

On the role of public engagement in implementation of waste management policies in Georgia according to an EU Association Agreement

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By signing the Association Agreement with the European Union, Georgia has made commitments, in addition to other areas, to harmonize waste management sector with the EU requirements. The paper dwells on the results of survey, which reflects the attitude of various interested parties toward the adoption of modern waste management approaches in Georgia, using an example of three large cities of Georgia.

An Association Agreement (AA) sets special requirements for Georgia in the field of environmental protection and, particularly, in the field of waste management. Waste is also seen as not only environmental, but socio-economic problem, which significantly affects the quality of life of the population in this country.

The law of Georgia “Waste Management Code”, which was enacted since 15 January, 2015, is aimed at establishing a legal framework for the implementation of such activities, which contribute to waste prevention, increased reuse of them, and processing them in environmentally safe manner. In subsequent years, the waste management sector of Georgia must be significantly changed. According to the commitments set out in the Association Agreement, the waste management system must be formed in the country, which must meet the EU requirements.

The National Waste Management Strategy makes clear that Georgia seeks to become the country oriented towards waste prevention and recycling.

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Supporting sustainable development of communities is impossible without solving the issues related to waste management. In general, the waste management policies are aimed at forming society oriented towards waste recycling. Society and individuals play an important role in waste management process.

The survey of different target groups was conducted in 2016 in three cities of Georgia: Tbilisi, Kutaisi and Batumi. The survey aimed at determining the situation existing in the process of fulfilling the European Union Association Agreement requirements and identifying needs of such target groups as municipalities, waste management municipal services, non-governmental organizations, universities, as well as at determining the population’s attitude to the implementation of modern waste management approaches.

The survey showed that 26% of respondents are well enough aware, and 23% are well aware of the European Union Association Agreement requirements regarding waste management, but 38% of them believe that are not well enough of this.

On the question on how compliance with the EU Association Agreement requirements regarding waste management sphere is carried out at the local and national levels, 13% responded that this compliance is carried out within timeframes, 52% of them believe that compliance is carried out partially, but 3% of them believe that it is carried out of timeframes.

89% of respondents believe that the population is ready partially for putting the EU Association Agreement requirements regarding waste management sphere into practice

(fig.1).

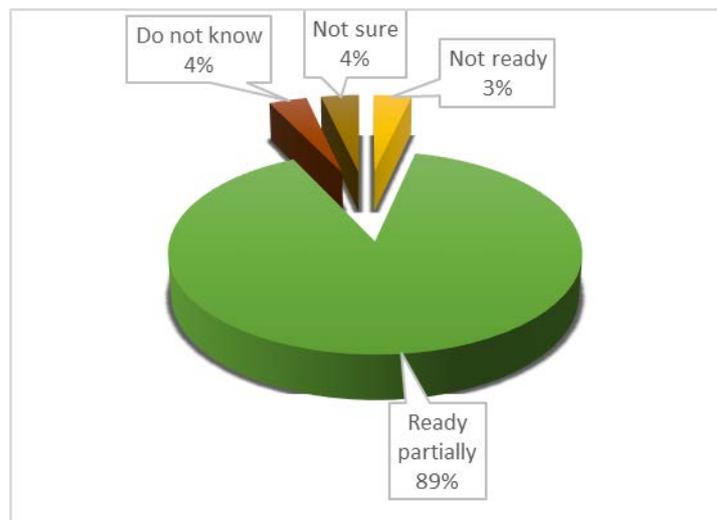


Fig.1

As is known, on 1 April, 2016, the National Waste Management Strategy and Action Plan were approved by the government of Georgia. The National Waste Management Strategy envisages the waste separation minimum indicators. In particular, in accordance with the Waste Management National Strategy, the following indicators are planned to achieve by 2010: paper – 30%; glass – 20%, metal – 70%, plastic – 30%.

So, 28% of respondents believe that it is realistic to achieve these indicators, but 55% of them think that it would be difficult to achieve these indicators (fig.2).

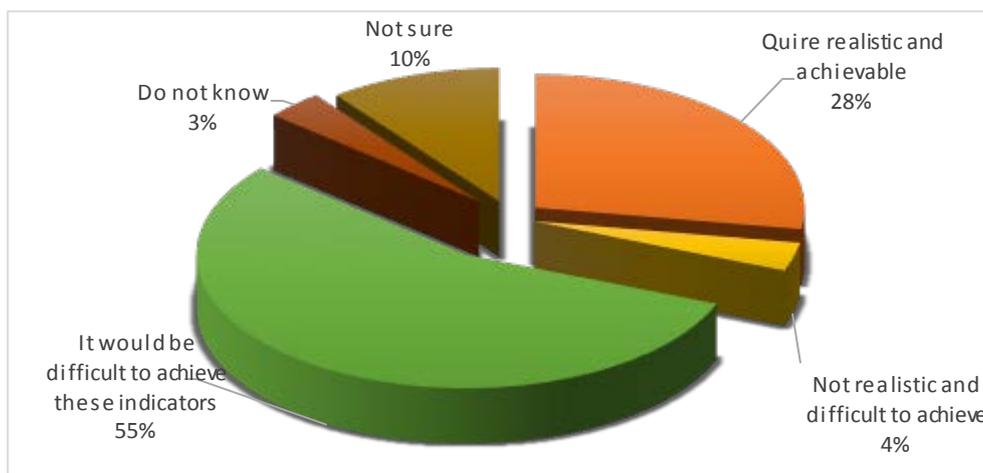


Fig.2

According to the National Waste Management Strategy, the municipalities have to start the meeting the commitments of implementing the waste separation practices since 2019. In this regard, 14% of respondents believe that the municipalities are ready to meet these commitments, but 39% of them think that the municipalities have no relevant experience, and only 18% of them believe that they are not ready for this (fig.3).

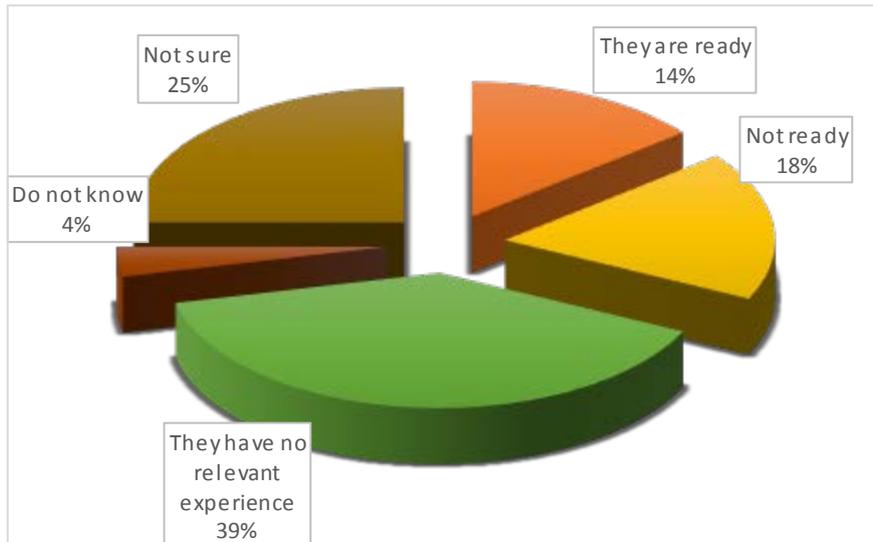


Fig.3

On the question on how extensively will the Association Agreement contribute to the improvement and development of waste management systems, 90% responded that it will improve significantly.

74% of respondents express their readiness to be actively involved in waste separation, but 13% don't really know yet what will they do, and 13% of them are going to take part from time to time (fig.4).

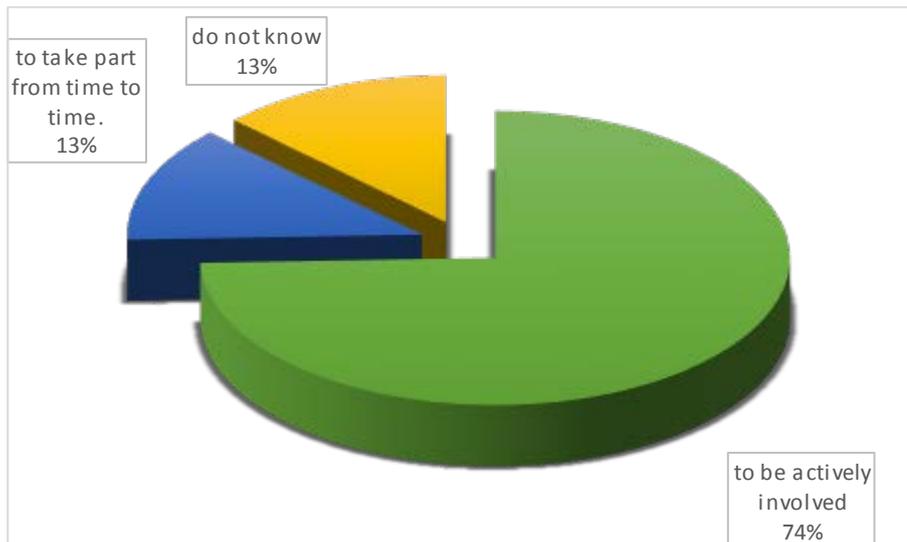


Fig.4

The best convenient approaches to waste separation for respondents are as follows:

- Separation at home conditions and placing of sorted waste in the specially-designed containers (68%).
- Placing of mixed ((unsorted) waste in a general container with subsequent sorting of them in the sorting centers (20,7%).
- Sorted waste delivery to a collection center with receipt of the relevant payment (14,2%).

- Producing compost from organic waste at home conditions, and placing other waste in a general container (4%).

96% of respondents believe that waste separation and recycling will contribute to the environment protection and sustainable development.

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