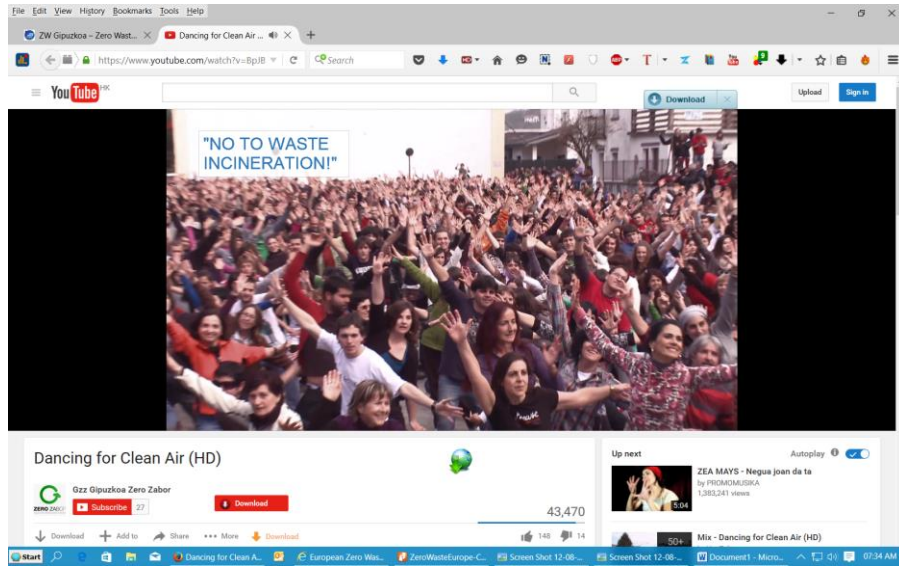


Flash Dancing for Clean Air - watch the video - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BpJBhZCS7YE>



[Gipuzkoa to save €250 million after scrapping the construction of the incineration plant](#)

15/01/2015 Translated from article published by GHK – click here for original text in [Spanish](#) and [Basque](#)



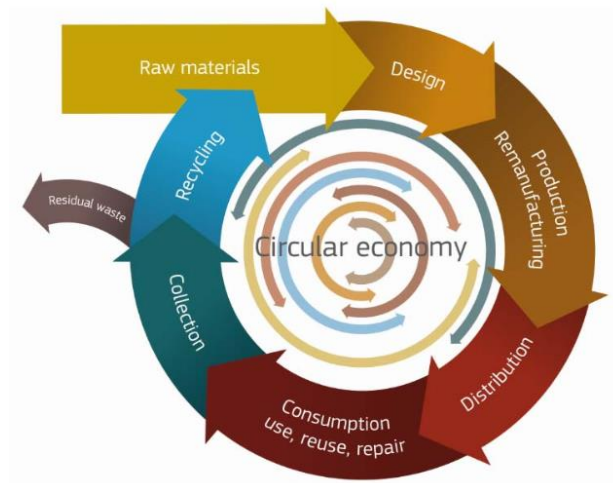
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7UM73CEvwMY>

Brussels, 2.7.2014
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**COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN
PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL
COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS**

**Towards a circular economy:
A zero waste programme for Europe**

{SWD(2014) 206 final}
{SWD(2014) 211 final}





<http://www.goldmanprize.org/recipient/rossano-ercolini/>



Rossano Ercolini

2013 Goldman Prize Recipient
Europe

- Italy
- Sustainable Development

An elementary school teacher, Rossano Ercolini began a public education campaign about the dangers of incinerators in his small Tuscan town that grew into a national Zero Waste movement.

In Italy and throughout Europe, incineration has been the leading approach to waste management. Consumerism and production has accelerated this trend, rapidly filling landfills and creating a bigger demand for incinerators.

In 1994, construction plans for an incinerator were proposed in a small town in Tuscany. Yet residents were not informed about the impact of the incinerator. Every year, incinerators remove thousands of tons of material from the recycling stream and burn them, releasing greenhouse gases into the atmosphere and leaving behind toxics that endanger the health of nearby residents.

A teacher at an elementary school not two miles from the proposed incinerator, Rossano Ercolini had heard of cities like San Francisco that were successfully working to eliminate waste. He taught his students to recycle paper and replaced plastic water bottles and plastic utensils in the school lunchroom with pitchers, glasses and silverware.

When Ercolini heard about construction plans for the incinerator, he became concerned about the local residents' health. He saw his responsibility as an educator to protect students' well-being and inform the broader community about the incinerator's risks as well as solutions to sustainably manage the town's garbage.

Ercolini began organizing town hall meetings in his village, Capannori—the capital of Italy's paper mill industry—where residents were able to ask questions and get clear answers about the whys and hows of recycling. He brought a bag of mixed waste and demonstrated how to sort out metal, glass and plastic to recycle and food scraps for composting and livestock feed. He brought in scientists, clergy, and other experts to share information about the dangers of incineration as well as the economic and environmental benefits of Zero Waste.

People began to see that it was indeed possible to manage waste without having to rely on incineration. Building on this momentum, Ercolini formed [Ambiente e Futuro](#) (Environment and Future) and began mobilizing street protests where citizens demanded authorities to stop plans for the incinerator. In response to the community's concerns, **Lucca's regional government officials canceled the incinerator's construction and put Ercolini in charge of developing a waste management plan.** He went door to door to get the community's input on alternatives to the incinerator, empowering them to propose solutions that would work for them. The larger province of Lucca is now **A year later, Capannori began implementing a new collection system that now recycles 82 percent of the city's waste. incinerator-free following the closure of two existing plants, and the government is committed to keeping incinerators out of the province.**

Ercolini is also looking at the bigger picture, working with companies to use packaging that produces less waste. For example, he's collaborating with Italy's largest manufacturer of coffee products, Lavazza, to develop reusable versions of single-use espresso capsules. He is also promoting Zero Waste as an opportunity to create jobs, where young people are trained to refurbish durable goods or break them down to recover metals and other material.

Capannori became a springboard for the nation's Zero Waste movement, which soon grew to include Naples—a strategic location given its dysfunctional waste collection system that left garbage piling up and burning on the streets. Ercolini successfully proposed the city to host Zero Waste International Alliance's 2009 global meeting. **A few months later, the city of Naples joined Capannori in adopting Zero Waste.**

Thanks to the grassroots campaign led by Ercolini educating communities on the merits of Zero Waste, 40 incinerators have been scrapped or shut down and 117 municipalities (home to more than 3 million residents) have joined Capannori in adopting a goal of Zero Waste. In November 2012, for the first time in Europe, the small but affluent region of Aosta passed a referendum banning incineration with overwhelming support from 90 percent of voters. Ercolini's efforts have sparked the beginning of a Zero Waste network throughout Europe, with countries such as England, Estonia, Spain, and Denmark following Italy's lead.

[Italiano](#)

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