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Closing the Loop – Nice to Meet You in Person!

15.12.2022 — Dimitra Panopoulou-Huovila



After almost three years since the PackAlliance project's physical kick-off meeting in Zaragoza, Spain, we were finally able to meet in person in Italy to close the loop and to proceed for the final stages of the project.

Online connection does not beat the human interaction

We have learnt that especially in international project work, meeting face to face is extremely important in growing confidence, trust and understanding as well as engagement of project partners both before and during the project. Meeting face to face is never restricted just for sharing information, which often happens perfectly fine online, but there is much more to it – deeper networking and building relationships, sharing ideas and views, and learning new which may even affect the project outcomes and achievements.

PackAlliance project for better and for worse

[PackAlliance](#) is an Erasmus+ KA programme funded project which aims at fostering the industrial and educational collaboration in the field of plastic packaging circularity. The

project started by a kick-off meeting in Zaragoza, Spain in the beginning of 2020 and for the moment we are finalising it.

Majority of the PackAlliance project lifetime was living with global crises. Like the rest of the world, we were not able to predict the changes to come in the beginning of 2020. We were, however, quite quickly adapting ourselves to the online mode to make things happen and were successfully able to create the PackAlliance pilot training “Specialist in the Circular Economy of Plastic Packaging.” As originally planned for its theoretical part, it was implemented online. On the other hand, the practical innovation part in collaboration with companies was also forced to be adapted into the online mode.

From the point of the project consortium, Covid-19 and world’s unstable situation were seen as limitations, especially when they were blocking the international student mobilities of the pilot programme. According to the feedback, the students appreciated their online innovation & development projects, but we believe that they would have gained much more of them by performing them face to face and in a foreign country and culture.

The entrepreneurial workshops and networking which were integral parts of the PackAlliance academia-industry collaboration were organised as online events. We see that they may have even increased the number of participants as an agile way to engage busy professionals from different companies and locations. This will be good practice in the future as well, without disparaging face-to-face meetings.

Closing the loop – gathering the project family together again

When we were able to travel to Italy for the final transnational meeting in October, all the project partners agreed that meeting face to face was welcomed and particularly important to strengthen the collaboration even during the last moments of the project. In addition to discussions and agreements on how to run the last miles of our project, we already achieved something unique to plastic packaging circular economy.

Read more about the project: <https://www.packall.eu/>

News article: [Circular economy shapes the future skills needed in plastic packaging industry](#)

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