

ANDRÁS NÁHLIK

2022

International Economy and Business MA

University of Sopron

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IS IT POSSIBLE TO TALK ABOUT CIRCULAR ECONOMY? INVESTIGATION ON PLASTIC RECYCLING IN HUNGARY¹

Megvalósítható-e a körkörös gazdaság? A műanyag újrahasznosítás vizsgálata

Magyarországon

The ratio of plastic in waste, especially plastic packaging, is enormous. To address this issue, the European Union has developed a plastics strategy that it expects Member States to adopt. The EU's waste policy models are known as the Waste Hierarchy and the Circular Economy Model, which both deal with plastics. The transition to a circular economy brings up different problems for different materials. In this paper, I investigate whether circularity is feasible for plastics.

This thesis further aims to define the situation at the EU and the Hungarian levels. The investigation utilized primary and secondary sources. The primary sources focused mainly on Hungary and comprised in-depth interviews with nine relevant Hungarian actors in the plastic waste industry, researchers, specialists from public and private companies, and an Austrian researcher. The interviews allowed for comparisons between the countries.

According to the respondents, the Hungarian situation is underdeveloped. Hungary has developed nearly the same infrastructure level as Western Europe, but Hungarian attitudes about recycling differ vastly from Western European attitudes. Developing an effective plastic recycling system requires changing behaviour first. Based on the primary research, it can be stated that it is not possible to achieve a perfect cycle for plastics, as material losses occur in all recycling processes.

Keywords: Plastic, recycling, circular economy,

JEL codes: Q53, Q58, Q59

^{1 1} Supported by the ÚNKP-22-2-2-SOE-109 New National Excellence Program of the Ministry for Culture and Innovation from the source of the National Research, Development and Innovation Fund."

