



Outcome document:

Implementing the Circular Economy Package: from wish to practice

Brussels, 13 September 2016 (10h00 to 15h00) Venue: Victor Hortaplein 40, 1060, Brussels, including 45 European, national and regional experts on Circular Economy.

General conclusions Session I: 'A systematic approach to developing a circular economy at the national and regional level'

- A transition to a circular economy will help the European Union to implement international commitments such as the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement (COP21), and to fulfil its ambition of creating more sustainable supply chains and globalized markets for secondary raw materials.
- A circular economy cannot be implemented 'in splendid isolation'. A broad spectrum of stakeholders, including the business community, should be involved.
- Product innovation and design as well as waste management are key elements of a circular economy. Whereas different goals should be defined for energy and for resources
- The creation of a vision, goals and a strategy at different governmental scale levels promotes the transition to a circular economy.
- Every governmental scale level should identify its own strengths within a circular economy.
- Additional efforts must be made to streamline existing policies more effectively to achieve more coherence and focus in current policies. Regulatory barriers, existing knowledge gaps and externalization of costs are making the transition more difficult.

General conclusions Session II: 'What are the potential costs and benefits of the circular economy for employment and what consequences will this have on skills and qualifications of the labour force?'

- The circular economy has been identified as a driver of growth and competitiveness in e.g. France. This trend is expected to affect the labour force and the skills that tomorrow's workers need to have.
- The impact on jobs will increase if material efficiency is combined with energy efficiency. Therefore, it is advisable to invest in the new labour skills required for the transition to a circular economy.

- Statistics in e.g. France show that a circular economy will create some new jobs, although most of the job creation is based on developing existing jobs, possibly with some minor development of skills.
- Life-long learning and integrating the circular economy in schooling is of major importance, starting in primary school.
- An agenda must be drawn up for education and new labour skills.
- It is uncertain how the development of a circular economy will affect employment. Further research into the overall effects is therefore necessary.

Debating the specifics: 'How can we increase and accelerate circular public procurement?'

- Products as such are no longer the focus and the modus operandi shifts towards a focus on 'what do we need' (light, transportation, etc.). In other words: from ownership to service.
- There are still legal, institutional and human obstacles that hinder the implementation of circular procurement.
- Training and awareness-raising projects are needed to increase knowledge and awareness levels and to overcome legal, institutional and human obstacles. A platform providing access to best practices is expected to be useful.
- Governments are 'inventing a new future' when it comes to circular public procurement, and matters are therefore uncertain. This fact of life requires an open attitude to innovation, rather than seeking to avoid aspects that are considered 'risks' from the perspective of the old system and the old ways of doing things.
- Innovation in a circular economy thrives when innovative procurement policies are applied.
- The concepts of Total Cost of Ownership and Total Cost of Usership should be strengthened as a starting point for procurement departments, auditors and controllers.