

Waste management is still a “big challenge” in North Macedonia, even more so in an area where the implementation of EU directives requires the engagement of large financial resources, as well as knowledge. That is why it is important to apply new solutions that will simultaneously bring about changes in several spheres, said Minister of Local Self-Government, Risto Penov during a recent meeting with North Macedonian recycling company **PakoMak**.

The Minister said that he welcomes PakoMak's initiative to find new, innovative ways to manage packaging waste. Depending on the treatment, packaging waste can be the most massive polluter or create new value through its processing, the Minister said.

Through new forms of organisation, the utility can be multifaceted, simultaneously achieving economic and social goals and contributing to inclusive and sustainable development. The added value lies in solidarity, the integration of marginalised groups into the formal economy, and raising the standard of service, the Minister noted.

Public cleanliness is the first impression that shapes the perception of the operation of local government and local services. This initiative is a good incentive for competent institutions and local governments, each in their respective jurisdiction, to create favourable conditions for this organisational concept to come to life. Informal collection of packaging waste is a part of our everyday life. We are all aware that many citizens secure their livelihoods in this way.

However, without formalising these activities, very often the harm done is greater than the benefit, Minister Penov said. Local authorities are most aware of this because waste management is a local responsibility, and they often face the rightful reactions of citizens. That's why local authorities are most invited to participate in the development of this concept, he added.

North Macedonia's Ministry of Local Self-Government always insists on principles derived from European strategic documents and the UN development goals – balanced, inclusive, sustainable, and [green development](#), as well as equitable access to public goods and their sustainable use, the Minister concluded.

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