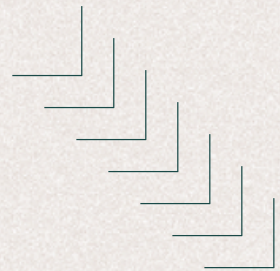


# MONTHLY UPDATE

May, 2026



## MAY IN FOCUS: The Balkan Forum

May was a dynamic and activity-filled month for The Balkan Forum, bringing together international cooperation, sustainability initiatives, public discussions, project activities, and media engagement across several regional and international platforms.

### UNIGREEN in Thessaloniki

**On May 4–5, 2026, The BF participated in the UNIGreen WP2 Self-Assessment Tool Introduction and Training Meeting** held at the International Hellenic University (IHU) in **Thessaloniki, Greece.**

The two-day meeting brought together project partners and university representatives to introduce and test **the new sustainability self-assessment tool** developed within the project. Through practical training sessions and discussions, participants explored how the tool can support Higher Education Institutions in assessing existing sustainability practices, governance structures, and institutional policies.

Unlike traditional questionnaires, the UNIGreen tool was designed as an interactive assessment platform that provides immediate feedback through weighted scores, visual dashboards, and gap analysis, helping institutions better identify strengths, challenges, and areas for improvement.

The meeting also served as an opportunity for exchange between partners and discussions on upcoming project activities for 2026, contributing to stronger regional cooperation and the advancement of sustainable governance practices in higher education.



*The BF and project partners during the UNIGreen training meeting in Thessaloniki, Greece.*



## GreenBridge Partners Meet in Malta

On **May 14–15, 2026**, The Balkan Forum participated in the **GreenBridge project meeting held at the Valletta Design Cluster in Malta**, together with project partners from Bulgaria, Malta, Kosovo, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The meeting focused on reviewing the overall progress of the project, ongoing implementation activities, deliverables, and upcoming milestones.

Throughout the two-day meeting, partners discussed **progress** across several work packages related to green and digital skills development in vocational education and training (VET), including project management, needs analysis, e-learning implementation, mobility activities, dissemination, and sustainability planning.

The Balkan Forum presented updates related to WP2 – Need Analysis in the Field of Green and Digital Skills in the Western Balkan Region, including work completed, key findings, conclusions, and next steps.

The meeting once again highlighted the **strong cooperation and communication** within the partnership, which continues to be one of the key strengths of the project. GreenBridge has continued to progress successfully across all activities and deliverables, with partners maintaining very active coordination, collaboration, and shared commitment toward the project objectives.

The project continues to contribute to strengthening green and digital capacities in vocational education across the Western Balkans while also building long-term regional partnerships and exchange between institutions.



*The BF and project partners during the Green Bridge project meeting in Valletta, Malta.*

# Reconnecting Through Sustainability: LogEx Circular Economy Week 2026

On May 25, 2026, The Balkan Forum and the **LogEx community** officially launched the 2026 Circular Economy Week under the theme “**Reconnecting to keep the tradition of cooperation in motion.**” The two-day online event brought together regional organizations and sustainability actors from across the Western Balkans, including **The Balkan Forum (Kosovo)**, **CIVIL (North Macedonia)**, **Build Green Group – BGG (Albania)**, and **COD Jajce (Bosnia and Herzegovina) Zero Waste Montenegro (Montenegro)**, to discuss cooperation, circular economy practices, and the importance of regional collaboration in advancing the green transition.

## Circular Economy Week 2026 – Day 1

The first day of the program was opened by Gazmend Berljajoli from The Balkan Forum and focused on innovation, sustainable design, and creative approaches to circularity. The keynote session was delivered by **Nikki Murseli, founder of DYVO Lab** and creator of the **Prishtina Sustainable Design Week Festival**, who shared insights from her professional journey, the development of the festival, and the role of sustainable design in shaping future communities.

The discussion highlighted the importance of creativity, innovation, and regional exchange in building more sustainable societies and creating practical solutions connected to circular economy principles.



*Day 1 of LogEx Circular Economy Week 2026*



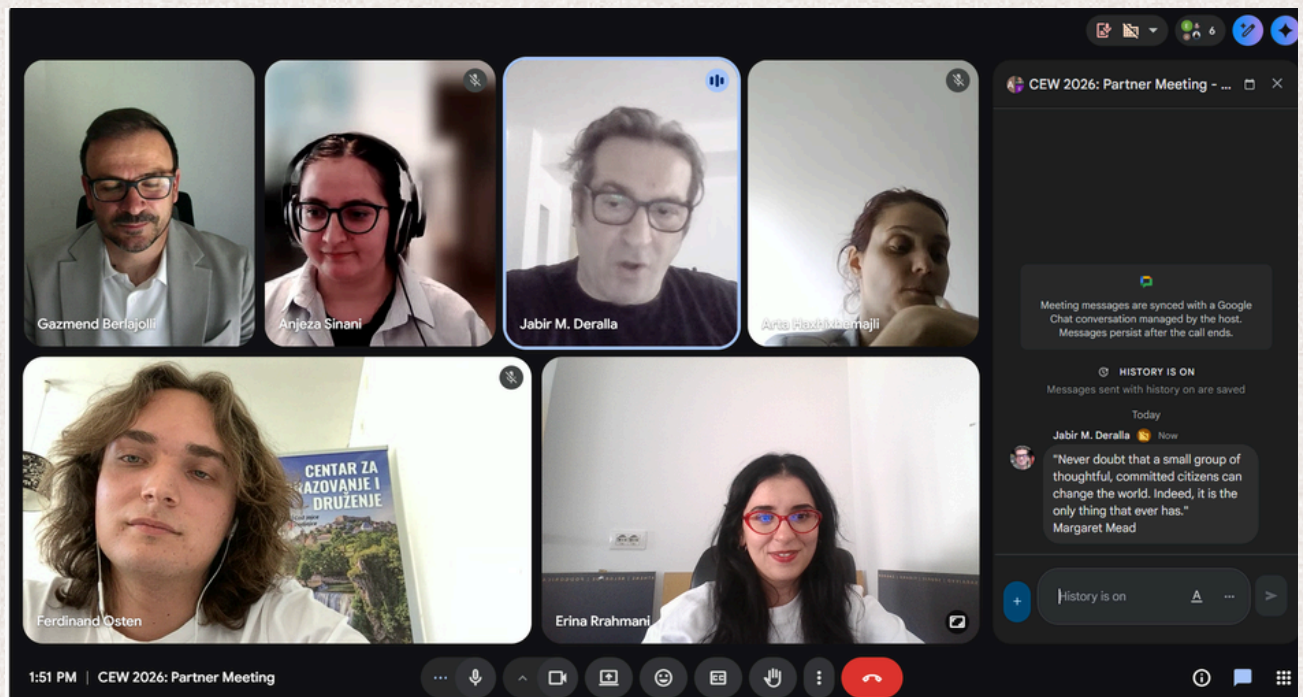
## Circular Economy Week 2026 – Day 2

The second day of Circular Economy Week, held on May 26, focused on partner updates, regional cooperation, and future planning within the LogEx community. Moderated by Erina Rrahmani from The Balkan Forum, the session provided an opportunity for partners to reflect on achievements, share national updates, and discuss future collaboration opportunities.

### Country Updates:

- **Kosovo:** The Balkan Forum highlighted the growth and achievements of the LogEx community, which has directly engaged more than 2,200 participants, indirectly reached over 1.8 million people, and implemented 53 activities across the Western Balkans. Members were encouraged to continue strengthening regional cooperation and local impact.
- **North Macedonia:** CIVIL presented recent achievements in reporting and public awareness related to sustainability and circular economy practices, while also outlining future plans and priorities.
- **Albania & Bosnia and Herzegovina:** Build Green Group (BGG) and COD Jajce shared key national milestones, ongoing activities, and upcoming environmental initiatives.

The event concluded with an open discussion among partners, reaffirming their shared commitment to bridging the skills gap, strengthening regional cooperation, and translating circular economy ideas and policies into practical local action across the region.



*Day 2 of LogEx Circular Economy Week 2026*



# Eco-Champions Recommendations and Online Petition

During May 2026, The Balkan Forum continued activities within the Eco-Champions initiative, focusing on community participation and environmental recommendations related to waste management and circular economy practices in Kosovo.

As part of the initiative, a **total of 120 participants** took part in the national voting process, helping identify and prioritize the **top 5 recommendations** out of **20 proposed waste management solutions**.

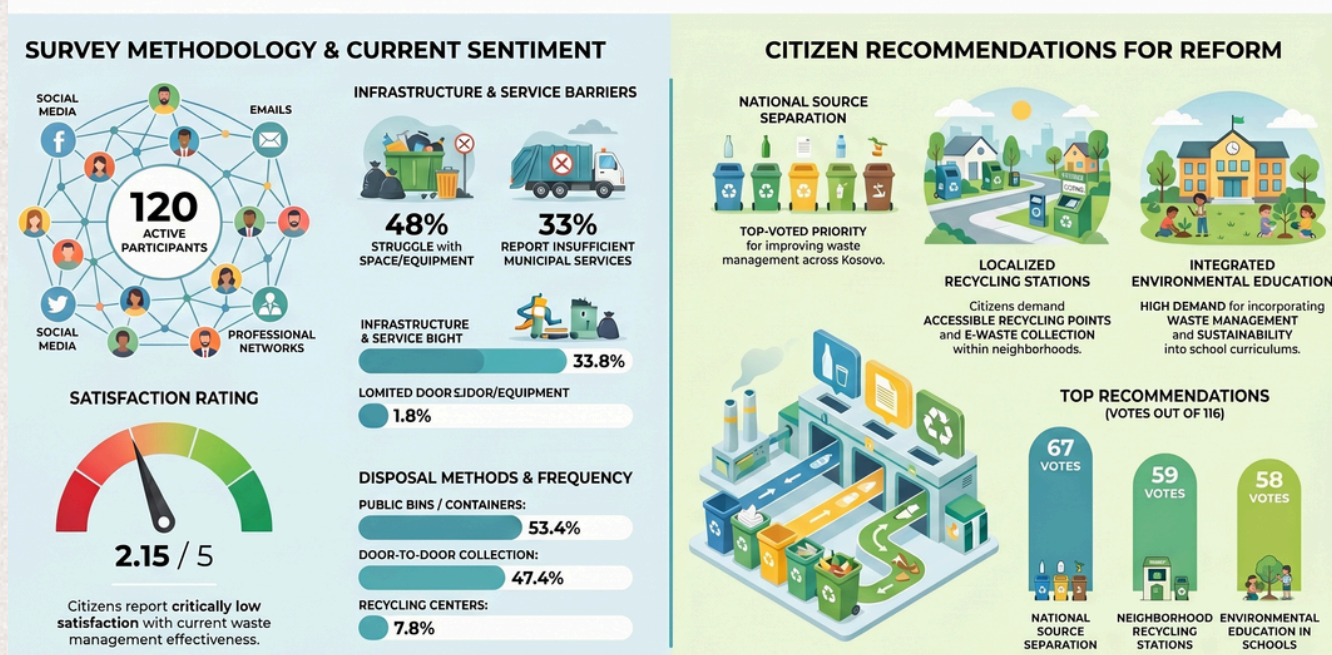
The results highlighted strong public support for:

1. **implementing waste separation at source at national level,**
2. **integrating environmental education into schools,**
3. **installing recycling stations in neighborhoods,**
4. **establishing financial incentives for recycling,**
5. **expanding waste collection services to rural areas.**

The survey also provided valuable insights into public perceptions and challenges related to waste management in Kosovo. Findings showed that insufficient municipal services remain one of the main concerns raised by participants, while the most requested improvement was the increase of recycling bins and collection points in public spaces.

These activities contributed to strengthening citizen participation and ensuring that community perspectives are reflected in future discussions on sustainable waste management practices

## **KOSOVO WASTE MANAGEMENT SURVEY: A Citizen-Driven Call for Change**



EcoChampions Survey results in pictures



# Eco-Champions Online Webinar: From Recommendations to Citizen Action

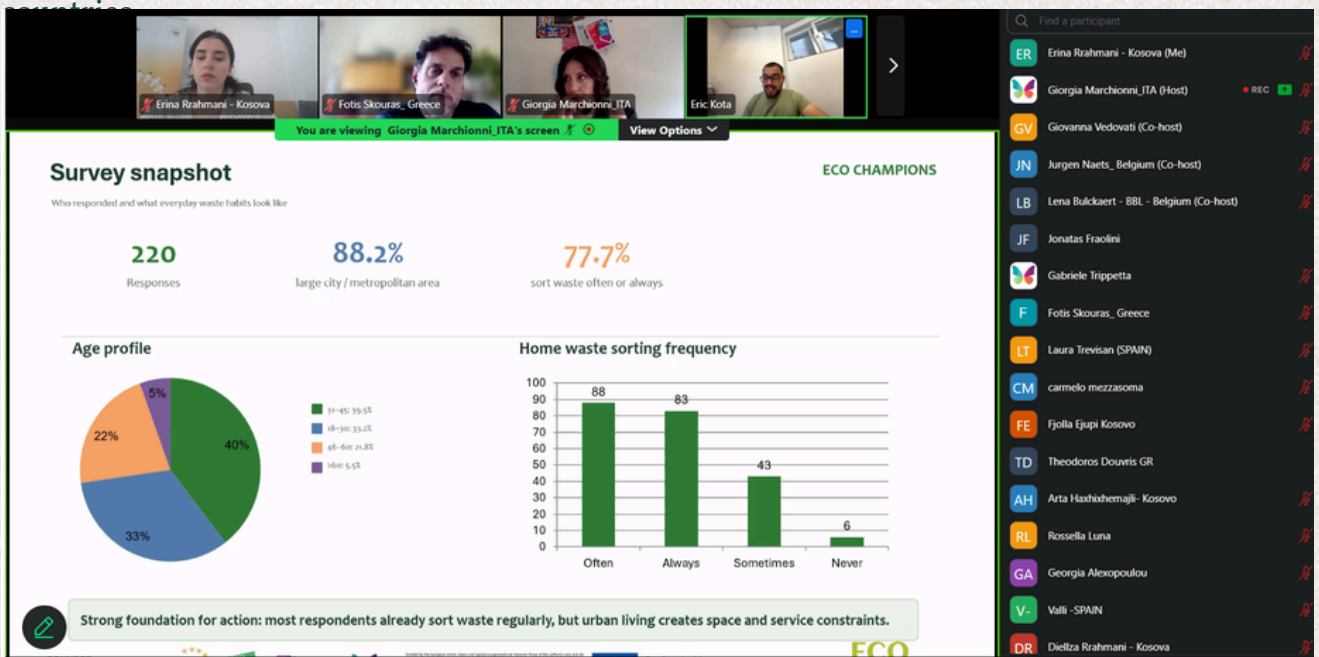
On **May 29, 2026**, the **Eco-Champions Online Webinar** brought together more than **450 participants** from partner countries to discuss citizen-driven solutions and the future of sustainable waste management. The event gathered project partners, stakeholders, and citizens to present project achievements, national results, and recommendations developed throughout the initiative.

The webinar included an overview of the Eco-Champions project objectives, main activities, and overall impact, followed by presentations from all partner countries, including Connect Brussels, The Balkan Forum, Co2gether, CRHACK LAB, and La Bien Pagá. Each partner presented their national results, highlighting citizens' priorities and key recommendations for improving waste management practices.

The Balkan Forum presented Kosovo's results, where 120 citizens participated in the voting process to select the **top 5 recommendations** out of 20 proposed solutions. The discussion highlighted the importance of public participation and ensuring that community perspectives are reflected in future environmental actions.

The event also featured a keynote presentation by **sustainability expert Lena Bulckaert**, who shared insights related to the project themes, reflected on the results achieved, and emphasized the importance of continued cooperation and citizen engagement in building more sustainable communities.

The webinar concluded with a summary of the project's impact and next steps toward strengthening civic participation and circular economy initiatives across participating



Online Webinar - May 29



# Public Engagement and Media Coverage

## INDEP Discussion Panel on Circular Economy and Waste Management

On May 7th, Gazmend Berljajolli, the Executive Director of The Balkan Forum, participated as panelist alongside representatives from Prefab Industry, contributing to the discussion on sustainability, governance, and circular economy practices in Kosovo.

This **discussion roundtable** was organized by the Institute for Development Policy (INDEP), in cooperation with Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung Kosovo (KAS), where the report “**From Waste Management toward Circular Value Chains – Policy, Investment, and Governance Priorities for Kosovo**” was presented.

The discussion brought together representatives from institutions, organizations, and relevant stakeholders working in the fields of sustainability, circular economy, and environmental governance. The event focused on identifying circular value chains that should be prioritized in Kosovo in order to achieve greater environmental and economic impact through targeted interventions.

Particular attention was given to packaging and plastic waste as one of the most urgent areas requiring action due to their significant presence in municipal waste streams and environmental pollution.



*INDEP Discussion Panel. Source: INDEP Facebook Page.*



## Eco Champions on Radio Dukagjini

On May 24, 2026, The Balkan Forum participated in the morning program “Mjellma e Mëngjesit” on Radio Dukagjini, hosted by journalist Mjellma Pallaska, to discuss the upcoming Eco-Champions webinar taking place on May 29 under the theme “From Waste to Local Change – How Communities Can Influence Local Policies.”

The **interview** focused on the importance of citizen participation in shaping local environmental policies and promoting more sustainable and circular ways of living. During the discussion, special attention was given to the role of communities, local cooperation, and practical initiatives in addressing environmental challenges and encouraging long-term sustainable change.

The webinar was also presented as a space where recommendations developed through citizen engagement and questionnaires in Belgium, Greece, Kosovo, Italy, and Spain would be shared and discussed. Additionally, the discussion highlighted the participation of Belgian expert Lena Bulckaert, who would provide practical examples and recommendations on how citizens can contribute to better waste management policies and sustainable living practices.

The media appearance contributed to increasing public awareness and outreach ahead of the webinar while encouraging broader public participation in discussions related to circular economy and local environmental action.

## Regional Media Coverage by CIVIL

The activities of the LogEx community and The Balkan Forum during the 2026 Circular Economy Week also received regional media coverage through CIVIL, a regional media and civil society organization based in North Macedonia focused on democracy, human rights, peacebuilding, and public engagement. highlighting the importance of regional cooperation and sustainability initiatives across the Western Balkans.

The article emphasized the role of the LogEx community in strengthening collaboration between organizations and partners from Kosovo, North Macedonia, Albania, and Bosnia and Herzegovina, while promoting circular economy practices, environmental awareness, and community-driven action.

The media coverage contributed to increasing the visibility of the initiative and further expanding public discussion around sustainability, circular economy policies, and regional cooperation in the Western Balkans.

**Article accessible here:** <https://shorturl.fm/j5dvx>



## Coming Up in June

### Macedonian Energy Forum 2026 - June 2, 2026

The Balkan Forum is invited to attend the MEF Energy Forum 2026: Advancing Energy Transition and Climate Resilience on the Road to COP31 organized on June 1-2 in Skopje, North Macedonia.

### Eco-Champions Final Event in Patras – 26 – 27 June 2026

**On June 26–27, 2026**, partners of the Eco-Champions project will gather in Patras, Greece, for the project's final event. Bringing Belgium, Greece, Kosovo, Italy, and Spain, the event will present key recommendations, recognize citizen and community engagement, and reflect on the project's impact.

The event will highlight the role of citizen participation in promoting sustainable waste management and circular economy practices, while fostering regional cooperation and knowledge exchange. It will also celebrate eco-citizens, organizations, and municipalities for their contributions to sustainability efforts.

As the concluding activity of the project, the gathering will mark the culmination of months of collaboration, community engagement, eco-challenges, recommendation voting, and cross-country cooperation.



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