

Study of sociological and behavioural factors
influencing public littering and illegal dumping
EGERIE study - March 2019

1. Introduction

Be WaPP commissioned EGÉRIE RESEARCH to carry out a sociological, psychological and behavioural study in order to:

- understand the causes of littering and illegal dumping and to determine the profile of those responsible for these acts;
- identify ways and means of achieving a change in behaviour to reduce public littering and illegal dumping.

The assignment included:

- a literature review on the factors influencing uncivil behaviour, the establishment of typical profiles, etc.;
- an analysis of the problem by citizens responsible for uncivil acts (littering - including a point on the problem of cigarette butts - and illegal dumping);
- a similar analysis, but this time from the perspective of law enforcement experts and professionals.

2. Methodology

Firstly, a literature review was performed to gather sources written by both national and international authors dealing with the motivational, sociological and behavioural factors influencing public littering and illegal dumping.

In a second phase, a qualitative study was conducted with the aim of understanding and explaining in depth the behaviour of the perpetrators of acts of public littering and illegal dumping. The study was carried out with two target groups: experts on the one hand, and citizens who commit acts of incivility on the other.

For the first target group, 21 experts and professionals (advisor, inspector general, regional director, environmental expert, director of ecology, etc.) from throughout Wallonia were interviewed individually (face to face or by telephone).

For the second target group, a panel of citizens aged between 18 and 65 years (104 people) who were perpetrators of acts of incivility participated in focus groups organised in different

regions of Wallonia. These individuals were divided into 13 groups. Each group of 8 people spoke about one type of waste (litter, illegal dumping and cigarette butts). Particular attention was paid to ensuring that each group had a perfect mix of age, gender, socio-economic status and family or living situation.

Prior to the group discussions, an initial telephone contact was made with each citizen on the panel to assess their degree of concern about the problem, to gather elements of personal experience (concrete examples of acts of littering and illegal dumping committed, causes and motivations, situations and/or circumstances, etc.) and to identify initial hypotheses as to their motivations for their acts of incivility.

Group discussion is a method which encourages the dynamic exchange and production of ideas. This method allows the different points of view to be compared, enriches the discourse of each person thanks to the group dynamic (each "insight" generates another), and allows solutions and courses of action to be identified together in order to bring about a change in behaviour which will reduce public littering and illegal dumping.

The two methods of telephone contacts and group meetings are used in a complementary way, since they enable a balance between the information collected individually and collectively. The process also allows hypotheses to be validated or invalidated and personal experience to be used as a "stimulus" in the groups to enrich the discussion and the possible solutions.

3. General findings

In terms of the literature review, although littering and illegal dumping is certainly an issue of concern in our societies, the analysis of the sources highlights a lack of precise literature on the subject. Therefore, most of the information collected addresses the two main research themes (littering and illegal dumping) without making a clear distinction between them.

Moreover, most of the reference sources state that solutions are being put in place to deal with public littering and illegal dumping and mention the developed communication actions without really trying to identify the sociological and behavioural factors which motivate acts of incivility.

The interviews with experts showed that although no one is supposed to be unaware of the law, its application today varies from one municipality to another. In general, individuals are guided more by their own personal vision of public space than by a civic desire to know the law and, above all, to apply it.

However, experts believe that when public authorities try to introduce new collection locations or approaches (e.g. underground bottle banks, bins with integrated ashtrays in shopping streets or regularly-emptied public bins), this generates new, more civic-minded behaviour from the population. This confirms that when governments send a signal of change, citizens follow.

Today's society is going through a period of great upheaval, with on the one hand a form of extreme individualisation of our society and on the other an increasingly blurred vision of each individual's civic commitments and the rights and duties associated with them.

For individuals, the public space has often become a “non-place”, a space where responsibility has become that of the public authorities, and where the individual is limited to retaining the profile of “consumer user”.

The factors which explain this attitude can be analysed around the border which has been created between the 'intimate' and the 'extimate'. Intimacy is the private sphere, where rules, rights and duties are clear and binding. In contrast, the extimate is defined as the 'non-intimate', the place outside the home which resembles an uninvolved place where management is delegated to others and where rules and laws have become blurred.

The starting point for behaviour which leads to the dumping of waste in public spaces is as much psychological and sociological as it is environmental: it is an issue which is closely linked to a model of society in which consumption is a powerful driver of identity.

However, the current consumption model is beginning to be questioned and is moving towards a model where "consuming is no longer really existing" and where individuals are asking many questions about the quality of their food and the waste associated with their consumption.

As regards locations for waste dumping, experts confirm that the first act of dumping often leads to subsequent and legitimate ones. They point to the emergence of reprehensible conduct in cross-border areas where the rules may be different (e.g. France/Belgium) and where neighbouring populations come to dump their waste, in places considered as facilitating the dumping and managed by the public authorities (bus stop bins, bottle banks or clothes bins, the outskirts of stations etc.).

4. Who are the uncivic-minded and what motivates them?

With regard to perpetrators of uncivil acts, there is no typical profile in the eyes of the professionals interviewed, but rather a multitude of both intrinsic and extrinsic factors (motivational register, circumstances, life situations, location profiles, etc.) should be taken into account as sources of explanation.

According to the experts and specifically inspectors, the main reasons for abandoning waste of any kind are laziness, denial of the act itself, accidental loss of waste, the budgets associated with the purchase of refuse bags, and lack of understanding of the rules and the opening hours of the recycling centres, which do not correspond to the requirements of citizens.

Thus, even if it is necessary to communicate to them, it seems impossible to the experts we met to address the same message to all the uncivic-minded.

In this context, it was nevertheless possible to identify common motivational and behavioural patterns, regardless of the type of waste involved.

The advantage of this motivational profile approach is that it provides answers and solutions which take into account both the triggers and the obstacles to these acts of incivility, both globally and specifically, by sub-segment or area investigated (littering/illegal dumping). This methodology should ultimately identify potential levers for behaviour change.

Five motivational profiles were identified:

1. **The blind**, defined as the basic profile of the uncivic-minded individual in terms of littering of the public space. Wearing blinkers, they do not see themselves as at fault except when they are regularly confronted with the consequences of their actions.

Their motto: "I didn't think it was a problem"

If they are subject to a sanction, their reaction is "I don't believe it", because they don't realize that they are at fault and that their act has consequences, and they don't know that there are applicable sanctions - their first reaction is astonishment.

2. **The semi-guilty**, guided by a feeling of powerlessness in the face of their difficulties in managing their waste, are ready to change because their guilt can be a driving force for changing their behaviour.

Their motto: "I couldn't do it any other way"

If they are subject to a sanction, their response will be "It's unfair", because they think they have already done all that they can.

3. **The altruist**, a convinced ecologist, consider themselves a benefactor, acting with generosity and respect for others and nature. We have to change their beliefs.

Their motto: "I think that I'm doing good"

If they are subject to a sanction, they just can't believe it - "It's impossible!", because they think that they are in the right.

4. **The challenger**, an impertinent individual, wants to "outsmart" the system. A real dialogue and collaboration must be initiated between them and the legal authorities to cause them to transform their negative dynamics into a positive, more committed and civic-minded perspective.

Their motto: "What fun!"

If they are subject to a sanction, they will react with the attitude that "I played and I lost", because they believe in a "not seen, not caught" dynamic.

5. **The nihilist**, guided by a feeling of revolt against the pressure and violence of the social system. Anger is their driving force. This profile is (today) difficult to engage in behavioural change. They need to be reminded of the rules and be included in a citizenship contract, with sanctions as a complementary solution.

Their motto: "*What is it this time?*"

If they are subject to a sanction, they will complain of the injustice of society and the rules, "*I've been proven right!*"

What emerges from the discourse of the people we met is the impression that today they alone bear the responsibility for waste after its use or consumption. They point to the explosion of invitations to consume (mobile/internet/etc.) along with the simultaneous impression that the response of the public authorities is incomplete or even absent.

Indeed, the public dustbin is recognised as the standard of use for the respect of cleanliness, but it becomes the key symbol of the lack of consideration towards them and the centre of all their grievances (not enough of them, always full, badly located, badly placed, etc.).

It seems normal or important to the uncivic-minded that there should be a sharing of responsibility for the management of consumer waste. For them, the public authority is responsible for the public space and therefore for maintaining cleanliness, i.e. the cleaning of the public space in itself, but also for the quality of the urban design.

Manufacturing companies (packaging, tobacco, etc.), supermarkets and all distribution and consumption sites are also singled out because the citizen is deemed to be the co-author or co-responsible for the management of the waste they produce indirectly through the consumption of products marketed by companies.

Thus, the perpetrators of littering and dumping recognise the illicit nature of their actions, but all refuse to be the "the mugs who pay for it", the sole culprits of a system of consumer society which naturally generates an excess of waste.

In the same logic, illegal dumping result from a difficulty in managing the overabundance of objects in the private space.

5. Litterers (including cigarette butts)

The discourse on 'littering' is common to all uncivic-minded individuals who litter and has a very strong 'me-first' psychological dimension. They are egocentric and put their personal comfort before anything else. Thus, minor personal litter is regarded as "everyday junk" to be disposed of without a second thought.

It is also a reflection of the specific relationship which these people have with cleanliness: they throw it away because, in a way, "carrying it" is disturbing to them. The perpetrator of acts of incivility prefers to get rid of their waste because they want to keep their pockets empty and their car clean and tidy.

The car is an 'intimate' place *par excellence*, reinforcing the perception of the car's exterior as 'extimate'. It is an extension of the self and is a more or less conscious reflection of one's identity. This leads to a particular attention to the cleanliness of this private space, which for some justifies their uncivil acts of throwing waste out of the vehicle.

Throwing away becomes a commonplace act. Waste is thus part of a consumption cycle in which its abandonment is the natural outcome and the standard solution (exacerbated by new "on the go" consumption patterns). Getting rid of it/throwing it away becomes a consequence associated with a consumption ritual according to which "we throw away as we consume".

It is a sort of thoughtless act, a "reflex" directly linked to a consumer reflex gesture without regard for the rules of good manners. Waste has no identity of its own and is considered a "non-object".

However, it would be possible to raise awareness of a culture of overconsumption and ephemeral pleasure as a negative mirror of society. There is a potential to change consumer and therefore "throwaway" behaviour, but this gaining of awareness will require support through education and promotion. In any case, a debate on the necessary sharing of responsibilities between the public authorities, the private sector and consumers cannot be avoided.

Although half of the citizens' panel said they were not aware of the seriousness of their actions or their impact, they all knew that littering was an act of incivility. As this type of incivility concerns the rules of good manners and the relationship with people (symbolic link to the cleaning staff), the fact of being at the origin of littering triggers a certain unease which is not particularly present in the case of illegal dumping.

6. The perpetrators of illegal dumping

Illegal dumping behaviour is a deliberate and planned act, as it involves circumventing the regulations in place. This implies the development of more or less developed strategies and makes the scenario of total recklessness more difficult. It requires the development of a real argument as to the reasons for the act.

Many uncivic-minded individuals insist that their first step was to follow the regulatory and institutional procedures for waste management, but when they were confronted with difficulties (solutions were deemed insufficient or too costly and experienced as constraints [time/organisation, etc.]), they opted for the easier and faster solution of illegal dumping.

Good behaviour requires energy along with financial, physical and organisational efforts. Whatever the context, the uncivic-minded always express many strong emotions in their story, and these emotions evolve in the different stages of the process, which we can define in 3 steps: BEFORE - DURING - AFTER.

The "BEFORE" is anger and/or helplessness. For the majority of the uncivic-minded, the backdrop of their discourse is woven by very negative feelings of anger, revolt and revenge, stemming from negative experiences with the legal system in place.

Confronted with what they feel is a form of disregard/non-respect for them and their efforts, the uncivic-minded express a very strong feeling of anger, rage or powerlessness (for example: the functioning of the recycling parks [unsuitable opening hours] and the lack of empathy of the reception staff, the price to be paid to get rid of their waste correctly, etc.). In this state of mind, they legitimise their actions with the justification that they have no other possible and realistic solutions available to get rid of their waste.

It should be noted that all these negative feelings can be exacerbated by a distressing life situation which leads to this type of behaviour: fire or flooding of one's home, death of a relative and emptying of one's home, arduous work, etc.

The "DURING" corresponds to the excitement or fear of "not seen, not caught ". For many, being the perpetrator of illegal dumping is a source of great excitement, since there is usually an awareness of the existence of a legal framework. The fear of being caught is a real factor of the act, and some people talk about it as a form of excitement to transgress a ban, to play with fire (the "outlaw" kick). However, this fear of being caught is nevertheless be a brake on the less adventurous profile of the uncivic-minded.

The 'AFTER' is the pleasure of having outsmarted the system, with the mitigated feeling of having been forced to do so. On the one hand, there is a sense of relief at having succeeded in getting rid of such "bulky" waste, and on the other hand, there is a form of pride at having managed to save money and outsmart the system. A certain amount of guilt may appear when the consequences of the actions committed are taken into account, but this is quickly evacuated given the feeling of anger and/or powerlessness and the tendency to blame the system. On the other hand, there is no guilt when the uncivic-minded person is in revolt against the system or when they feel that they are doing a good thing for others, for example, by leaving a magazine on the pavement which can be picked up by someone else.

Moreover, even if there are structural waste management solutions, such as recycling parks, bottle banks, door-to-door waste collection, etc., they may be considered by some as disconnected from their real needs. However, we note the willingness of the public authorities

to propose new solutions such as bulky items collections on request, or recycling centres. Nevertheless, these solutions are still largely unknown to many of the respondents.

There is also often a clear distinction in the eyes of the uncivic-minded between breaking a rule and harming the environment. For some, the perception of the seriousness of their actions will often be related to the ecological impact and not to the impact of waste regulation and the related sanction.

There are areas which are more specifically “suitable” for abandonment in the public space. Indeed, the degraded state of certain areas of the city is often cited as an excuse for adding waste to existing environmental uncleanliness or degradation. The city is a space which is often perceived as dirty and polluted, so the uncivic-minded are less hesitant to dispose of their waste.

Certain areas dedicated to waste collection (recycling parks, bottle banks etc.) can also pose problems. These areas are managed by the public authorities and it therefore seems normal for the uncivic-minded to litter in front of, beside and around these areas.

Vacant lots, country roadsides and isolated areas are also places where uncivil behaviour can occur. These are lifeless places which generate a sense of 'quasi- entitlement' to illegal dumping and a shared sense that illegal dumping does not harm people or nature.

Whereas for littering there is no typical profile of perpetrators of uncivil acts in terms of age, gender, or life situation, the same cannot be said for the perpetrators of illegal dumping. There are real specificities associated with their behaviour:

- age;
- gender;
- type of housing (urban versus rural);
- social situation.

a) age:

Beliefs and desires change depending on age. For example, older people think that nature is still capable of "absorbing" waste, whereas young people see alternative solutions arising from the circular economy (sharing, reuse, etc.).

Young people are more likely to consider second-hand sales before throwing away their waste. Young adults are much more likely to shop online. They sometimes end up with waste on their hands, as it is not always possible to return old, defective items, or where there is over-packaging due to transport. This is different from buying through traditional channels.

Older people's behaviour is marked by the habits of the past (e.g. being able to burn their rubbish at the bottom of the garden like they used to do). According to them, everything has

become much stricter and more restrictive, and it is also difficult for them to move bulky items.

b) gender (male/female)

Gender is a vector of inequality in waste management. Women (especially single women) have difficulty properly managing heavy waste, especially large bulky items. They also complain of the atmosphere of the recycling parks, which is considered to be very masculine and unwelcoming.

c) type of housing (urban versus rural)

The type of housing is an important element in waste management. In rural areas, bad habits persist (burning, burying, etc.).

In addition, other causes of uncivil behaviour are present. Thus, disparities related to storage facilities (e.g. size of cellars/ presence of an attic/spaces at the end of the garden etc.) and travel (e.g. inhabitants of urban municipalities do not always have a car) can influence the act of waste disposal.

In urban and peri-urban areas, the act of illegal dumping is much more 'considered'. Care must be taken to act as discreetly as possible, "under cover of darkness". In the countryside, on the contrary, there are more opportunities to dispose of waste easily, with less social control and without much thought.

d) social situation

The social situation also plays a role, more specifically in situations of precariousness and when there is a major life change which results in a significant loss of anchor points (divorce, job loss, arrival of a child, stepfamily, etc.).

The act of illegal dumping is then often narrated as a causal link with the individual's social situation and is perceived as the only possible solution to keep one's head above water, especially from a financial point of view. It should be noted that for a fringe section of the poor population, waste sorting and management is not a "mastered practice" and they are often not very proud of this.

Those who not experiencing major financial difficulties are guided by a feeling of injustice that they have to pay far too much for waste management. Their littering behaviour is thus more of a "claim" than a real financial problem of daily life.

7. Types of litter

The study identified five types of litter in the eyes of those interviewed:

1. "Biodegradables":

This wastes is considered to be "forgivable", with a level of impact or severity close to zero, as it will "naturally" disappear. Biodegradable waste is designed to be thrown away or have thrown away, and in the eyes of those interviewed it is ecological waste *par excellence*.

For the respondents, this category includes:

- raw unprocessed products coming from nature and returning to nature (peels/cores/fruits/ pistachio shells/etc.) ;
- "small" papers (small papers/ parking tickets/ till receipts/ tissues etc.). Sometimes "small sweet wrappers" are included in this category, as the small size of the product and its waste justifies the minimising of the act of disposal;
- food scraps from on-the-go consumption (picnics/ snacks/ leftover sandwiches/etc.) with a lack of clarity on whether their packaging is included in this biodegradable category: sometimes yes/ sometimes no);
- articles with biodegradable labels (nappies/packaging from organic products, etc.). Particular attention should be given to this type of waste, for which the "ecological" label strongly exonerates the act of disposal. Thus, the arrival of so-called "biodegradable" cutlery/straw/plates/cups "validates" the fact that uncivic-minded people continue to litter.

2. Waste "by force of habit"

This is waste with a ritualistic, mechanical but also discrete consumption characteristic, which facilitates the speed of its abandonment. They include chewing gum and cigarette butts, which have some similarities in terms of their consumption mechanism. For the latter, uncivic-minded people by habit make them disappear quickly by counting on their disappearance via the sewers.

For smokers, the cigarette butt is considered to be both the most discreet and the least manageable piece of waste. It is unthinkable to keep it on your person, so smokers always have to get rid of it quickly or in a hurry.

Throwing away a cigarette butt is a natural part of smoking, less "condemned" than the act of smoking itself. The ban on smoking in many places increases outdoor consumption and clearly influences street litter, with the feeling that few dedicated solutions are provided.

For smokers, the car is a space which facilitates the impulsive elimination of cigarette butts (absence of an ashtray/discomfort of the smell, impossibility of extinguishing and therefore danger of retaining the butt, etc.). The lack of acceptable solutions to retain them justifies the obligation to dispose of them, leading *in extenso* to a lack of guilt.

3. Waste "from over-packaging"

This includes single-portion packaging, bags of sweets or candy bars, drive-through waste, lunch packaging (cardboard boxes/cups/cutlery/leftover pre-packaged salad etc.).

Consumers experience two feelings:

- an injustice: a feeling of unshared responsibility and injustice in that the disposal of packaging waste is now the sole responsibility of consumers;
- discomfort: the lack of rubbish bins near the places where people consume "on the go" and the places where these drinks are sold accentuates a feeling of lack of attention to the customer's comfort and does not encourage the will to change behaviour.

4. Waste which is "publicised and singled out"

Plastic bottles and metal cans etc. constitute waste which has become the focus of ecology and the environmental cause (damage to the sea/animals, etc.) with extensive media coverage of the seriousness of the effects of this type of waste.

5. "Small accumulated waste": litter or illegal dumping?

Anything which persists in a pocket or bag which embarrasses the owner and hinders personal comfort. This is waste which needs to be removed, to make room or to clean (all types of packaging waste, tissues, etc. but also batteries, bank statements, envelopes, the contents of the car ashtray, anything lying around in the car which disturbs the driver or their passengers, etc.).

This waste is disposed of discreetly. This act is often similar to illegal dumping, as it is often motivated by an intention to dispose of the waste. It is therefore a conscious and premeditated act.

8. Types of illegal dumping

There are six main categories of illegal dumping in the eyes of the people we met:

1. "Everyday" household waste

This is a form of convenience, where public bins become extensions of domestic bins and the uncivic-minded person has little or no guilt regarding their actions. This is often recurring waste in terms of frequency, often with the aim of reducing the cost of the bin (and avoiding unpleasant odours), such as cat litter, coffee capsules, baby nappies, mussel shells, fish entrails or simply standard everyday waste.

2. "Biodegradable" waste

This waste has a certain 'naturalness' which makes the uncivic-minded feel less guilty. This category includes biodegradable cat litter, garden/orchard waste, etc., and for some, wooden furniture, which is a natural material. There is a tendency to throw it away without guilt, in the belief that it will "be absorbed by nature".

3. 'Toxic' waste

This category generates more attention due to the consequences and risks involved (for oneself and for others). A lack of knowledge of environmental impacts justifies a certain "laissez-faire" attitude! This includes paint, waste oil, batteries, light bulbs, chemicals, asbestos, etc.

One of the reasons why this type of waste is also dumped is that you have to accumulate several items before you can dispose of them, which leads to them being thrown out in the normal dustbin (batteries, light bulbs) or being disposed of by dumping them without any further consideration in waterways, a vacant plot or on the roadside, etc.

4. "Bulky items" from the house/closet

These are objects that have reached the end of their lifespan and no longer meet their needs, and the problem is often their size. This category includes toys, VHS tapes, DVDs, CDs, crockery, hangers, clothes, decorative items, small lamps, vases, etc.

Their degree of wear and tear is one of the first criteria which will determine their disposal:

- if the object is still in good condition: it is either put on the pavement with a "free to take" sign, resold or given away. This is seen as a positive gesture, and in this context no one imagines that it is forbidden to dispose of bulky items in this manner;
- if the object is unusable: it is disposed of in the normal dustbin if it is not too bulky or heavy. Larger items of waste are dumped in isolated locations.

5. Small electric appliances

These are objects which tend to end up in the traditional dustbin, such as shavers, lamps, irons, hoovers, coffee makers, etc. There is not always a clear understanding of the rules for dealing with this type of electronic waste.

For devices which are sensitive in terms of data confidentiality (mobile phones, computers, etc.), the need to guarantee confidentiality when they are legally disposed of is often mentioned, which leads to keeping them at home for security or disposing of them in such a way that they can no longer be traced, such as dumping them in water.

6. (Very) "bulky" waste

This is waste which requires a lot of effort, such as large household appliances (washing machine, fridge, etc.), furniture (sofa, shower cubicle, etc.), construction/renovation/worksite waste, tyres, etc.

The size and/or weight of the waste makes it difficult and awkward to handle, and so people mentioned the need for a trailer and assistance in lifting and transporting it. In their view, the practical and logistical difficulties may explain deviant behaviour leading to the abandonment of such waste outside.

9. What are the barriers to uncivil behaviour?

9.1. Littering (including cigarette butts)

Overall, there are few barriers associated with the attitude of the perpetrator, since for them the disposal of the waste results from a sense of normality. However, there are places and spaces where it is not possible to act discreetly, and this can curb uncivil acts. The same applies to all places which are known for or symbolise social well-being or status and which force people to respect the rules of good manners (for example, clean upmarket neighbourhoods where it is perceived that cleaning has just taken place, etc.).

In addition, the confrontation of the uncivic-minded with the perception of children can be a hindrance, causing a feeling of embarrassment. The uncivic-minded do not want to take on the role of the person who does not set a good example: cleanliness then becomes a basic educational criterion, a rule, and it takes its place in the values of family education. The presence of children thus creates a sense of discomfort and even shame. Spaces dedicated to children (playgrounds/beach/park, etc.) are thus spaces which possess a moral "brake" (but which nonetheless does not prevent waste!).

The presence of the public authority can also impede uncivil acts. A certain fear of the police (more than of the cleaners) seems to confirm that deep down, the uncivic-minded recognise the reprehensible nature of their actions. Another obstacle may arise in the presence of cleaning staff, who remind the uncivic-minded of the disrespectful nature of their behaviour in the context of "good manners".

Moreover, the presence of witnesses discourages the act of littering. The choice of dumping small articles of waste is thus made according to who is in the vicinity. The consumption environment will particularly influence the behaviour of the uncivic-minded, especially smokers, who will more willingly throw their cigarette butts on the ground in front of other smokers.

9.2. Illegal dumping

For illegal dumping, various factors such as the cleanliness of the site can curb the behaviour of the uncivic-minded. Indeed, the uncivic-minded are uncomfortable with being the first person to soil a location. The social gaze and embarrassment of being seen can also be a deterrent to disposing of waste, since the uncivic-minded seek discretion when disposing of waste, for fear of being singled out and criticised.

Fear of punishment also leads to the same need for discretion and anonymity, but this time in relation to the police.

Children and their view of this type of behaviour are once again an important element here. For the uncivic-minded, it is important to avoid committing their 'misdeed' when children are around for fear of setting a bad example and of facing their disapproval. Indeed, children are generally well aware of the uncivic acts to avoid and their consequences through school, youth movements, etc. The guilt of leaving a planet in bad shape for children exists particularly among parents and grandparents.

However, it would seem that financial penalties are mainly an incentive for the uncivic-minded to be cautious and use cunning. In fact, according to them, the threat of punishing deviant behaviour is the only response of the public authorities to waste management which is perceived as 'problematic'.

The majority of the people we met had heard of the existence of a sanction for illegal dumping. However, the information is often quite unclear, and they tell themselves that with a little caution and strategy they won't be caught. Nevertheless, the existence of a legal framework and possible sanctions hinders some people, who are indeed afraid of being caught.

The precise amount of the sanctions is generally unknown and seems to have a different impact on each person; either there is a fear of the sanction, regardless of its amount, or the risk plays a role if it is considered to be minimal (little chance of being caught) or calculated (calculation of the savings obtained thanks to the illegal dumping).

The repressive dimension of the fine is strongly criticised when it is part of a context of system failure in which the citizen is powerless and where it is therefore experienced as a real injustice (see for example when glass/clothing bins or recycling bins are full or inaccessible).

This repressive dimension is also strongly criticised when it is experienced as a social injustice, with financial consequences which are much more burdensome for the most vulnerable, poorer people than for others.

While the imposition of a sanction certainly plays a role in limiting dumping for some users, it is nevertheless important to contextualise the approach by associating the consequences of this type of uncivil behaviour with this decision.

10. How can the fight against littering in public spaces gain ground?

There is no single solution, but a range of actions can be developed together to help the uncivic-minded change their behaviour. This change is all the more difficult because the uncivil act of littering is deeply rooted in habits, like a reflex.

Moreover, implementing behavioural change is a long-term process. Various studies show that a period of at least 10 years is necessary.

It is important to **return value to public space** to allow people to "re-appropriate" them and thus move from being "throwaway consumers" to being more attentive and respectful "responsible citizens".

All the reflection on the theme of "cleanliness and public spaces" must have the aim of having these spaces appropriated by the users, with an impact on the quality of life in the locations so that they can experience them as places where they feel safe, respected, comfortable and free. Re-appropriating a neighbourhood or a street leads to a feeling of well-being and of harmonious living together and permits a form of responsibility for this space.

The transformation of the dynamics associating individuals, waste and public space must involve prevention actions (informing, educating and using the social gaze as a dissuasive force) and repressive actions, while not neglecting the strength of valuing positive acts, with the objective being to accompany change and reintroduce the rules of proper use of public space.

This transformation can only be achieved through a new dynamic of shared responsibility between stakeholders: citizens, public authorities, the business community and trade. In this context, Be WaPP has a crucial role to play as a catalyst for change.

Enforcing sanctions and making them credible is one of the fundamental bases of the fight against littering and illegal dumping. It is important to remember the regulations in force and the financial penalties for these acts of incivility. While no one is supposed to be ignorant of the law (and the price of breaking it), it remains unclear for many people.

The feeling of impunity with the idea that the risk is a remote one must be overcome. At present, sanctions are perceived as being illogical and unrelated (from simple warnings to fines ranging from €50 to €350 or more). This situation raises questions about the effectiveness and consistency of the legal framework.

Implementing sanctions would counter the widespread feeling of impunity which discourages "making the effort". The reality of the sanctions will slow down some of the uncivic-minded, especially as the fear of being caught increases.

On the other hand, pressure should be maintained to avoid a return to 'bad' reflex habits and to reactivate the prevailing feeling that the risk of being caught remains low.

It is therefore important to increase the effectiveness of the sanction when there is a flagrant case of incivility, with the possibility of imposing an immediate punishment or a delayed but more severe punishment.

However, these sanctions will remain incomprehensible if they are not accompanied by informative guidance and awareness-raising. It is important that the individual being punished learns the consequences of their actions.

Another way of applying sanctions is to offer **community service or alternative sentences**. This is a way of giving meaning to the act of reparation.

Indeed, the alternative sanction (such as participation in a waste collection) was well received by the people interviewed during the roundtables, because it addresses two issues: civic-mindedness and shame. Picking up litter on the ground means, on the one hand, being singled out and, on the other hand, being made aware of the consequences of one's actions. This type of 'punishment' brings a dimension of accountability and can become a driver for behavioural change.

It also has the advantage of forcing people to look at the reality through the eyes of those who do the work for them or who suffer the consequences of their actions (working with cleaning staff/cleaning children's areas, road accesses, etc.).

Education and information also play an important role in the fight against littering in public spaces. At the same time, emphasis should be placed on recognising and valuing the efforts made so that the uncivic-minded, who are ready to make the effort to change their behaviour or who have taken the step into the virtuous circle, can positively identify themselves as an actor of change, following the example of the various initiatives participating in the global awareness-raising movement around the "safeguarding" of the planet.

Children are initiators of virtuous behaviour. They naturally impose their social gaze and encourage respect for basic rules within the family. It is therefore essential to introduce the notions of sorting, civic-mindedness and cleanliness into the school curriculum from an early age. It is necessary to capitalise on the 'prescriptive' role of children who, through the education they receive, force their parents to reflect on their illicit acts (even if this applies more to littering than for illegal dumping, which generally takes place without and far from the presence of children).

Correct information about the true biodegradability of waste is also important. Indeed, many of the uncivic-minded have a completely distorted perception of the gravity of abandoning waste which they consider "biodegradable". It would therefore be useful to provide information on the time waste requires to biodegrade.

It is also necessary to **create links between waste and its direct effects on the environment, nature and animals**, in order to make the uncivic-minded aware of the gravity of their actions

and the "ecological" or "health" consequences. It should be remembered that any waste or deposit is potentially harmful, regardless of its condition, composition, etc.

The usefulness of sorting within the household should also be **emphasised** so that the practice is continued outside the home. In this sense, the presence of public bins for sorting can be a signal of the commitment of the municipal authorities to the problem of waste management.

It is necessary to anticipate the needs of citizens and to inform them proactively about the management of their waste by proposing appropriate solutions, for example when buying new products which require the disposal of old ones (mattresses, household appliances, etc.), in second-hand shops, during life events such as moving, building work, etc.

In the specific case of **smokers**, they are aware of the need to find solutions, however, they believe that the responsibility for finding effective and sustainable solutions lies with tobacco producers. On a practical level, smokers are familiar with "pocket ashtrays". However, they have doubts about their effectiveness. It is therefore necessary to remove this doubt and to communicate on the effectiveness of these devices.

Everyone has their share of responsibility. While education and information are the keys, the sanction will only have an effect if it is accompanied by real commitments on the part of the public authorities and all the actors (local, commercial, etc.) in the fight to improve the cleanliness of public spaces.

The uncivic-minded have expectations of the authorities. They want more empathy with "their reality", they mention excessive prices and taxes for waste management, and they expect better management of recycling parks, bottle banks and public dustbins. This is the counterpart of the efforts they could make to change their behaviour.

In concrete terms, they want to see an improvement in the management of recycling parks. Flexible opening hours which are in line with the life of the citizen must be guaranteed. We also need to rethink the quality of the reception at these sites, because if they are well received, citizens will feel assisted and encouraged in the process of recycling their waste rather than choosing to dump it outside.

As regards bottle banks and public bins, the public authorities must ensure that these facilities are managed efficiently, because in the eyes of the uncivic-minded, if the container or bin is full and they have to leave their waste at the foot of these collection containers, the fault does not lie with them but with the public authorities

At the same time, it is also necessary to promote recycling centres and the circular economy, which are all solutions which reflect an image of joint responsibility for a waste problem. This is part of a dynamic which has the merit of creating value from waste and giving people a sense of purpose.

There are **also many expectations regarding the involvement of companies and shops** in the fight against littering and illegal dumping in public spaces. Indeed, it is important that companies and producers think about the "after-consumption" of their products, both in terms of the nature of the waste generated and in terms of recyclability. In addition to this, shops selling "on the go" products should also think about how best to support consumers when they have to dispose of the waste (e.g. placing bins around their shop).

Last but not least, the **cleaners** should be **valued** as guardians of citizens' comfort. It is essential to break the little-valued, even invisible, image of the public cleaner by giving meaning to their work.