Ministry of Environment and Water. An analysis of the existing state of waste management in the municipality of Blagoevgrad is made, presenting findings and conclusions from the analyzes. The aim of the Program is for the Municipality of Blagoevgrad to outline feasible strategies to improve waste management and to provide quality services in accordance with the pan-European hierarchy for waste management to the residents of the municipality. The implementation of the objectives of the Program will improve the quality of the environment and the well-being of the residents in the municipality of Blagoevgrad. The Municipality of Blagoevgrad is a member of the Regional Association for Waste Management in the Blagoevgrad region, consisting of the municipalities of Blagoevgrad, Simitli, Kocherinovo, Rila and Boboshevo. The program will also contribute to the implementation of the regional waste targets in the region, as well as the national waste management policies.

The Program includes a number of measures to reduce landfills and increase the amount of recycled and recovered waste, as well as measures for separate collection and recovery of green and biodegradable waste in the municipality.

**Municipal Development Plan of the Municipality of Blagoevgrad 2014-2020** is a document for strategic planning of sustainable integrated development on the territory of the municipality, which is developed in accordance with the provisions of the Regional Development Strategy of Blagoevgrad for the period 2014-2020. for development determines the medium-term development goals and priorities, taking into account the specific characteristics and potential of the municipality, on the one hand, and the strategic guidelines for developing the goals and priorities of the municipal development plans contained in the respective regional development strategy. 2020, on the other hand.

The approach, methods and principles used in the development of the municipal development plan (MDP) ensure that the strategic document is in accordance with the regulatory requirements in the field of regional development, as well as with the defined national and regional development goals and priorities in Bulgaria. In addition, the plan is consistent with the specific conditions, procedures and requirements for the implementation of regulations related to local self-government, spatial planning, environmental protection, cadastre and property register for the territory of the municipality. The Municipal Development Plan of Blagoevgrad Municipality as a strategic document links the comparative advantages and potential for development at the local level with a clearly defined vision, goals and priorities for achieving strategic goals, related to the pursuit of a higher standard of living and sustainable living development.

The compliance of the municipal development plan with the requirements set out in the strategic guidelines and the EU legislation in the field of regional policy refers to the extent to which the planning document, developed and implemented at local level, reflects the general European policy context for balanced and sustainable development of EU regions and local communities. In general, the strategic objectives of this policy are aimed at reducing economic, social and territorial imbalances and improving living standards. In addition to the harmonization of objectives and priorities in the context of EU regional policy, compliance needs to be sought in terms of management, monitoring and evaluation methods in the process of developing and implementing the municipal development plan. For example, the tools established in European practice for determining physical and financial indicators could be used to take into account the results achieved and the impact of the implementation of measures and projects within the municipal development plan. The forms for providing information and publicity on the adoption and implementation of the plan, as well as for working with partners in the field of integrated sustainable local development, could also be used effectively.

**Ordinance for waste management on the territory of Blagoevgrad Municipality 2014** is a normative local document in compliance with the national legislation in the field of waste management. They are settled by the ordinance:



- Terms and conditions for disposal, collection, including separation, transportation, transshipment, recovery and disposal of household and construction waste, including biowaste, hazardous household waste, widespread waste and industrial waste from individuals and legal entities in the territory of the Municipality.
- Obligations and responsibilities of the obligated persons - households, legal entities, incl. commercial sites, production and business entities, hospitals, schools, administrative buildings and other sites located in the Municipality of Blagoevgrad in terms of waste management, in accordance with the requirements of the Waste Management Act (WMA) and bylaws on its implementation, as well as the payment of the provided services by the order of the Law for the local taxes and fees and the Ordinance for the determination and administration of the local fees and prices of services on the territory of the Municipality of Blagoevgrad.
- The requirements to the sites for transfer of waste from paper and cardboard, plastics and glass, the conditions for their registration, as well as the conditions for transfer of waste to the sites under Art. 19, para. 3, item 11 of the WMA.
- The officials appointed by the Mayor from the Municipality of Blagoevgrad are obliged to exercise control over the observance of the requirements of this Ordinance and to impose fines and property sanctions on the violators..

The concept of bio-waste is introduced in the new Waste Framework Directive 2008/98 / EC. Biowaste is a new concept in legislation. These are biodegradable waste from parks and gardens, food and kitchen waste from households, restaurants, catering establishments and retail outlets, as well as similar waste from food processing enterprises. They are divided into two main streams: green waste from parks and gardens, which contain about 50-60% moisture and more wood, and kitchen waste, where the moisture content reaches 80%. Biowaste does not include residues from forestry or agricultural activities, natural fertilizers, sewage sludge or other biodegradable waste such as natural textiles, paper or treated wood. In the EU, bio-waste usually accounts for between 30% and 40% of municipal solid waste.

On average, 41% of municipal solid waste is landfilled, and in some Member States (eg Poland, Lithuania) this percentage exceeds 90%. However, landfilling poses serious



environmental risks such as greenhouse gas emissions and soil and groundwater pollution. It takes valuable resources (compost, energy) from the economic and natural cycle. This violates the fundamental principles of EU waste policy and sustainable resource management, in particular the “waste hierarchy”, which must be at the heart of waste management policy.

According to the Waste Framework Directive 2008/98 / EC, Member States should take measures to promote:

- separate collection of biowaste for composting and anaerobic digestion of biowaste;
- the treatment of bio-waste in a way that provides a high degree of environmental protection;
- the use of environmentally friendly materials produced from biowaste.

The Waste Framework Directive, in addition to encouraging Member States to collect and recycle bio-waste separately, allows it to be included in the calculation of the overall binding target for the recycling of municipal waste. In addition, this Directive makes it possible to set minimum requirements in the EU for the management of bio-waste, as well as criteria for the quality of compost from bio-waste, including requirements for the origin of waste and treatment processes. These criteria aim to increase consumer confidence and strengthen the market for the benefit of an economy through the rational use of materials.

There is no single model for the management of bio-waste that is diverted from landfills that is best for the environment. The management of this type of waste depends on a number of local factors, including waste collection systems, the composition and quality of waste, climatic conditions, the ability to use various products derived from waste such as electricity, heat, biogas or compost. Biowaste management options include, in addition to waste prevention, collection (separately or as mixed waste), anaerobic digestion and composting, incineration and landfilling. The environmental and economic benefits of different treatment methods depend significantly on local conditions, such as population density, infrastructure and climate, as well as the availability of markets for the final product (energy, compost, etc.).

A number of EU legal instruments address the issue of bio-waste treatment. The general requirements for waste management, such as the protection of the environment and human health during waste treatment, as well as the prioritization of waste recycling, are enshrined in the new Waste Framework Directive, which also contains specific elements related to with bio-waste (new targets for the recycling of municipal waste, which may include bio-waste) and a mechanism to set quality criteria for compost.

Improving biowaste management in the EU will bring the following benefits:

- prevention of nearly 10 million tons of greenhouse gas emissions, expressed in CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent, ie. a 4% contribution to the EU's emission reduction target of 10% by 2020 compared to 2005 levels for sectors not covered by the Emissions Trading Scheme. If emission prevention strategies are ambitious enough, 44 million tonnes of emissions, expressed in CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent, can be avoided;
- About one third of the EU 2020 target for the use of energy from renewable sources in transport could be achieved by using biogas derived from bio-waste for car fuels, and about 2% of the total energy target from renewable sources could be achieved if all bio-waste is converted into energy;
- expanded market of quality compost so that its volume reaches about 28 million tons; • saving resources by replacing 10% of phosphate fertilizers, 9% of potassium fertilizers and 8% of calcium fertilizers with compost;
- Improving depleted agricultural soils in the EU from 3 to 7% with compost and solving the problem of soil degradation in Europe.

Standards for the use and quality of compost exist in most Member States, but they differ significantly in part due to differences in soil policies. Although there is no comprehensive European Community legislation, some rules regulate specific aspects of bio-waste processing, biogas production and compost use. Biowaste can be converted into electricity, heat or transport fuels at a relatively low cost, thus limiting the use of fossil fuels. Directive 2009/28 / EC on renewable energy sources sets out the benefits of using waste for the production of transport fuels, and their contribution to meeting the 10% target for energy from renewable sources in transport is twofold. This possibility should be taken into account when drawing up measures to achieve the

national binding target for the use of energy from renewable energy sources for 2020. The Organic Farming Regulation № 889/2008 / EC lays down the conditions for the use of compost in organic farming. Decision 2006/799 / EC and Decision 2007/64 / EC on the Ecolabel for soil improvers and growing media sets limits on the content of pollutants and requires compost to be composed only of waste. The Thematic Strategy for Soil Protection COM (2006) 231 calls for the use of compost as one of the best sources of sustainable organic matter from which new humus can be developed in degraded soils.

EU environmental policy is based on the precautionary principle, the precautionary principle and the principle of source pollution, as well as the 'polluter pays' principle. The precautionary principle is a risk management tool that can be applied when there is scientific uncertainty about an alleged risk to human health or the environment arising from a particular action or policy. For example, in case of doubt as to the potentially dangerous effects of a product and if uncertainty persists after an objective scientific assessment, instructions may be given to stop the distribution of the product in question or to withdraw it from the market. These types of measures should be non-discriminatory and proportionate and should be reviewed upon receipt of additional scientific information.

The 'polluter pays' principle applies on the basis of the Environmental Liability Directive, which aims to prevent or remedy damage to the environment in respect of protected species or natural habitats, waters and soils. For certain professional activities, such as the transport of dangerous goods or activities involving discharges into water, operators must take preventive measures in the event of an imminent danger to the environment. If damage has already been done, they are obliged to take appropriate measures to repair it and pay the associated costs. The scope of the directive has been extended three times to include the management of mining waste, the management of geological storage sites and the safety of offshore oil and gas production.

In addition, the integration of environmental issues into other EU policy areas has become an important concept in European policy since it first emerged as a result of an initiative by the Cardiff European Council in 1998. In recent years, integration environmental policy has made significant progress, for example in the field of energy policy, as reflected in the parallel EU climate and energy package or in the Roadmap to a Competitive Low Carbon Economy by 2050.

**Framework documents and acts at local level related to the development of social services and support:**

**Municipal strategy for development of social services 2016 - 2020.**

The municipal strategy for development of social services in the municipality of Blagoevgrad 2016 - 2020 is part of the implementation of local sectoral policies. It was developed by a team of municipal employees, formed by order of the mayor of Blagoevgrad and adopted in 2016 by a decision of the Municipal Council of Blagoevgrad. The strategy determines the municipal framework and the parameters of the social services in the municipality. Geographically, it covers all settlements in the municipality and pays special attention to access to support for people from small settlements. The planned services and measures for social inclusion have a implementation period of 2016-2020.

The municipal strategy for the development of social services aims to provide affordable and quality social services in the municipality of Blagoevgrad, integration of communities and individuals, full implementation and care for people from vulnerable groups.

The strategy emphasizes the following:

- The development and improvement of the existing social services for the period;
- The opening of new social services, according to the target groups - children at risk, people with disabilities and the elderly;
- Initiation and development of cross-sectoral support services, including innovative social services.

The characteristic of the Municipal Strategy for Development of Social Services is that it is strongly focused on the so-called classic social services, known as state-delegated activities and the most common forms of support (type of patronage care), which are financed from the municipal budget. Although a number of support formulations found in the Strategy refer to support for social inclusion, rather the participation of vulnerable groups as service users is taken into account, the thesis of their possible full participation in the Strategy is rather underdeveloped. the performance of certain activities, including various types of employment. It could be said that the document lacks measures / recommendations for specific actions in the direction of

development of social enterprises and support for people from vulnerable groups as participants / entities in the field of social entrepreneurship.

## 1. CIRCULAR ECONOMY

The circular economy is a new European political concept, which envisages structural reform in order to transition the Bulgarian economy from a "take it, do it, throw it away" model to a cyclical model that is more in line with the living system.

The circular economy emerges in the context of sustainable development initiatives. Its aim is to meet the need to protect the environment by producing goods or offering services that lead to reduced consumption of raw materials and energy from depleted sources. The circular economy is characterized by the use of eco-friendly materials, as well as recycled materials and raw materials, which require the application of new technologies. Many of these technologies can be used in the activities of social enterprises.



*Fig. 3 Circular economy*

In 2015, the European Commission (EC) adopted an action plan to accelerate Europe's transition to a circular economy, strengthen global competitiveness, promote sustainable economic growth and create new jobs.

The action plan contains 54 measures to "close the cycle" of the product life cycle - from production and consumption to waste management and the market for secondary raw materials. The plan also identifies 5 (five) priority sectors to accelerate the transition along the value chain (plastics, food waste, critical raw materials, construction and demolition, biomass and bio-based materials). It emphasizes building a solid foundation for investment and innovation development.

This transition is financially supported through the European Structural and Investment Funds, Horizon 2020, the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) and the LIFE program.

The action plan encourages close cooperation with Member States, regions and municipalities, businesses, research organizations, citizens and other stakeholders involved in the circular economy.

As one of the EU's main policies, cohesion policy is considered to be one of the main sources of investment. In addition, as regards the principles of proportionality and subsidiarity, cohesion policy also provides the best tools for the transition to a circular economy. Multilevel governance, which is the basis for cohesion policy, follows the same principle. These two public policies therefore follow the same logic and should complement each other while achieving their own policy objectives. We need to recognize and strengthen the existing policy instruments within both policies in order to make full use of this potential.

All cities and municipalities in the EU will be the driving force behind the transition to a circular economy. Local and regional authorities are closest to the citizens and to local challenges, thus giving them a better idea of the challenges and opportunities at local level. It is therefore crucial to ensure adequate functional and financial autonomy for local and regional authorities, especially with regard to their right to develop and implement their own community-led local development strategies and integrated territorial investments to support local stakeholders to combine funding flows and plan local initiatives aimed at the transition to a circular economy.

Thinking in systems is one of the basic principles of the circular economy, as the transition from a linear to a circular model of our economy can only be achieved through cooperation and linking the models of economic activity and production. The report also highlights the role of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which are better acquainted with local markets and



can raise awareness of positive practices by working with communities and creating value and sustainable jobs at local level. Through innovation and development, SMEs provide the market and society with new solutions and business models. In this process, they rely on cohesion policy, and in particular on smart specialization and synergies with Horizon 2020, the European Structural and Investment Funds, and the investments attracted through the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), etc. We should support these efforts and adapt both policies in this direction, with the aim of making today's innovations a reality tomorrow. Social enterprises should also be developed in this direction, which are also characterized by a good knowledge of local problems and skills for quick and effective involvement in the work process of representatives of vulnerable groups in the community. Unfortunately, there is still no demand for circular products and services, as they are often more expensive than linear ones, while the negative externalities of the latter are not taken into account. Green public procurement, combined with circular procurement, is a powerful tool through which public authorities can stimulate circular economy markets.

In addition, the macro-regional approach is key to achieving regional cooperation and coordination, as well as the possibility of creating regional markets, in particular for secondary raw materials. That is why we need to speed up the creation of joint capabilities, for example with regard to the recovery of waste oils and other recycling capacity. Cross-border and transnational cooperation programs are crucial to support interregional cooperation in the field of circular economy activities, promote industrial symbiosis, raise awareness and stimulate the exchange of knowledge and best practices.

Cohesion policy and the circular economy are not only a matter of infrastructure policy, but also of social cohesion and solidarity. They provide answers to the challenges facing local and regional communities on how to address the most important climate issues. For this reason, the possibility of introducing a new ex ante conditionality provision is being considered in order to achieve a circular economy in the framework of cohesion policy, so that the new operational programs can better reflect the principles of the circular economy. The report calls for the introduction of an appropriate monitoring methodology so as to accurately monitor the

contribution of cohesion policy to the transition to a circular economy, and calls for a significant increase in the cost of the circular economy and climate in cohesion policy beyond 2020.

Waste management is central to the circular economy: it determines the practical application of the EU waste hierarchy. The waste hierarchy identifies a priority order from prevention, preparation for reuse, recycling and recovery of energy to disposal, such as landfilling. The purpose of this principle is to promote the possibilities by which the best overall effect on the environment is achieved. Depending on how we collect and manage our waste, recycling can be more active and valuable materials returned to the economy for reuse, or an inefficient system can be created in which most of the waste is suitable for recycling. recycling, landfills or incineration, which may have harmful effects on the environment and involve significant economic losses. In order to achieve high levels of material utilization, it is essential to send messages containing a long-term vision to public authorities, businesses and investors and to create appropriate favorable conditions at EU level, including the consistent implementation of existing obligations. It is necessary to take into account all types of waste, whether it is produced by households, enterprises, production and mining or construction.

Currently, only about 40% of EU household waste is recycled. This average percentage masks large differences between Member States and regions, with recycling covering 80% of household waste in some areas and less than 5% in others. The Commission is in the process of presenting new legislative proposals on waste, which contain a long-term vision for more recycling and to reduce landfilling, while taking into account the differences between Member States. These proposals will also encourage the more active use of economic instruments to achieve coherence with the EU waste hierarchy.

It is also important to overcome obstacles on the spot. Achieving higher levels of recycling is often limited by administrative capacity, lack of investment in separate collection and recycling infrastructure, and insufficient use of economic instruments (eg landfill fees or "pay more if you throw away more") schemes. ); A significant challenge is also the creation of excessive capacity in infrastructure for the treatment of residual waste (including mixed waste). The new legislative proposals on waste address these barriers, combining long-term and intermediate targets with the

possibility of extending the deadline for countries facing the greatest challenges in increasing separate collection and recycling, while at the same time introduces a requirement to draw up an implementation strategy so that progress can be made and implementation gaps can be addressed in a timely manner. In addition, the Commission is ready to provide technical assistance to Member States facing implementation difficulties and to facilitate the exchange of best practices with countries and regions that have managed to improve their waste management. It has already launched a number of initiatives to promote compliance to achieve better enforcement of EU waste legislation, including on municipal and hazardous waste and separate collection, and to raise awareness at national level. Current close cooperation with Member States will be strengthened in the future and the interrelationship between waste legislation and wider action in support of the circular economy will be improved.

## VI. PRESENTATION OF ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION



**Analysis and evaluation in the field of social entrepreneurship on the territory of Blagoevgrad municipality:**

Social entrepreneurship, in addition to being well known, is an extremely relevant concept in many European countries, including Bulgaria. For the last 10 years, the social economy, also known as the solidarity economy, has been officially recognized as the third economy in Europe. This is mainly due to the fact that social entrepreneurship allows the integration of economic and social goals into one, the implementation of adequate social policy and effective support for vulnerable groups in society in the broadest sense.

The development and sustainable interest in the social economy and social entrepreneurship is mainly due to their potential for finding solutions to social problems, creating sustainable jobs, facilitating social and labor integration, combating poverty and social exclusion. The social economy is both part of the real economy and part of civil society, in which individuals and legal entities carry out economic activities for public benefit and reinvest profits to achieve social goals..



*Fig. 4. Social economy and social entrepreneurship*

The Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee on "Cooperatives and Restructuring" states that cooperatives have a long-term goal of achieving economic and social sustainability by empowering people, anticipating change, and optimizing the use of resources. Their profits are not used to increase the return on investment, but are directed to sustainable investments. There are around 160,000 cooperatives in Europe, owned by 123 million members and employing more than 5 million people. However, the cooperative enterprise as a form is not well known either to the citizens as a whole or to the private business sectors. The conditions under which cooperatives operate are not always equal, as their specific characteristics are not always reflected in national and European legislation and funding programs.

The Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee on 'Cooperatives and Restructuring' recognizes that different types of social cooperatives are key factors in stimulating social innovation. Labor integration cooperatives employ a large number of people who have been made redundant and have not been able to return to the normal labor market. In some countries, social cooperatives (Bulgaria, Poland, Italy) are large employers of people with disabilities. Cooperatives providing social services are active participants in the restructuring of the public sector.

In Bulgaria, social entrepreneurship is at a relatively early stage of development, although there are about 4,700 organizations that self-identify as social. One of the main reasons for the weaker development of this sector in the country compared to other European countries is the long period without a legal definition of a social enterprise and norms governing its status, form and activity. All analyzes on the subject take into account that one of the most important deficits in recent years is that of a unified, comprehensive regulatory or otherwise structured system of rules related to and consistent with the social and solidarity economy, as well as conditions, organization and order, in which social enterprises in the country operate and interact with the state and municipalities. At present, the Law on Enterprises of the Social and Solidarity Economy, adopted by the National Assembly on 18.10.2019, promulgated in the country. in SG, issue 91 of November 2, 2018.

The Law on Enterprises of the Social and Solidarity Economy aims at the development of the social and solidarity economy as an economic sector with special rules. It creates the necessary



conditions for the social and solidarity economy to be realized in the form of entrepreneurship, subject to the following principles:

- advantage of social over economic goals;
- association in public and / or collective form;
- publicity and transparency;
- independence from state authorities;
- participation of members, employees in management decisions.

The expected effect of the implementation of the Law on Enterprises of the Social and Solidarity Economy is in several directions:

- improving the access of people from vulnerable groups to employment and training for acquiring or improving professional qualifications, in order to raise their standard of living;
- creating conditions for providing support to people from vulnerable groups for social inclusion and independent living;
- reduction of social inequality;
- sustainable territorial development;
- creating opportunities for cooperation and closer cooperation between the social enterprises themselves, between the social enterprises and other stakeholders (municipalities, the state, investors, citizens, etc.).

The creation and entry into force of the Law on Enterprises in the Social and Solidarity Economy was preceded by several strategic frameworks, which gave impetus to initiatives for social entrepreneurship and social innovation at the national level:

- 1) National Concept for Social Economy (04.04.2012) - a basic document of national importance, which defines the policy framework regarding social entrepreneurship and the social economy. Action plans for different periods have been developed for the National Concept.



The document, in view of the period of its creation and adoption, provides the following definitions relating to social enterprises:

- social enterprises may be registered under national law cooperatives, enterprises and organizations whose activities are aimed at social and humanitarian effects and which reinvest their profits for social causes for the benefit of the community;
  - the social enterprise is an enterprise with leading social goals, and the surplus is reinvested in the same business or in the community;
  - social entrepreneurship is a business in which the main priority is people, regardless of whether it develops, finances and implements solutions to social, cultural or environmental problems.
- 2) The National Strategy for Youth 2010-2020 - a document that examines the promotion of social entrepreneurship among young people, improving their economic activity and professional development as basic guidelines for conducting national policy in the field.
  - 3) National Strategy for Poverty Reduction and Promotion of Social Inclusion 2020 - this is a document in which the main measure to ensure employment opportunities and income growth is the promotion of entrepreneurship, including social entrepreneurship initiatives.
  - 4) Long-term strategy for employment of people with disabilities for the period 2011-2020, The main goal of the strategy is to provide conditions for effective exercise of the right to free choice of employment of people with disabilities of working age and improve their quality of life as conditions for free and full inclusion in public life.

The adoption and entry into force of the Law on Enterprises of the Social and Solidarity Economy was preceded by accumulated practical experience and a large number of operating social enterprises, although the statistics for them are not yet sufficiently developed. The best data at this stage are available for specialized enterprises for people with disabilities. Currently, the Register of Specialized Enterprises, which is maintained by the Agency for People with Disabilities, includes 235 specialized companies for people with disabilities. The total number of

employees in them amounts to about 2,616 people, at least 30% of whom are people with disabilities.

The new Law on Enterprises of Social and Solidarity Economy envisages the establishment of a National Register of Social Enterprises in the Republic of Bulgaria (the official start of the register is from December 2019).

The need for this type of registration is justified by:

- The specifics of the model of social enterprises;
- The explicit focus of social enterprises on activities of public interest mainly over goals related to return on capital;
- The main expectations from the introduction of the National Register of Social Enterprises in the Republic of Bulgaria are the following:
  - the availability of objective and accurate information on the state of the sector will have a positive impact on the ability of public policy to promote their future development;
  - raising the trust and awareness of citizens, consumers and investors regarding the specifics of their activities and contributions.

As already mentioned above, before the establishment of the National Register of Social Enterprises in the country (registrations start in December 2019, pursuant to the Law on Enterprises of Social and Solidarity Economy) about 4,500 enterprises in the country have self-determined as social. In general, they are oriented towards several models:

- Model for job creation and workforce development - the economic logic of the business venture is based on the ability to create jobs for disadvantaged people, which removes them from the role of passive observers. The social enterprises in the country are concentrated mainly in this model, which is largely a result of the proliferation of specialized enterprises for people with disabilities. In the municipality of Blagoevgrad also operates such a model enterprise - TPKE "Rila" - Blagoevgrad, on the territory of Blagoevgrad they are a total of four.

- Entrepreneurial model - the social enterprise is the link between disadvantaged people and the market. Its purpose is to provide a market (marketing and distribution) for products made by people with disabilities during their occupational therapy.
- Direct service model - the social enterprise provides social services for a fee (most often these are services in the home environment). It is a very common practice for a social enterprise to be a provider of social services for its members, with payment being made through a contract with the municipality or the state.

The study conducted for the purposes of this report showed the presence of a variety of social enterprises in the country, including Blagoevgrad:

- independent trading companies that employ people from risk groups and / or offer services or products for such people;
- specialized enterprises for people with disabilities, which provide employment for these vulnerable groups;
- non-governmental organizations that develop economic activity within the legally established opportunity for this or register companies for the development of such activity, providing work for people from vulnerable groups;
- social enterprises to the municipalities, which provide employment to people from risk groups (most often with disabilities);
- social enterprises in the form of public-private partnerships with municipalities;
- day care centers for people with disabilities who are looking for business opportunities in order to socialize and adapt the users of the service;
- social enterprises within a large industrial holding company set up for the purpose of employing workers who have suffered a degree of disability while working for the same employer.

The most common field of activity of social enterprises in Bulgaria at the moment are services, most often social and educational. Production and trade are poorly represented. The enterprises that are engaged in production mainly produce clothes, food, souvenirs, objects of applied art, etc. In general, with different coverage, the following areas of activity of social enterprises in the country can be formulated:

- production and trade;
- social services (in view of the requirements of the Social Assistance Act, these social enterprises are registered in the MLSP as providers of social services);
- educational services (the legislation in Bulgaria does not impose special rules for educational services provided by social enterprises and gives the right to non-profit organizations and companies or cooperatives to register as schools and vocational training centers and to issue valid ones according to the legislation in Bulgaria , diplomas of education or acquired professional qualification);
- health services (very often they are provided together with social services - different in volume forms of integrated services);
- agriculture, eco- and rural tourism (a promising area that is currently not sufficiently developed. Given the natural and cultural resources of Bulgaria, it is realistic to expect increased interest from social entrepreneurs in agriculture and rural tourism).

Among the large number of self-identified social enterprises and the models and spheres of their activity listed above, the Law on Enterprises of Social and Solidarity Economy defines social and solidarity economy as "... a form of entrepreneurship aimed at one or more social activities and / or social objectives pursued by enterprises, including through the production of various goods or the provision of services, in cooperation with state or local authorities or independently. ". According to Art. 5 of the Law on the Enterprises of the Social and Solidarity Economy "Subjects of the social and solidarity economy are the cooperatives, the non-profit legal entities for carrying out public benefit activity and social enterprises". For the purposes of the Law, a Social Enterprise is an enterprise which, regardless of its legal form, has as its object the activity of producing goods or providing services, combining economic results with social goals, achieving measurable, positive social added value, being managed transparently with the participation of members, employees in management decisions... and / or the profit is mainly spent on social activities and / or social purpose according to the memorandum of association. "The definition of social enterprise in the Additional Provisions of the Act includes a requirement for staff of the respective enterprise.

The law provides for two categories of social enterprises - class A and class A +. For class A the conditions are that the enterprise spends for social activity or purpose at least half of the profit after tax, but not less than BGN 7,500 or has hired at least 3 persons from the vulnerable groups specified in the law. Class A + enterprises meet both requirements or are developing in one of the districts in Bulgaria, where unemployment is above the national average.

Another condition for a social enterprise is that it is managed transparently, with the participation of members, employees or employees in making management decisions.

After the serious positive change in the normative relation with the entry into force of the Law on Enterprises of Social and Solidarity Economy, the following main challenges remain before the development of the social economy and social entrepreneurship in the country:

- Lack of initial funding - this is a problem that affects virtually all social enterprises and relates to initial and working capital funding. In addition to financial resources, social enterprises need other resources - a suitable room for office or production, storage, machinery, equipment, etc. Some of the existing practices in such cases include the establishment of public-private partnerships between the entrepreneur and local authorities, which provide premises and initial equipment, and in turn the entrepreneur undertakes to employ people with disabilities or vulnerable groups in the social enterprise. who find it difficult to find a job on the labor market.
- Specifics of the project approach to financing of social enterprises - the most common in recent years in our country model of financing of social enterprises is the project. In 2009, a procedure was announced for the direct provision of grants under the scheme BG051PO001-5.1.01 "Social Entrepreneurship - Promotion and support of social enterprises / Pilot Phase /" to the Operational Program "Human Resources Development" 2007-2013. The aim of the procedure was to support the development of social entrepreneurship as an opportunity to improve the quality of life of people at risk and overcome their social isolation.

Later, in 2011, again under the Operational Program "Human Resources Development" 2007-2013, a new procedure for grant BG051PO001-5.1.02 "New Opportunities" was launched.

The main goal was to support the process of development of the social economy and creation of social capital by supporting municipalities to ensure employment and activity of persons from risk groups. The specific objectives were: Support for people from the target groups; Optimization of social costs of municipalities; Support for initiatives at the local level aimed at dealing with local problems arising from poverty and social isolation of people from the municipality; Creating and supporting good practices for the development of social enterprises.

In 2018, under the procedure "Development of Social Entrepreneurship", implemented by the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy within the Operational Program "Human Resources Development" 2014-2020, the projects of 190 social enterprises in the country were launched, relying on gratuitous financial assistance between BGN 50,000 and BGN 391,166. The procedure tried to ensure the sustainability of social enterprises by requiring each funded enterprise to be within some existing structure - a non-governmental organization, company or municipality. Although the model in which the social enterprise is set up towards a well-functioning organization or institution, the general practice shows that the project financing model is very unsustainable. The reason is that in most cases of project financing there is no long-term vision for the development of the social enterprise. Social entrepreneurs in these cases are driven by a social cause, not by the desire to realize an entrepreneurial idea. These deficits, set at the very beginning of the social enterprise, determine the cessation of its existence almost immediately after the end of the grant funding.

This conclusion is also required by the established lack of sustainability of the currently supported social enterprises under the above-mentioned funding.

- Unstable political and economic environment - most of the social entrepreneurs believe that the institutions in the country do not have a sufficient understanding of the nature and goals of social enterprises, which negatively affects the support expected of them in such an endeavor.
- Personnel problems - one of the most common problems of social enterprises is to find suitable staff - both those directly involved in the actual activity of the enterprise and those who should manage the activity. Many people with disabilities or those who are socially disadvantaged for other reasons are not motivated to work. Many of them have



the attitude that the company is obliged to provide them with work without setting almost any requirements for them. In most cases, these are people who have received various social benefits for a long time, do not have any professional qualification (in some cases the required level of education), nor do they want to acquire one.

The lack of employees with managerial and marketing experience in social enterprises is also a major problem. In general, the management of such enterprises is mainly engaged in humanities education, who have no knowledge and experience in the field of management, marketing and finance..

- Acceptance, understanding and promotion of the activities of social enterprises - despite the positive practice in the field there is still a lack of clear idea and sufficient information about the nature and goals of social enterprises. There is still a negative and discriminatory attitude towards people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups in the smaller settlements when it comes to their professional realization. The opinion that they are less capable members of the society continues to prevail and this negative attitude and underestimation is transferred to the goods and services offered by them.
- Lack of working systems for monitoring and evaluation of the effect and benefits of the existence and activity of social enterprises. The evaluations are mainly based on opinions and impressions of representatives of various stakeholders. Most often, however, these are the managers of the social enterprises themselves, which are inherently subjective and mostly focused on the positive effect caused on people with disabilities.

The challenges listed above are covered to varying degrees in the Law on Enterprises of the Social and Solidarity Economy. An example of this is the regulated opportunities for local governments to assist social enterprises in their activities, which can support the development of social and solidarity economy according to local characteristics by developing programs and mechanisms, including specific measures in their regulations. The law provides grounds for municipalities to further develop existing practices for the promotion of social enterprises, supports the implementation of these forms of cooperation, including by limiting the opportunities for subjective self-determination of various enterprises as social ones.

The Law on Enterprises of the Social and Solidarity Economy includes a number of measures to promote social enterprises, the effectiveness of which is to be assessed on the basis of their practical application. They are part of them:

- establishment for the benefit of social enterprises of the right to build on municipal property or the right to use municipal property and items without tender or competition, but only by decision of the Municipal Council (in order to achieve specific social goals set by the company );
- financial support for raising the qualification of employees from a vulnerable social group within municipalities, where the unemployment rate is higher or equal to the national average;
- opportunity for participation of local authorities in forms of cooperation with social enterprises.

At the same time, European trends in recent years in the field of social economy and social entrepreneurship are aimed at building businesses based on social inclusion, the development of a collaborative economy and the development of a circular economy. Social inclusion-based businesses are commercial organizations that aim to solve problems affecting highly vulnerable social groups by integrating them into businesses such as suppliers, distributors, retailers or customers.

The main focus of the circular economy is sustainable development. Its main goal is to protect the environment by producing goods or offering services that lead to reduced consumption of raw materials and energy from exhaustible sources. The circular economy is characterized by the use of eco-friendly materials as well as recycled materials and raw materials. At the same time, this requires the application of new technologies, some of which can be used in the activities of social enterprises.

The collaborative economy is a response to the development of online platforms that facilitate the supply and, consequently, people's access to various services. Social enterprises show great interest in the collaborative economy because of the opportunities it provides to overcome the physical, economic and social isolation that is characteristic of rural or areas with a reduced and / or aging population. The effectiveness of social enterprises in this area is determined by their

characteristic deep ties with the local community and the full contacts they are able to maintain with its representatives.

In recent years, as a reflection of the pan-European trend, powers have been transferred from the central to the local authorities to activities mainly related to improving the quality of life at the regional level. The fact that the environment is one of the essential elements of quality of life, along with social and economic aspects, is recognized by local government. Moreover, local authorities are best acquainted with the state and problems of the environment, including waste management in the municipality, so their contribution to the development and implementation of national policy is crucial.

The partnership agreement of the Republic of Bulgaria with the EC for the period 2014-2022, outlining the assistance of the European Structural and Investment Funds defines the role of community-led local development as a useful tool for empowering local communities to improve the institutional capacity of local stakeholders. countries and for the creation of social innovations at the local level, including the promotion of the development of the social economy and social enterprises.

Against the background of the situation thus described, as of 31.12.2019, in the Municipality of Blagoevgrad there are 9 enterprises that self-identify as social according to the criteria listed above. The information was collected through a training conducted for the purposes of this report, as the National Register of Social Enterprises in the Republic of Bulgaria, which is established pursuant to the Law on Enterprises of Social and Solidarity Economy, still does not provide up-to-date information.

Among the self-identified as social enterprises, the most long-established is TPKE "Rila". The main activity of the cooperative is sewing production.

Produces clothes for the Bulgarian and European markets, provides bookbinding services.

It develops its activity in its own material base, and has a company store in the building of the cooperative. TPKE "Rila" provides employment opportunities for people with disabilities, being the only such specialized enterprise in the territory of Blagoevgrad, in which the percentage ratio of employees with disabilities and other employees is about 30:70. In 2017, an agreement

was signed between the Municipality of Blagoevgrad and TPKE "Rila" for the production of uniforms for schools, municipal companies and organizations, for archiving and binding documents, bookbinding services and production of paper packaging, participation in bazaars and organizing fashion reviews.

The most recently created, but also the most innovative of the social enterprises operating in the municipality of Blagoevgrad is Social Enterprise / Internet Business Services / - Blagoevgrad, whose activity is aimed at providing Internet business services.

Two of the local social enterprises are engaged in training activities.

More than half of the self-identified as social enterprises in the municipality of Blagoevgrad have used funding under the Operational Program "Human Resources Development" 2014-2020.

The Municipality of Blagoevgrad has experience in developing activities in the field of social entrepreneurship. Funds from the Operational Program "Human Resources Development" 2007-2013, Priority Axis 5: Social Inclusion and Promotion of the Social Economy, Main Area of Intervention 5.1 "Support to the Social Economy", Name of the operation "Social" were used for their implementation. entrepreneurship. Promotion and support of social enterprises ". The participation of Blagoevgrad Municipality with a project is motivated by the goal of Operation Social Entrepreneurship, namely to support the process of development of the social economy to create social capital by supporting ideas for employment and activity, development of social skills and stimulating initiatives for self-financing of activities in the social sphere.

In the period March 2009 - June 2011 the Municipality of Blagoevgrad implemented the project "Social Enterprise" Services in the Home and Garden ", Administrative Contract for Grant № BG 051PO001-5.1.01-0077-S0001. The beneficiary of the project is the Association of Social Service Providers, and the partners are four municipalities - Aytos, Blagoevgrad, Byala Slatina and Veliko Tarnovo. The main goal of the project is to achieve sustainable development of social entrepreneurship in the listed municipalities by providing new services in the social enterprise "Home and Garden Services". The main activities of the project include the development and

testing in practice of a comprehensive model for marketing and operation of a social enterprise "Services in the home and garden" with the participation of people with disabilities and the long-term unemployed.

For this purpose, a number of people wishing to work as gardeners and helpers in the home have undergone training - for the municipality of Blagoevgrad their number is a total of 40 people, divided into two groups of 20. Some of the trainees were people using residential services in the territory of the municipality (Sheltered housing for people with mental retardation and Sheltered housing for people with mental illness).

Despite the successfully completed trainings, in the municipality of Blagoevgrad the development of a social enterprise that will provide communal services for the population is not successful. There are no data on the achieved results for the exercise of the profession by the trained persons after the end of the project. There is a desire from representatives of the target group of the project to participate in trainings and to learn and practice a profession related to the provision of services of a similar nature at home. There is also interest from the people who are targeted by these services - mostly elderly and single people who have difficulty coping with such activities on their own. However, after the end of the project, the activity did not continue.



*Fig. 5. Social Enterprise Home and Garden Services Project*

There are several reasons for the lack of sustainability of the results of the project "Social Enterprise" Home and Garden Services":

- The aim of the project did not specifically include the establishment of a social enterprise in each of the partner municipalities;
- At that time the municipality of Blagoevgrad did not recognize the activity as an opportunity to start a new social enterprise on its territory. The factors that influenced this at that time were several: the lack of experience in the municipality (including local NGOs) in the creation and maintenance of the activity of such a social enterprise, the lack of legislation in the field of social entrepreneurship at that time;
- Difficulties in finding a market for these services - this is the period in which the social services "social assistant", "personal assistant", "domestic helper", which are provided free of charge, are already actively, with OPHRD funds and through national programs. and informally include the services that a potential social enterprise set up under the project would provide;
- Insufficient popularity of such paid assistance as a separate group of services, which are not intended only for the extremely needy, who have difficulties even with their own needs.

In view of the above, it could be concluded that despite the existing local experience and the currently available enterprises, which have defined themselves as social, social entrepreneurship remains almost invisible in the Municipality of Blagoevgrad. There is still a lack of recognition of social enterprises as an innovative model for creating employment for disadvantaged groups in the labor market, as well as a new form of active social inclusion. There is no practice of local government support for social entrepreneurship. In this direction, there is neither practical experience nor developed documents regulating such possible support at the local level. This hinders the definition of areas, policies and local issues where the opportunities of social enterprises are still untapped and greatly underestimated.

On the other hand, the rather episodic activity of social enterprises at the local level and the opinions of stakeholders gives grounds to conclude that the organizations operating in the sector



perceive as an incentive for development the existence of legislation that regulates not only their general status but also the possibilities for support from local authorities.

The activities for the provision of certain social or educational services are still the most widespread and recognizable, both for social entrepreneurs and for potential users. However, in the process of a study conducted to prepare this report, interest was also found in new activities, including those related to waste management.

The long-term activity of TPKE "Rila" and the sustainability of its results prove the greater resilience of cooperative enterprises compared to traditional ones, especially in times of crisis and other smaller economic challenges. The application of such a more sustainable model of work could serve as a successful basis for the development of activities in a field other than those typical of social enterprises in the municipality of Blagoevgrad so far.

Analysis and assessment in the field of waste management in the municipality of Blagoevgrad:

Waste management on the territory of Blagoevgrad municipality is carried out by the municipal company "Biostroy" EOOD, which performs activities for garbage collection and garbage disposal of mixed household waste from households, construction waste and others. There is a system for separate collection of packaging waste, including paper and cardboard, plastic, glass and metal from households. The Municipality of Blagoevgrad has a contract with an organization for recovery, which has the relevant permits for collection, transportation and recycling of this waste and thus fulfills its commitments under the Waste Management Act. The system works well and the municipality successfully implements the goals. There is still no system for separate collection of biodegradable and green waste on the territory of Blagoevgrad municipality, but with the construction of the composting installation for separately collected green waste, the installation for pre-treatment of mixed municipal waste and the anaerobic installation for separately collected biodegradable waste of a system for separate collection of biodegradable and green waste by placing containers in households.

In order to improve the ecological situation on the territory of Blagoevgrad Municipality, two projects are being implemented under Priority Axis 2 "Waste" of the Operational Program

“Environment” 2014-2020 in the field of waste management. In 2019, the regional landfill for non-hazardous waste was built and put into operation, which is implemented under the project "Construction of a regional waste management system, Blagoevgrad region, serving the municipalities of Blagoevgrad, Simitli, Rila, Kocherinovo and Boboshevo - 1st stage“, Financed from the state budget through the Enterprise for Management of Environmental Protection Activities (EMEPA). The landfill is built on an area of 106 ha, located in the Teketo area, the land of the village of Buchino and the Tsalenite locality in the land of the village of Balgarchevo, Blagoevgrad municipality.

The regional waste management system, Blagoevgrad region includes:

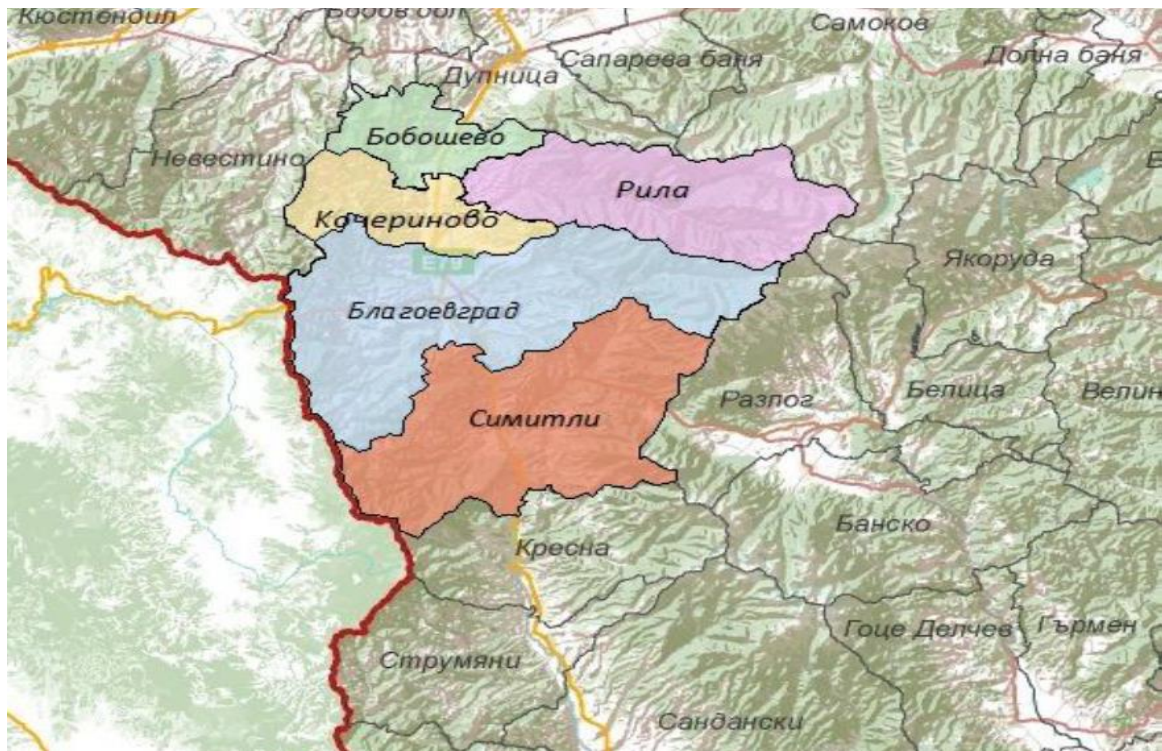
- Construction of new cells for non-hazardous waste on the site of the regional landfill - 2 pcs. with an average annual capacity of 20,566 t / year. (average forecast for annual landfilled waste for the period 2015 - 2040, after commissioning of the plants for separation and composting);
- Construction of an installation for heap composting of the collected green waste from the municipality of Blagoevgrad with a capacity of 2,300 t / year. green waste on site;
- Construction of a separation plant with a capacity of 24,000 t / year. on the site;
- Construction of an installation for container composting of the separated biodegradable waste from the municipality for 3 200 t / year. biodegradable waste on site;
- Construction of a site for gratuitous delivery of separately collected household waste for the municipality of Blagoevgrad, sized for a capacity of 4,400 t / year. in Regulated Land XX618.21, within the regulatory boundaries of the town of Blagoevgrad;
- Reclamation of the old landfill of Blagoevgrad municipality (located on the site of the regional landfill).

The capacity of the constructed regional landfill is about 574,240 m<sup>3</sup> of waste.

On the territory of the regional landfill and in a neighboring property, a composting installation for separately collected biodegradable and green waste, an installation for pre-treatment of municipal waste and an anaerobic installation for separately collected biodegradable

waste are to be built, which will serve the municipalities of the Regional of waste - Blagoevgrad (RSUO - Blagoevgrad). The site of the regional waste management system is located on land owned by the Municipality of Blagoevgrad.

The municipalities of RWMS - Blagoevgrad participate jointly, as partners in the construction of a composting plant for separately collected biodegradable and green waste, an installation for pre-treatment of municipal waste and an anaerobic installation for separately collected biodegradable waste.



*Fig 6. Territorial scope of RWMS - Blagoevgrad*

At the moment on the territory of the municipalities of RSUO - Blagoevgrad there are no built, under construction and planned for construction installations for preliminary treatment of household waste, as well as an installation for utilization and recycling of biodegradable municipal waste, incl. and composting of biowaste.

The Municipality of Blagoevgrad, together with the partner municipalities Simitli, Rila, Kocherinovo and Boboshevo and members of the Regional Association for Waste Management - Blagoevgrad have concluded administrative contracts for grants with the Minister of Environment

*This document was created within the Grant Agreement № В2.9С.11 of 06.10.2017, project "Green employment in the management of biowastes" (Green\_Crew), concluded between the Municipality of Serres and the Ministry of Economy and Development, which is implemented with the financial support of the Cross-border Cooperation Program INTERREG VA "Greece - Bulgaria" 2014-2020, co-financed by the European Union through the European Regional Development Fund.*

and Water of the Republic of Bulgaria through the Operational Program "Environment 2014-2020" for two projects, namely:

- 1) *"Design and construction of additional infrastructure / installation for pre-treatment of municipal waste and composting installation for separately collected biodegradable and / or green waste / for development of the regional waste management system of Blagoevgrad region, including municipalities Blagoevgrad, Simitli, Rila , Kocherinovo and Boboshevo "*.
- 2) *"Design and construction of an anaerobic installation for separately collected biodegradable waste for a regional waste management system of the Blagoevgrad Region"*.

The expected results from the implementation of the two projects:

- 1) Achieving a higher level of waste management in the municipalities of RWMS - Blagoevgrad according to the hierarchy of their management, set in the current legislation;
- 2) Reducing the amount of landfilled waste by building a composting plant for separately collected biodegradable and green waste, a pre-treatment plant for municipal waste and an anaerobic installation of separately collected biodegradable waste and promoting their recycling and recovery;
- 3) Organizing separate collection, recycling and recovery of biodegradable waste;
- 4) Treatment and treatment of biodegradable waste in an environmentally safe manner;
- 5) The construction of the installations and their commissioning will contribute to the achievement of the national goals set in the national legislation and in the National Waste Management Plan 2014-2020;
- 6) Encouraging active public participation in waste management.



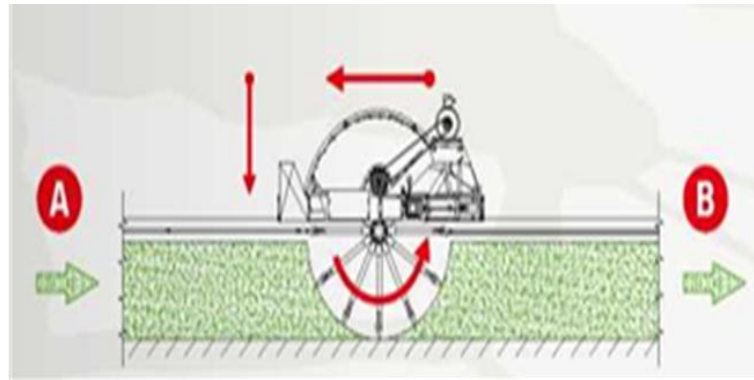
The **composting plant for separately collected green waste** will be located on the territory of the regional landfill, and will operate only with separately collected green and wood waste. The installation will have a capacity of 2,516 t / year. The planned year of commissioning is 2021.

The chosen technology is installation in open cages with a canopy, with an automated system for displacement and mixing.

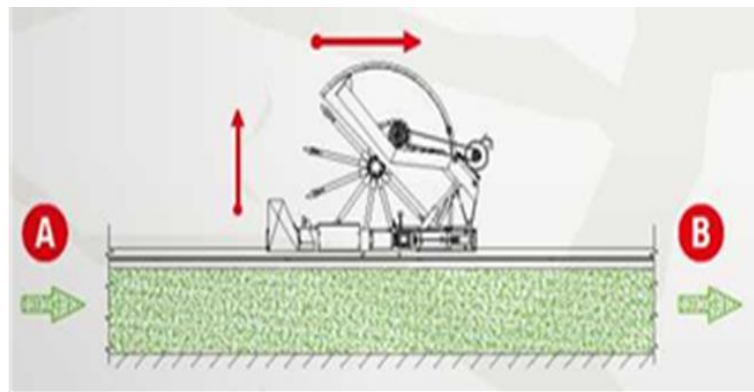


*Fig. 7. Composting in open cages with a canopy*

Aeration is provided to the system, which is a prerequisite for a faster and higher quality composting process. Due to the planned aeration of the first 25 m of the line and the nature of the incoming streams - green and wood waste, composting is not expected, on the one hand due to the higher moisture content in green waste, and on the other - due to daily mixing of material.



*Fig. 8. The automated system at work*



*Fig. 9 The automated system when moving*

The technology for composting in open cages with a canopy, through an automated mixing and mixing system is suitable for conditions where the maintenance activities for the proper course of the composting process are low depending on the climate, and the machines used are low operating and simplified. service. Operating costs are optimized because the system is automated and there is no need for continuous availability of service personnel. If the installation has automatic filling, the presence of a work team is required only when programming the cycles.

**The installation for pre-treatment of mixed household waste** will be located on the territory of the regional landfill, in a multi-level construction together with the installation for composting of separately collected green and wood waste. The installation will have a capacity of 24,117 t / year. mixed collected household waste, and the planned year of commissioning is 2021.





*Fig. 10. Pre-treatment plant*

The installation will ensure the separation of the largest possible amount of recyclable fractions from the flow of mixed collected municipal waste, which will then be handed over for recycling and recovery.

The pre-treatment plant includes an optimal combination of mechanization, equipment and manual labor. Recyclable waste streams have been studied and analyzed so as to achieve satisfactory results in their pre-treatment and separation. The line is tailored to the specifics of the waste, taking into account risk positions that may affect the process. Initial pre-sorting of bulky waste is provided, as well as equipment to help maximize results. This high-tech line will allow for unimpeded operation and full achievement of the goals for diversion of recyclable waste from landfill, set for implementation by the municipalities of RSO Blagoevgrad. The technological process ends with pressing and baling of the separated waste for their convenient and compact transportation to the recycling factories. The system also has a module for stabilization of the residual organic fraction before its disposal.

The power supply of the installation and its separate parts is carried out by means of a front loader. The sieve fraction and the residual waste are subject to fragmentation and subsequent stabilization.

After sorting the waste, only a small part of it will be disposed of. Aggregates will be completely disposed of due to the inability to be recovered or stabilized.

**For the anaerobic installation for separately collected biodegradable waste**, a technology of anaerobic decomposition of household biodegradable waste is recommended, using the method of dry methanization. A facility for subsequent indoor composting, a biofilter and a cogeneration module for the production of electricity and heat will be built next to this installation. The project will build an installation for anaerobic digestion by the method of dry methanization. The determined capacity is 15 819 tons of separately collected biodegradable waste for 2021.



*Fig. 11. Dry methanization plant*

The advantage of this technology is the non-influence of the process by the various pollutants that fall into the collected waste. In the process, the separation of contaminants is carried out in the final stage - during screening (screening) of the compost produced by the aerobic installation.

According to the prepared Morphological analysis of the composition and quantity of waste in the municipality of Blagoevgrad for 2016, it was found that the quantities of landfilled biodegradable waste are 27,429 tons, which represents 91% of the landfilled municipal waste.

Separately collected green waste from the maintenance of municipal parks and gardens in the municipality of Blagoevgrad is 5 616 tons of green waste from this biodegradable waste.

The data on the composition and quantity of household waste generated on the territory of Blagoevgrad Municipality for 2016 are presented in the following table:

Faction	%	t/year.
Nutritional	26,25	10 235,68
Paper and cardboard	15,53	6 055,62
Plastic	17,98	7 010,95
Textiles and leather	10,83	4 222,95
Rubber	1,01	393,83
Garden	12,14	4 733,76
Wooden	2,02	787,66
Glass	4,89	1 906,76
Metals	2,12	826,65
Inert	7,14	2 784,11
Dangerous	0,09	35,09
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100,00</b>	<b>38 993,07</b>

*Table 3. Quantity and composition of waste of Blagoevgrad municipality for 2016.*

The introduction of a separate collection system is a long process that requires step-by-step adequate measures with constant analysis of the results and the possibility to revise the measures

and approach. Therefore, when integrating the projects for construction of a composting plant for separately collected green and wood waste and an installation for anaerobic digestion of separately collected biodegradable waste, a conservative approach was adopted in determining the capacities of the composting plant, in order to prepare and implement measures for separate collection, which for the needs of the anaerobic digestion plant must be carried out to a greater extent.

The construction of the new installations will ensure the utilization of biodegradable and green waste, landfilling and treatment of waste in an environmentally friendly manner and compliance by municipalities with all statutory norms in the field of waste management.

During the preparation of this report a survey was conducted among employees of social services in the municipality of Blagoevgrad, employees of institutions that work mainly with people from vulnerable groups (Directorate "Social Assistance" - Blagoevgrad, Directorate "Labor Office" - Blagoevgrad), employees in a private company - licensed labor intermediary, working mainly in the municipality of Blagoevgrad ("Personal Invest" Ltd. - Blagoevgrad). A total of 38 employees took part in the survey. The survey aimed to gather the impressions and opinions of the employees of the listed organizations regarding the adoption of social entrepreneurship as an opportunity to improve living conditions in the municipality of Blagoevgrad, including the social inclusion of people at risk. The choice to conduct a survey among them is determined by the understanding that their impressions and opinions are formed on the basis of their daily contacts with people from vulnerable groups who need support for learning to live independently, help with career guidance and motivation. for participation in the labor market as an opportunity to change their quality of life and for their social inclusion.

On the territory of Blagoevgrad municipality there are more than 20 social services, almost half of which are providing community support for adults - three Family Accommodation Centers, three Sheltered Housing, two Day Care Centers for Adults with Disabilities, Center for temporary accommodation. In all these social services, part of the support includes support for employment. Employees working in them share that the activities aimed at developing work habits and basic skills necessary for the exercise of certain types of work are the basis of support for people. For the most part, these activities are in the form of occupational therapy, conducted on site in the respective institutions. The most common is the functional-domestic and entertaining occupational



therapy. Much less in their work the staff of part of Sofia University uses partially occupational occupational therapy (light repairs, agricultural activities). In the residential services for adults with mild disabilities on the territory of Blagoevgrad municipality, the support for the accommodated includes registration in the Labor Office or other licensed labor intermediaries, assistance for participation in appropriate trainings and courses for acquiring skills or professional qualification, assistance in finding and starting a job. As a result of these purposeful efforts, there are users of Sofia University who are provided with employment.

Employees in these social services are unanimous in their opinion that people who use residential services or daily forms of support and have a job in accordance with their capabilities and interests, achieve real and full social inclusion. There is a lasting change in their quality of life and their motivation for social activity.

The employees of DSP - Blagoevgrad shared that some of the people from vulnerable groups, who have been given the opportunity for successful employment, change their opinion that the use of the existing mechanisms for social support in the country is enough for a full life. In the survey, respondents pointed out that not just starting a job, but providing employment that is consistent with the real capabilities and desires of people from vulnerable groups is what most strongly influences their motivation for change and development.

The employees of DBT - Blagoevgrad and the private company - licensed labor intermediary are unanimous that social entrepreneurship would be a serious opportunity to fill the existing vacuum in the labor market for employment of people from vulnerable groups, including the long-term unemployed, people without any or with a low level of education and qualification. In view of the specifics of the social enterprise, the employees who participated in the survey believe that in order to activate social entrepreneurship, the emphasis should be on creating the most appropriate environment for this. This includes the inclusion of new mediation services: family labor consultant; post-employment counseling and mentoring; the so-called "mobile labor office". In fact, such services could also be called integrated, as resources not only institutions and private organizations working in the field of the labor market could be used to provide and complement them.

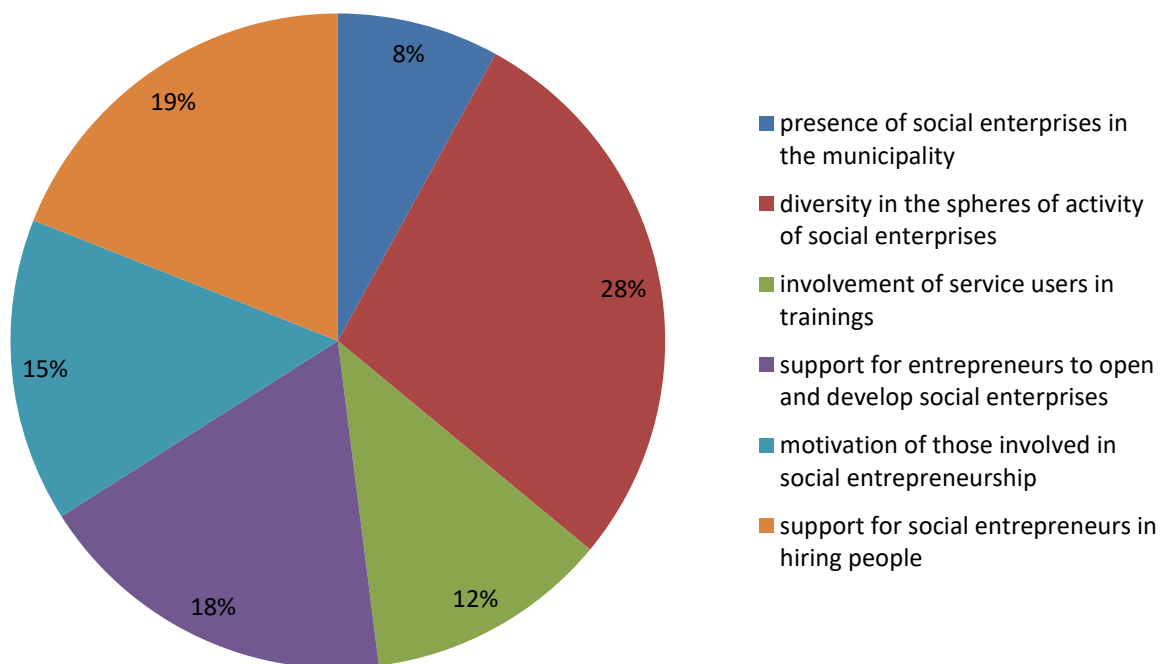
After the survey, the opinions of the employees in the social services and the institutions, who work mainly with people from vulnerable groups, regarding the important conditions for achieving their social inclusion were summarized and ranked according to the number of shares. The summary opinions are as follows:

- Existence of sufficient social enterprises in the municipality, as one of the opportunities for employment, outside of occupational therapies, supported employment or other forms;
- Diversity in the spheres of activity of the social enterprises, operating on the territory of the municipality - the already imposed individual approach of work in the social services gives an opportunity for a user of Sofia University to develop his strongest sides and skills. The effect of such an individual approach to work can be sustainable in the presence of opportunities for application of newly acquired / developed skills. The known areas of activity of social enterprises suggest a limited number of people who can be included in employment. Focusing on different and current areas of activity of these companies will have a positive effect. Waste management is one of the new opportunities for social entrepreneurship, which the employees, among whom the survey was conducted, identify as extremely suitable. The reason for this is that the topic of waste management, including the separate collection of biodegradable waste, is already a topical issue for society. It arouses great interest due to its serious impact on people's quality of life and the ability of people with their skills and purposeful actions to positively influence the process. The interviewed employees share that the people they work with are interested in the topic due to the fact that this is a serious opportunity for new professions in the field of waste management and environmental protection to enter the practice. These occupations are important for DBT clients and employment agencies, as the skills needed to practice them could be easily acquired. The other factor that makes these professions attractive is the possibility of their long-term practice, due to the seriousness of the problem of waste management and the constant need for environmental protection.



- Opportunities for inclusion of the users of the services in additional forms of training for acquisition / increase of skills and qualification, apart from those that can be organized in the social service itself;
- Informing, motivating and supporting entrepreneurs in the direction of opening and developing social enterprises;
- Informing and motivating those involved in social entrepreneurship for new and current areas of activity, including waste management;
- Information and support for social entrepreneurs on administrative issues related to hiring people from vulnerable groups.

## Summarized opinions of employees in social services and institutions



*Fig. 12. Summarized opinions of employees in social services and institutions*

## VII. КОНСТАТАЦИИ, ИЗВОДИ, ЗАКЛЮЧЕНИЯ И ПРЕПОРЪКИ



### **Conclusions and recommendations regarding waste management**

Raising awareness of waste management and the motivation of different social groups and business organizations is critical to improving waste management results. Provision should be made for expanding the scope of information activities for the public and business, activities which are traditionally underestimated by the competent institutions.

An important prerequisite for this are some of the measures implemented so far in the municipality, such as participation in a number of national and local campaigns for waste disposal through the participation of volunteers, inclusion in the annual competition for municipalities "For a clean environment", participation in regular information campaigns. recovery organizations,

support for conducting mini-campaigns in educational institutions at the local level and other similar initiatives organized by non-governmental organizations.

These activities could be supplemented by periodic organization of thematic information and volunteer campaigns, provision of information by the NSI on municipal waste by municipalities, etc.

At this stage, the measures implemented by the municipality take into account the degree of efficiency in terms of subordination between the individual activities, so as to derive a synergistic effect and improve the overall efficiency of them.

The municipality ensures sustainability and complementarity at the local level of national policies in the field. For this reason, measures such as:

- implementation of a long-term national communication strategy for waste management;
- the practical application of the legislation in the field of waste management, which imposes an obligation on municipalities to conduct regular information campaigns on activities related to environmental protection and waste management and to include in municipal waste management programs information measures of the public and business should be seen as interlinked and aimed at maximizing the impact of local efforts.

Another group of measures that are in the focus of the municipality are those that aim to conduct public consultations, survey the opinions and attitudes of citizens at the local level in the development of municipal waste management programs.

They aim to take into account the views of citizens and businesses and directly involve them in the management decision-making process.

The ways in which the opinion of the residents is surveyed and the opportunity for their initiative is provided are mainly surveys, surveys, meetings initiated by the municipality, the opportunity to submit opinions and suggestions electronically.

The activity of the municipality should be continued and supplemented with active participation in national programs for improving the awareness and participation of the population and business regarding the waste management activities.

The information activities could be supplemented by publishing on the website of the municipality information on the location, type and conditions for delivery of separately collected waste from households and legal entities, conducting training programs for business to prevent waste and its effective use as resource, creation of internet platforms for exchange of good business practices, etc.

### **Conclusions and recommendations regarding social entrepreneurship in Blagoevgrad municipality:**

The European trend, which is already beginning to stand out in the country, is the tangible participation of social and solidarity-based enterprises in the social economy. They combine broader social and environmental and community goals with governance that follows an entrepreneurial model. Currently, the enterprises that act as social in the municipality of Blagoevgrad are engaged in the provision of social services and services for labor integration of disadvantaged groups. Although the change in national legislation in this area is quite a fact, there is already interest in expanding the scope of activities with which social enterprises have the right to engage, such as the provision of public services, including in the fields of culture and the environment. . In the municipality of Blagoevgrad this interest is still weak and is registered as gathering information about existing practices from the position of observers and students of foreign experience. No concrete initiative in the field and with activities other than the usual ones has been registered yet. At this stage, regulatory change is seen as an opportunity for local government support for existing activities, which has not yet been specifically formulated.

In view of the above, it should be noted the importance and need to create conditions and opportunities on local soil to expand the scope of social entrepreneurship. This requires the joint efforts of the entire local community. Development should take into account European trends in recent years in the field of social economy and social entrepreneurship, which are aimed at

building businesses based on social inclusion, the development of a collaborative economy and the development of a circular economy. The new opportunities provided by the Law on Enterprises of Social and Solidarity Economy to the municipalities should be used to support and encourage initiatives in the field of social entrepreneurship (establishment for remuneration in favor of social enterprises of the right to build on municipal property or the right to use of municipal property and belongings without a tender or competition, but only with a decision of the Municipal Council, financial support for raising the qualification of employees from vulnerable social groups within municipalities where the unemployment rate is higher or equal to the average for opportunity for participation of local authorities in forms of cooperation with social enterprises).

### **Conclusions:**

Taking into account all the above, it can be concluded that the municipality has real conditions for the establishment of a social enterprise that will focus its activities on different from the usual activities, including the management of biodegradable waste.

Before formulating the benefits of the development of a social cooperative enterprise in the field of use of "green waste" in the municipality of Blagoevgrad, it is important to specify that the goals of social entrepreneurship do not depend on the scope of the enterprise and are aimed at: strengthening of social solidarity and cohesion; strengthening the ability to solve social and other important problems for society; provision of products and services that are in the public interest; promoting social innovation; developing new employment opportunities; additional jobs for vulnerable groups in the labor market.

The efficiency of the emergence and development of a social cooperative enterprise in the field of the use of "green waste" in the municipality of Blagoevgrad could be summarized as follows:

- Strengthening the role of the local community in developing new approaches and models for tackling poverty and social exclusion, mainly due to the lack of opportunities for professional engagement and realization of vulnerable groups.
- Focusing the activity of the social enterprise on the field of waste management has all the prerequisites to have a positive impact on its competitiveness and sustainability.



- The development of a social enterprise in the field of waste management will allow the formulation of new knowledge and attitudes in the local community about the nature and content of the contributions of social enterprises to the quality of life of people.
- The emergence of a social enterprise with activities aimed at waste management will have a positive impact on improving the quality of life at the local level. The fact that the environment (in particular waste management) is one of the essential elements of quality of life, along with social and economic aspects, is recognized by local self-government. Local authorities are best acquainted with the state and problems of the environment, including waste management in the municipality. The measures taken by the local government in this direction will meet a natural partner in their implementation in the face of possible social enterprises with the same subject of activity.
- The successful model of work of the social enterprise in a new field of activity could be applied in the formation and development of new and existing social enterprises at the local level.
- In order to achieve good results in the field of separate collection and composting of biodegradable waste, it is necessary to continuously raise public awareness. It is extremely important to separate the collection of biodegradable and green waste, in order to treat it in an environmentally safe way and obtain a final product - compost, which can be used for own needs and in agriculture.
- Continuous monitoring of the municipal waste management programs, in order to monitor the measures set for their implementation regarding the management of biodegradable waste
- It is necessary to regularly inform the citizens by publishing up-to-date information on the website of the Municipality of Blagoevgrad and in another appropriate way.
- In order to effectively utilize biodegradable waste, it is necessary to implement year-round campaigns in support of their recycling by conducting information campaigns,

site visits, distribution of information brochures, media campaigns - through local radio, television and newspapers.

- Use of home composting as a method for recycling of biodegradable waste on the territory of Blagoevgrad municipality.

## VIII. SOURCES OF INFORMATION



1. *Directive 2006/12 / EC on waste*
2. *Directive 1999/31 / EC on the landfill of waste*
3. *National Waste Management Plan 2014-2020*
4. *Municipal Development Plan of the Municipality of Blagoevgrad 2014-2020*
5. *Waste Management Program Blagoevgrad Municipality 2015-2020*
6. *National strategic plan for gradual reduction of the quantities of biodegradable waste intended for landfill 2010-2020.*
7. *EU Europe 2020 strategy*
8. *Pre-investment studies for the installations*
9. *Guidelines for applying for funding under OPHRD 2007-2013.*
10. *Guidelines for applying for funding under OPHRD 2014-2020.*
11. *Guidelines for applying for funding under OPE 2014-2020.*
12. *Law on Environmental Protection*
13. *Waste Management Act*
14. *Law on the Enterprises of the Social and Solidarity Economy*
15. *Law on Social Assistance*
16. *Municipal strategy for development of social services 2016 -2020*
17. *National Strategy for Poverty Reduction and Promotion of Social Inclusion 2020*
18. *National concept of social economy*
19. *National Youth Strategy 2010-2020*

*20. Long-term employment strategy for people with disabilities 2011-2020*

*21. Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee on 'Cooperatives and Restructuring'  
(own-initiative opinion)*