



Annual report 2023

Reuse and recovery in the lead



41,814,826

**devices that
we collected
together
with you**



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INTERVIEW WITH THE CEO AND CHAIRMAN

“We want to focus even more on reuse and repair”

Following a minor decline in 2022, collection figures in 2023 are back on the rise. With some 127,000 tonnes of electrical appliances and light bulbs, we are back to the levels seen in our record year of 2021. According to CEO Eric Dewaet and Chairman Bruno Vermoesen, increased efforts around reuse and repair are also yielding great results. The new mission, vision and structure have undoubtedly contributed to this.



”

Our members are excited to be involved as part of our new structure, which is great to see!

– Bruno Vermoesen



Bruno Vermoesen: “For me, the key moment of the past year was the introduction of our new structure – a non-profit organisation comprising six subdivisions. Our members – manufacturers and importers of electrical and electronic appliances – were keen to get involved. We are now working within a simpler structure, allowing us to better and more quickly get our message across. This is an opportunity our members have seized with both hands. I believe we have already succeeded in achieving our goal of building real partnerships, and shaping a ‘we’ narrative. For example, we have switched to a fairer, performance-based compensation system for recyclers.”

Eric Dewaet: “We are very happy with the positive feedback from our stakeholders regarding Recupel’s communication and overall partnership approach. At our annual stakeholder meeting, this was commended by those present. Another thing I will never forget: King Filip’s visit to the

COMET Group, one of our trusted recycling partners. As well as enjoying a look behind the scenes, the King brought in some old electrical appliances to drop off in a collection box himself.”

Recupel has placed even greater emphasis on reuse and repair. Are you already seeing the results?

Vermoesen: “We have made changes that are sure to pay off in terms of extending the lifespan of used electrical appliances. In that respect, we can also reflect positively on our new mission and vision, which are clearly rooted in repair and reuse. Society is constantly evolving, and Recupel is evolving with it. Take, for instance, legislative initiatives such as the European Green Deal. This year, we’re also pushing further in the direction of reuse and repair with the establishment of a dedicated working group of manufacturers of electronic devices.”



By already opting for reuse at source, we can encourage a high quality influx of goods.

– Eric Dewaet

Dewaet: “Overall, there is noticeably greater interest in reuse and repair. The circular economy is really coming alive. In 2023, we officially included encouraging this development as part of our renewed mission. It’s great to see that’s also yielding positive results. By 2023, total reuse increased by 38%, rising from 4,900 tonnes in 2022 to 6,700 tonnes. These are figures as reported by [HERW!N](#) and the [RESSOURCES Federation](#), as corroborated by member and approved recycler figures, too.”

“To promote reuse and repair, we also need to ensure that discarded appliances are handled with care. We refer to this as ‘careful collection’. This starts at the recycling centres, where we partner with [Repair&Share](#) to neatly stack appliances on roll cages. Following this, our partners take care of transport, ensuring the appliances are not damaged during transit, either. In this way, by already opting for reuse at source, we can encourage a high quality influx of goods.”

Vermoesen: “We’ve already received a great deal of positive feedback from our second-hand stores, who greatly appreciate our efforts in promoting reuse to the wider public.”

Were there any other focal points in 2023?

Dewaet: “Yes indeed. Take recycling, for instance. While we are mainly talking about the percentage by weight that processors are able to reclaim as raw materials, quality is also an important factor. Metals such as copper, aluminium and iron, for example, can be reused fairly easily. Plastics are harder to recycle to the same level of quality. In this field, there is a greater need for interaction between manufacturers, processors, research institutions, and so on.”

Vermoesen: “We should also be thinking about recycled material. The amount of recycled material will be a key element in conforming with the requirements set out by the EU’s forthcoming revamped Ecodesign regulation. Product designers will more than likely be required to use a – yet to be determined – percentage of recycled plastic. For manufacturers, that will undoubtedly pose a challenge. Not only should there be more recycled material on the market, this material needs to be of sufficiently high quality. We are not quite there yet.”



“On a separate note, I also wish to highlight the partnerships that manufacturers and reuse centres are establishing with social economy employers. These are enabling people who’ve been unemployed for a long time to repair appliances for others with small budgets to repurchase. We have spent the last year mapping out Recupel’s entire value chain, from collection and transport to recycling, repair and reuse. In total, more than 60% of employees work within the social economy, accounting for more than 1,000 jobs.”

What does the future hold?

Dewaet: “We are of course looking beyond 2024. To truly engage in the circular economy, we need

to acquire greater knowledge about our products. To that end, we are currently trialling a scanning app. We have already had success in a pilot project, scanning and sorting LCD and LED displays via the app. Processors need to be able to separate these two types, as LCD displays contain mercury, and therefore belong in a different recycling stream. Moreover, using the scanning app, we hope to gather useful information about the collected appliances, such as age and repair history. This can provide an indication of whether a particular appliance is still suitable for reuse. We expect that it will become more important to inform people on an individual basis about where they can take their discarded appliances. The more we know, the more we can contribute to the circular economy.”

Our vision

Together with consumers and partners, Recupel is creating a sustainable and circular society by collecting electrical and electronic appliances and light bulbs to give them a new lease of life.

Our mission

On behalf of manufacturers, Recupel collects and processes used electrical and electronic appliances and light bulbs. Working with a wide network of partners, we encourage repair and reuse and organise high-quality recycling. That way, together we reduce our consumption of raw materials and energy.

OUR RESULTS

127,852 tonnes of discarded electrical appliances and light bulbs



Back on track.

A solid increase yields results similar to previous record years

Over the last year, Belgians handed in an average of just under 11 kg, increasing the total volume of collected appliances and old light bulbs by 7.1%. Thanks to the efforts of consumers, companies and Recupel's partners, we are once again closing in on the record levels seen in 2020 and 2021. While Belgian households account for more than 90% of the appliances handed in, the most notable increase came in the form of professional appliances, such as large refrigerators, printers and catering equipment, rising from 6,500 tonnes in 2022 to 8,830 tonnes in 2023.



Collection

119,425 tonnes (2022)

127,852 ton
collected in 2023

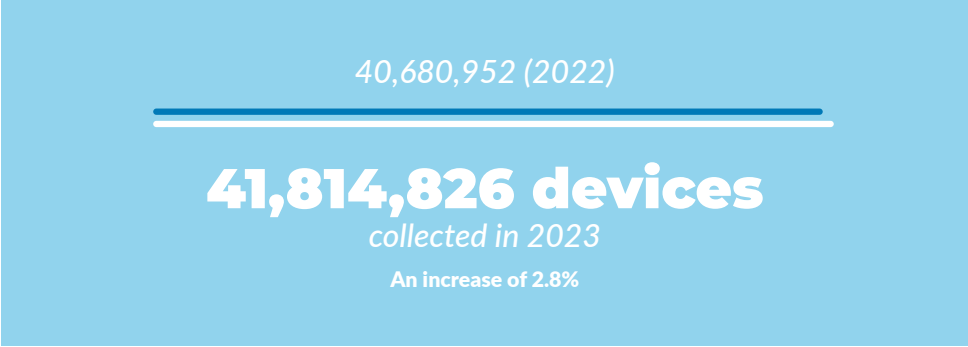
An increase of 7.1%

The volumes collected (in tonnes) per category:

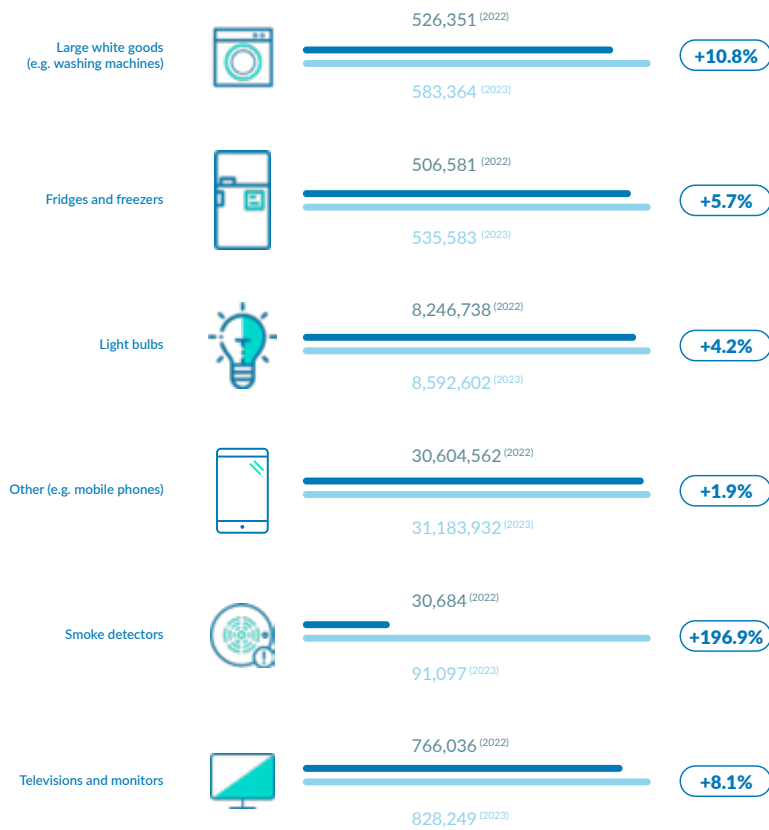


41,814,826 million devices

An increase of 2.8% compared to 2022



In units per category:





Reuse

6,764,188 kg of appliances reused

Over the last year, consumers and businesses collectively put 1,613,291 discarded appliances back into circulation. In terms of volume, we are talking 6,764,188 kg of reusable goods, a whopping 38% increase!

By maximising our focus on reuse, we will be able to spend a lot less energy and resources on new appliances. What's more, this also creates valuable jobs for those who might struggle to find employment, checking and repairing the collected appliances. At the same time, it means lower earners can find affordable and quality appliances in second-hand stores and reuse centres.

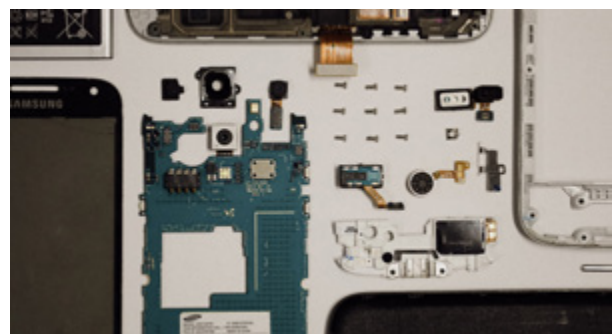


2,458,821 kg in second-hand stores and reuse centres

Second-hand outlets and reuse centres managed to put just under 2,500 tonnes of discarded appliances back into circulation, a solid 7% increase compared to 2022.

1,115,629 kg from approved recyclers

Approved recyclers collect old appliances on behalf of Recupel, with some even seeing to the reuse of these appliances themselves. In 2023, they were able to breathe new life into over 1,000 tonnes of professional and household appliances.



3,189,737 kg from members

Recupel members, manufacturers and distributors of electrical appliances put 3,189,737 kg of discarded and returned appliances back into circulation in 2023.

Recycling

**95.4% of e-waste
put to good use**

Our recycling rates are still on the up. In 2022, our recyclers were already recycling 82.3% of collected appliances and light bulbs. Last year, this share rose to 83.1%. On top of that, we managed to recover 1% as auxiliary materials for use in other processes, while incinerating 11.3% to generate energy.

PER CATEGORY:

	FERROUS MATERIALS	NON-FERROUS MATERIALS	PLASTIC	OTHER	RESULTS PER GROUP	LEGAL OBJECTIVE
LARGE WHITE GOODS	100%	100%	96.7%	65.6%	93%	85%
FRIDGES AND FREEZERS	100%	99.4%	98%	80.2%	97.6%	85%
LIGHT BULBS	95.5%	87.7%	100%	93.6%	93.6%	80%
OTHER	100%	100%	99.8%	79.5%	95.9%	75%
TELEVISIONS AND MONITORS	100%	100%	95.9%	89.6%	94.9%	80%
PER MATERIAL STREAM	100%	99.9%	98.6%	78.6%		
LEGAL OBJECTIVE	95%	95%	80%			

Year after year, our recycling results manage to exceed European targets. In 2023, this was no different, once again yielding high numbers for every type of material and fraction.



Our collection network



544 recycling centres

Recycling centres are a crucial link within the circular economy. In Belgium, we operate a total 544 centres.

11,728 collection points

Shops selling electrical appliances and electronic devices have a legal obligation to accept similar devices from customers for processing. They can register as a collection point for this purpose. Spread throughout Belgium, these accounted for 11,728 collection points in 2023. 2,660 of these shops also have a Recupel Point, which are handy containers for customers to deposit small electrical appliances and light bulbs.



41 reuse centres

In 2023, we worked with 26 Flemish reuse centres, as well as 15 members of Ressources in Brussels and Wallonia. These repair discarded appliances when necessary and re-prepare them for sale in second-hand stores.

89 approved recyclers

Companies can bring discarded electrical appliances directly to one of our approved recyclers for proper disposal. Recupel has a network of 89 approved recyclers: 75 collectors and 14 processors.

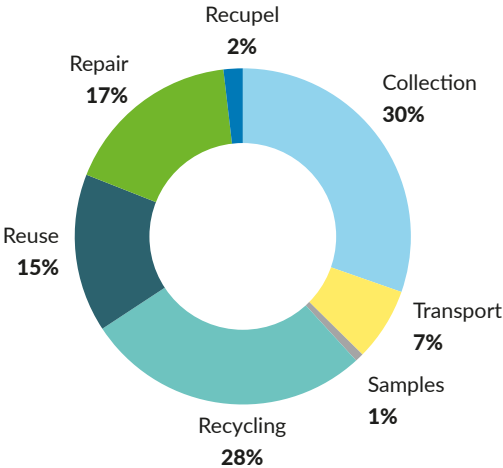


Employment in our value chain

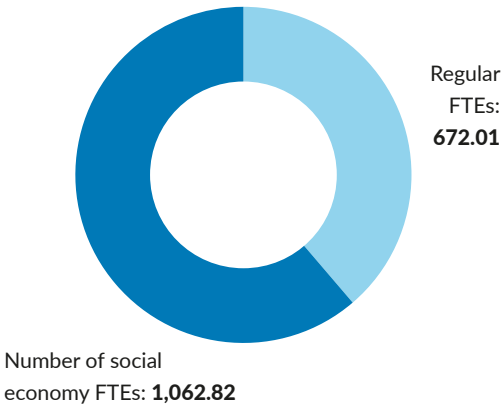
KU Leuven's HIVA Research Institute for Work and Society has mapped out Recupel's entire value chain. In total, the research institution identified 1,734 full-time equivalents (FTEs) within the organisation, most of them working in collection and recycling.

Our entire value chain counts over 1,000 social economy employees, accounting for a 61% share. The majority of people who are far removed from the labour market, are employed in the repair and reuse sector. As for recycling, one third of employees are in the social economy.

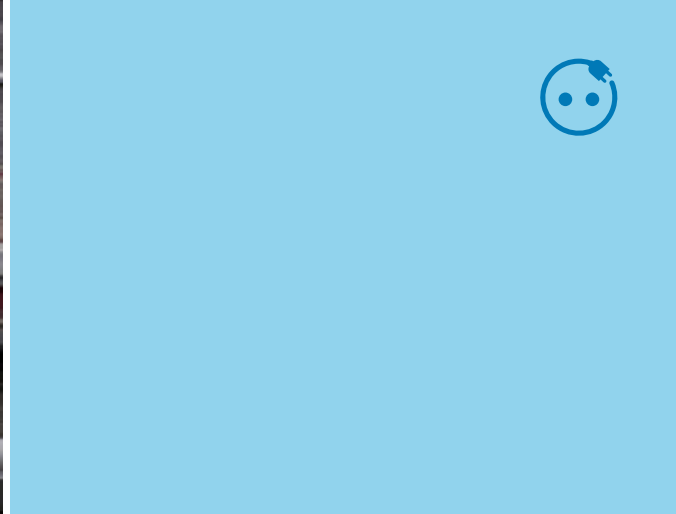
Share of employees in the entire value chain



Social economy employment vs. mainstream labour market



Our entire value chain counts over 1,000 social economy employees



Our impact in 2023

Saying goodbye to old appliances: that was Recupel's continued commitment in 2023. Through various actions and campaigns, we managed to encourage even more Belgians to give their old appliances a second life.



Speed dating with Recupel

How do you encourage the reuse of electrical appliances? By focusing on both the quantity and quality of collection, while also creating the best possible matches among second-hand stores, retailers and manufacturers of electrical appliances!

For the first edition of the Recupel Speeddate, we played matchmaker for some 50 businesses from

within the social and 'mainstream' economy. We employed a software tool to link the right profiles – based on region, requirements and specialisations – and scheduled speed dates accordingly. Over one morning, address books were updated and new partnership opportunities were discussed. Our matchmaking efforts are now continuing through [a dedicated LinkedIn group](#).



Recupel partners up with Nostalgie and L'Îlôt

For the third year in a row, Recupel and Nostalgie joined forces for *Mission Recyclage*, which involved inviting residents of Zinnik, Auderghem, Jambes and Bierghes to hand in their old electrical appliances. In 2023, Recupel and Nostalgie also teamed up with L'Îlôt, a non-profit organisation active in Brussels and Wallonia that has been fighting homelessness for over 60 years. Also on board were R.APP.EL - Resources Restor, Les Petits Riens, La Poudrière, Retrival and Electro Sofie. The repaired appliances were donated to people in precarious positions, waiting for the non-profit organisation to find them a new home. At the same time, appliances beyond repair were recycled into new raw materials.



AB & Black Box Revelation

Recycling? There's music in that, as evidenced by Black Box Revelation's performance at the AB, in partnership with Recupel, where anyone who recycled two discarded old phones could enjoy an exclusive concert on 28 January 2024. The aim? To collect 3,000 old mobile phones.

According to a recent Recupel survey, some one and a half million old mobile phones are lying unused in Belgian homes. Many materials contained within those smartphones can be recycled – including materials that are increasingly in-demand today, such as cobalt and palladium. We are therefore playing all the right notes when it comes to resource scarcity.

Mega Mindy teaches kids about recycling



Shaping minds for the future. Recupel has had a long-standing commitment to education. By encouraging good behaviours in children, we can perhaps also generate a positive impact on their parents' behaviour.

In 2023, Recupel launched a new collection campaign with Studio 100, which saw [K3](#) and the [cast of Galaxy Park](#) call for people to bring discarded electronic toys, along with any other unused electronic devices, to the Big Sinterklaas Show, in exchange for a sustainable reward. Meanwhile, [Mega Mindy](#) helped Mega Toby and kids in Flanders to properly recycle.

A study into reuse and repair service usage

When it comes to repairing or buying second-hand electrical appliances, the entire household electronics repair sector generated a turnover of just under €120 million in 2021, and employed some 900 workers. This was revealed by a recent study on reuse and repair service usage, conducted by research agency Möbius on behalf of Recupel. The study will be repeated every five years.

One of the most striking figures is that one in four Belgians had an appliance repaired in 2021. That's not to say, however, that they did not come up against any barriers in doing so. That is why Recupel is making it a priority to inform and raise awareness among consumers. Over the course of 2024, for instance, we plan to share a map for this very purpose via our website, allowing consumers to easily find where they can get their appliances repaired locally.





Electrical appliances are not for the scrapheap

Some 14% of waste electrical appliances (WEEE) end up on the scrapheap. This is according to Recupel's four-yearly 'Massbalans' study, which also tracks how close we are to the European target of collecting and properly disposing of 65% of WEEE.

By bringing their electronic waste to recycling centres and declaring this waste stream to Recupel or BeWEEE, scrap dealers can make a big difference. To encourage this, Recupel is providing improved compensation as part of its new agreements for Recupel approved recyclers.



GoodPlanet

Shaping minds for the future



Offering a positive outlook and a hopeful message, GoodPlanet travels to schools and businesses. Education is an important step in creating a more sustainable society. Projects range from green playgrounds and zero-waste challenges to campaigns for the collection of e-waste. In other words: the perfect partner for Recupel!

“We have been working with Recupel since 2013,” explains Simon Reijnders, Programme Director for Circular Economy, Climate, Energy and Water at GoodPlanet. “We share one mission: to promote and facilitate the circular economy. Because Recupel is responsible for collection and processing, it possesses technical expertise when it comes to the reuse and recycling of electrical and electronic appliances. We channel that expertise into educational workshops and campaigns adapted to our target audience.”

The five R's

The five R's of the circular economy – reduce, reuse, repair, recycle and rethink – form the cornerstone of the workshops. Through an

educational teaching package and interactive work formats, children and young people learn about where electrical and electronic appliances come from, what valuable and raw materials they contain and what happens to them when we are finished with them. The workshops align perfectly with the learning goals in both primary and secondary education.

Electrical Heroes, raw material hunts and mobile phone collection campaigns

In 2023, GoodPlanet and Recupel once again teamed up to work on a number of successful projects. The ‘ElektroHelden’ (Electrical Heroes) campaign was launched in Leuven, with ten primary



We turn Recupel's technical expertise into educational workshops and campaigns

– Simon Reijniers

schools taking part. “Over several workshops, fifth and sixth year students learned all about reusing and recycling old electricals,” explains Reijniers. “Afterwards, students were able to log their own heroic deeds through an online platform and set up a big fundraiser for each school, with the school collecting the most appliances winning a trip to Technopolis.” This first edition proved an instant success! Together, the 10 schools collected 28,220 discarded appliances, amounting to 22.2 tonnes. Pupils at St Norbert's School even got to tell **ROBtv** all about their special fundraiser. “In 2024, we'll be running this campaign in Bruges and Aalst.”



A second project in partnership with Recupel is the raw material hunt workshop. Last year, this saw 305 classes participate from across the country. These 6,000 secondary school students attended workshops on 'urban mining' and what the circular economy means in practice. We also organised a mobile phone collection in schools in partnership with Proximus, collecting close to 21,000 old phones over the space of a year. As a reward, participating schools received refurbished computers and laptops. Schools will once again get the opportunity to participate in the **raw material hunt** and **mobile phone collection** in 2024.

Recupel launched the communications campaigns, facilitated the collections, handled the collected appliances and ensured their proper processing for reuse and recycling.

Enthusiastic participants

‘Younger children, teenagers and teachers are all very enthusiastic about our joint projects,’ says Reijniers. There are schools that GoodPlanet visits year after year, ensuring that all students are able to participate in the workshops. “That helps us create active users, for today and tomorrow.”

GoodPlanet Belgium is a non-profit organisation operating nationwide. Each year, some 100 employees help to inspire more than 500,000 children, young people and adults. Through projects, campaigns and workshops, they help to spread knowledge on sustainable development.

Website: www.goodplanet.be/en

ORGANISATION & FIGURES

Governing body

EXECUTIVES

Bruno Vermoesen
Chairman

Derek Mc Millan

Koen Waelput

Kris Den Haese

Marc Moris

Patrick Van den Bossche

Rony Haentjens

Werner Donckers

Manuela Fiorucci

Marie Van Breusegem

Maxime Parein

Roeland verlinden

OBSERVERS FROM THE REGIONS

Stéphane Lucic
Département Sols et Déchets

Maxime Banse
Leefmilieu Brussel

Tom Van Troyen
OVAM

OBSERVING FEDERATIONS

Fallon Declerck
Nelectra

Koen Bruylant
beMedTech



Financial results

ASSETS	2023	2022
Intangible fixed assets	0.00	0.00
Tangible fixed assets	993,358.87	556,081.88
Financial fixed assets	123.00	123.00
Fixed assets	993,481.87	556,204.88
Accounts receivable within one year	11,405,137.34	3,608,035.33
Cash	117,037,382.83	7,687,536.99
Deferrals and accruals	555,551.45	82,873.60
Current assets	128,998,071.62	11,378,445.92
TOTAL ASSETS	129,991,553.49	11,934,650.80
LIABILITIES	2023	2022
Allocated funds and other reserves	41,008,113.00	0.00
Profit carried forward	63,724,814.81	0.00
Equity	104,732,927.81	0.00
Accruals for risks and costs	12,426,557.92	0.00
Accruals	12,426,557.92	0.00
Accounts payable within one year	12,832,067.76	11,934,650.80
Current liabilities	12,832,067.76	11,934,650.80
TOTAL LIABILITIES	129,991,553.49	11,934,650.80
RESULT OF THE YEAR	2023	2022
Turnover	35,460,161.15	43,872,780.27
Non-recurring operating income	1,524.01	6,656.78
Operating income	35,461,685.16	43,879,437.05
Purchases	-37,800,928.37	0.00
Services and other	-8,659,633.48	-40,207,388.23
Remunerations and direct social securities	-3,521,937.02	-3,310,455.33
Depreciations, provisions	-221,106.85	-316,680.57
Accruals for risks and costs	6,257,069.20	0.00
Other operating charges	-872,978.44	-43,000.19
Non-recurring operating charges	0.00	-803.89
Operating charges	-44,819,514.96	-43,878,328.21
Operating profit/loss	-9,357,829.80	1,108.84
Financial income	1,444,289.75	11,080.38
Financial charges	-20,768.97	-12,189.22
Financial results	1,423,520.78	-1,108.84
Exceptional results	0.00	0.00
Result to be carried forward	-7,934,309.02	0.00



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