



# Pioneers

## JOHANNA KOHVAKKA

Finland (2018)

**Highlights - food waste regulations, knowledge transfer, career development**

**Who are you?** Johanna Kohvakka is a consultant specialising in the circular economy and food waste. She joined the Pioneers programme for the opportunity to do something different and felt that showing international work experience is valued when applying for work.



**What did you learn?** Although Johanna knew about Finnish waste legislation, the placement gave her the opportunity to learn more about EU waste legislation. She also visited the European Commission in Brussels to understand more about the detail within the directives. All of the information about waste legislation and practices in different countries will be very useful in Johanna's future work.

Johanna learnt about the value of networks and how the Pioneers experience can create opportunities for future work opportunities.

**What did you do?** Johanna worked at the Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment in Cyprus focussing on environmental issues. Cyprus needs to estimate the amount of food waste and its plans to reduce it, or face EU sanctions by 2020. Johanna has worked on food waste initiatives in Finland so was able to bring best practice ideas such as waste segregation. She also compared food waste collection in hotter climates as she recognised that there were different challenges if food starts rotting whilst being segregated. She also helped the Ministry to make plans on how to become a zero-waste office by recommending actions which included targets for external accreditation.

While at the placement, she wrote a blog article on plastic waste to correct some misconceptions about plastic, particularly about the benefits of biodegradable and bioplastics.



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“ The Pioneers programme is for all ages and experiences. ”

**What happens next?** Cyprus is currently developing its legislation for food waste and has incorporated elements of Johanna’s placement activities. Johanna has also been back to Cyprus for the waste reduction week and has made preliminary plans with the host to also return this year to help deliver the plan in practice.

Following her blog articles on plastic waste, Johanna is now writing a book about plastics.

“ Great to meet other Pioneers and increase your network. ”



The winning poster of a schools competition about waste Johanna ran at her placement.