



ECOWEEK 2021 IN AEGINA, GREECE
HISTORY + TOURISM + SUSTAINABILITY
 Aiming Towards a Sustainability Vision in Practice
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ECOWEEK Partner event in EU GREEN WEEK 2021: ‘Smart Cities + Innovation + Zero Pollution’ June 5, 2021 Online

ECOWEEK celebrated on June 5 the International Environment Day with an ECOWEEK EU Green Week 2021 Partner event online with an interactive discussion with distinguished speakers from Europe on **Smart Cities Innovation Zero Pollution**: Best practices in sustainable design and innovation will be presented, in the design of new environmentally friendly materials, sustainable urban solutions, organic products, smart mobility, innovation in fabrication and reuse of materials and packaging and much more! The event took place in collaboration with the Friedrich Naumann Foundation.

The event also marked the celebration of ECOWEEK of its 15-year anniversary with activity in 17 countries and the celebration of Greece of the 200-year anniversary from the Greek independence revolution that led to the establishment of the modern Greek state.

The European Green Week 2021 titled: “Zero pollution for healthier people and planet” is dedicated to the ‘zero pollution ambition’. It also includes European Green Deal initiatives, such as climate initiatives, upcoming Chemicals Strategy, as well as initiatives in the fields of energy, industry, mobility, agriculture, fisheries, health and biodiversity.



The speakers included the **Mayor of Aegina Yiannis Zorbas** who saluted the event. In the first panel titled 'Smart Materials & Innovation and Zero Waste' participated **Dr. Konstantinos Giannakopoulos** of the Institute of Nanoscience and Nanotechnology, National Centre for Scientific Research "Demokritos", Greece, architect and educator **Katerina Novakova** of PETMAT, Czech Republic, **Vaya Mitsiou, Katerina Chatziangelaki and Harry Kazas** of Rhoeco Fine Organic Goods, Greece, and **Aleksander Rajch** co-founder and director for external relations of the Polish Alternative Fuels Association (PSPA) from Poland. The panel moderators were **Dr. Elias Messinas**, ECOWEEK founding chairman and **Despoina Kouinoglou**, ECOWEEK Associate.

The second panel titled 'Smart Cities & Innovation & Environment' was organized in collaboration with the Friedrich Naumann Foundation and moderators Dr. Elias Messinas, ECOWEEK founding chairman and Despoina Kouinoglou, ECOWEEK Associate. The panel consisted of Ioannis Antonakis, Deputy Mayor of Environment, Alimos Municipality, Greece, Dr. Burcu Özdemir, Director of Smart City Dept., Metropolitan Municipality of Istanbul, Turkey, and Natalia Pantelidou, Deputy Mayor of Public Works, Kalamaria Municipality, Greece.

"The European Green Deals has set very ambitious goals, to turn Europe climate-neutral and pollution-free by 2050, and our economies circular and sustainable. Is that possible?" remarked Dr. Messinas. "Well, it is up to us. Before COVID-19 keeping people at home for weeks sounded impossible, yet, collectively we achieved the impossible when needed!" And he adds: 'As an overview of the stimulating and inspiring presentations and best practice examples that we saw today, we can summarize them in the following bullets points that each one can take with us:

- Science and technology are there but they are not enough. We need to adopt the right habits to use them or to avoid them when needed. Need policy to convince and guide people to do what they want without trying to solve technological problems with more technology.
- When we speak about habits, people's habits have the most influence to sustainability and the environment – each habit that each one of us has, it multiplies by 7 billion people on earth. The same way that one person cannot make an impact, but together we can.
- Each person uses about 5 cups of disposable cups every day to enjoy coffee. If you cannot use the same mug again and again, what if you drink and plant – that is, you enjoy the coffee and contribute to local ecology. People – consumers – crave for products that do the right thing – they combine the best experience without becoming a burden to the planet.
- Smart mobility is not only about electric private vehicles, but also about giving municipalities and individuals the choice of mobility with electric buses and efficient and non-polluting public transportation, shared vehicles, electric bicycles, pedestrian and clean transportations zones in city centers, and more.



- The more a municipality communicates and shares with residents, the more results it sees. Children are the ambassadors of the new ideas of sustainability it is therefore very important to invest in educating and raising awareness in schools.
- Smart cities are not only about technology, but primarily about making cities humane and raising the quality of life in cities. Also, about developing a participatory democracy in cities and about solving problems holistically – not focused and isolated.
- Cities are starting to place attention to public spaces and to make them more accessible and compatible for children. Then these places will be better places, because they will be better for everyone. It is important in cities to engage people in the making of public spaces, so that they take ownership of these places and they protect them from vandalism.
- New materials and technologies can protect urban surfaces from vandalism. But the best protection of cities and public spaces are informed, involved and active citizens.

This online event was the first event leading to the event ECOWEEK 2021: **‘History + Tourism + Sustainability: Towards a Sustainability Vision in Practice’** scheduled to take place in Aegina, Greece in August 2021 online and in-situ.

More details at ECOWEEK 2021 at: <https://ecoweeek2021.org>

ECOWEEK is a non-profit organization with the passion to change people’s habits, established with the mission to raise environmental awareness and to engage the public in promoting the principles of social and environmental sustainability through design. Since 2005, ECOWEEK has developed programs in 17 countries and a network in 56 countries. ECOWEEK workshops of design interventions and placemaking have made an impact in more than 30 cities, through more than 200 sustainable design workshops engaging more than 4500 students and professionals, and hundreds of local stakeholders.

Visit ECOWEEK website: <https://ecoweeek2021.org>

Contact ECOWEEK at: ecoweeek@ecoweeek.org

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