



Coordination Group meeting – 17 October 2019

Participants:

- CG Members: *Ladeja Godina Košir (Circular Change), Leon De Graaf* (BusinessEurope), Romina Giovannetti (ECOEMBES), Eugenia Mansutti* (Eurocities), Lieze Cloots (OVAM), Harald Friedl (Circle Economy), Maja Johannessen (Ellen MacArthur Foundation), Michael Kuhndt (Collaborating Centre on Sustainable Consumption and Production (CSCP), Joanna Kulczycka (Waste Management and Recycling Cluster), Elena Simina Lakatos (Institute for Research in Circular Economy and Environment "Ernest Lupan"), François-Michel Lambert, Marline Weber (National Institute for Circular Economy), Michal Len (RREUSE), Kari Herlevi (SITRA), Philippe Micheaux Naudet (ACR+), Christoph Scharff (CEC4Europe), Jean-Pierre Schweitzer (EEB), Arthur Ten Wolde (Ecopreneur.eu), Laurent Zibell (industriAll - European trade union), Konstantinos Malandrinos* (Municipal Waste Europe) – (* = replacement)*
- EESC: *Bernd Dittmann, Peter Schmidt, Cillian Lohan*
- European Commission: *Emmanuelle Maire, Maria Rincon, Eva Dalenstam (ENV), Fulvia Raffaelli, Fabien Porcher (GROW)*
- ECESP Secretariat: *Janine Borg, Anna Cameron, Silvia Staffa, Sophie Birmann, Vitus van Rij (EESC)*

Item	Discussion	Decisions
Welcome	<p>The Chair of the Platform's Coordination Group, Ladeja Godina Košir, Circular Change, welcomed the participants and relayed how she had experienced a clear need for a "network of networks" on circular economy throughout the past year. Regardless, she expressed concern relevant stakeholders had not heard of the Platform before, and urged the Coordination Group to step out of the bubble of European policy-making, raising the particular attention non-EU countries merit in their circular transition as well.</p> <p>Reviewing her chairmanship of the Coordination Group for 2018 – 2019, Ms Godina Košir expressed that this had been an exciting honour, and asked the members for nominations for the 2020 mandate.</p> <p>Mr Peter Schmidt, EESC Member, thanked the Chair for her welcome and chairmanship, inviting her to stand again.</p>	<p>2018 – 2019 minutes adopted</p> <p>Agenda adopted</p> <p>Ladeja Godina Košir nominated and confirmed Chair of the ECESP Coordination Group for 2020</p>

	The Coordination Group unanimously confirmed Ladeja Godina Košir as Chair for the coming year.	
ECESP in 2019	<p>The Chair thanked the Secretariat for its support in the preceding year, and highlighted the key role the Platform has in creating an impactful civil society contribution to the circular economy transition. She recalled the successful Circular Economy Stakeholder Conference in March 2019 and the importance of cooperating with other platforms.</p> <p>The Chair invited the Secretariat to present the 2018 – 2019 Annual Activity Report and review of the ECESP workplan.</p> <p>The Secretariat presented its review of the 2018 – 2020 workplan by highlighting that 22 out of 30 actions have been complete, while another 5 are ongoing. The Secretariat also introduced two studies commissioned by the EESC to support the platform:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Circular economy strategies and roadmaps in Europe: Identifying synergies and the potential for cooperation and alliance building</i>¹ • <i>Identifying the impact of the circular economy on the Fast-Moving Consumer Goods Industry: opportunities and challenges for businesses, workers and consumers – mobile phones as an example</i>² <p>Mr Laurent Zibell, industriALL, presented the latter study as concrete analysis into a complex issue. Discarded mobile phones represent largely untapped resources, and could provide businesses with valuable (critical) raw materials that Europe currently imports mainly. Simultaneously, moving to a circular economy in the mobile phone industry could stimulate the repair and refurbishment industries in creating up to 45,000 jobs in Europe, while consumers would benefit from cheaper high-quality electronics and reduced emissions.</p> <p>The Chair invited several Coordination Group members to present their respective activities for 2018 – 2019:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr Francois-Michel Lambert, Institut National de l'Economie Circulaire (INEC), presented the INEC's key activities and highlighted the institute's efforts to map European CE networks in particular. This underlies a wider desire to strengthen the European platform, which would allow CG members to learn more from each 	

¹ <https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/publications-other-work/publications/circular-economy-strategies-and-roadmaps-europe-study>

² <https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/publications-other-work/publications/identifying-impact-circular-economy-fast-moving-consumer-goods-fmcg-industry-opportunities-and-challenges-businesses>

other and thus accelerate the circular transition even further. Mr Lambert also mentioned the activities of INEC related to the circular economy bill currently being debated in the French Parliament and the need to gradually move towards harmonised rules at EU level; he also highlighted the importance of monitoring, reporting and accounting tools for businesses. INEC is currently co-leading a study on circular economy networks in Europe, which is scheduled to be presented at a conference in January/February 2020. INEC suggested to invite CG members to a back-to-back meeting after the presentation.

- Mr Michael Kuhndt, Centre for Sustainable Consumption and Production, focused on the Consumer Insight Action Panel and invited fellow CG members to join its activities in plastics, electronics and packaging to make CE 'easy' for consumers, thus engendering a shift towards a circular culture.
- Mr Christoff Scharff, CEC4EUROPE, also shared what the European Circular Economy Club had achieved in bringing stakeholders together and furthering knowledge, for example with the Circularity Gap Report Austria.

Mr Harald Friedl, Circle Economy, discussed the failures of the September 2019 UNSG Global Climate Action Summit and stressed the importance of benchmarking action. Building on existing collaborations, such as with the C40 alliance, and Circularity Gap Reports, as developed for Austria, could help governments drive action towards realising climate ambitions. Simultaneously, he expressed a desire to link the ECESP with other platforms such as the WEF's Platform for Accelerating the Circular Economy (PACE), and lauded the Ellen MacArthur Foundation's collaboration with BlackRock, while presenting some of Circle Economy's activities in capacity building for banks and investment firms. He concluded that the Platform also requires the capability to quickly respond to global requests, such as those he had received from Israel and Chile recently.

Mr Kari Herlevi, SITRA, stressed the importance of focussing on digitalisation and the social dimension of CE, while building on preceding speakers by presenting his collaboration with the WEF and Canada (CE Jobs report due in the coming weeks) in moving towards a global approach.

The Chair thanked these members for their presentations and strongly reiterated the need for more collaboration within the CG, before inviting the Secretariat to present developments regarding the Platform's website in the past year.

The ECESP Secretariat, presented how the website's editorial team sources, processes and disseminates knowledge. While the Platform's social media presence grew steadily and the website's Knowledge and Platform sections experienced particular growth, challenges remained in:

- sourcing relevant content
- processing high quality Good Practices
- defining the scope of this website

While thanking the Secretariat for its work in operating and editing the website, the Chair stressed that difficulties remain with contributing content, and steps should be taken to make this as simple as possible.

Ms Emmanuelle Maire, DG ENV, expressed willingness to invest in boosting activity on the website, especially its forum, and further links between EC websites/fora and the ECESP, such as the EU Retail Forum.

Ms Lieze Cloots, OVAM, suggested including more content about cultural events that adopt circular management practices as this could inspire and guide others in adopting such methods when organising similar events. These merit particular attention due to the wide reach such events have, with some festivals raising awareness of circular principles among more than a million citizens.

Mr Laurent Zibell, industriALL, stressed that a forum requires a clear purpose to be meaningful for participants while suggesting that discussing policy could motivate stakeholders towards animating the forum. He also underlined the importance of a more operational and user-friendly shared space.

Mr Harald Friedl, Circle Economy, emphasised that several CG members host their own circular portals: the Platform could benefit from setting up a digital working group to share lessons learned and prevent duplication of existing resources. Reports should also not be a purpose in themselves, but provide the actionable knowledge stakeholders need to begin their circular journey.

The Chair shared a proposal to improve the digital platform and the idea that by doing less while linking existing resources, more could perhaps be achieved.

	<p>Ms Joanna Kulczykcka, WMRC, expressed a need for Good Practices to be replicable, as hyperlocal case studies might only serve as advertisements. She also stressed the importance of education, highlighting that circular economy is a new field of study and many universities have updated their course offerings.</p> <p>Ms Marline Weber, INEC, stressed the importance of connecting platforms internationally. Understanding technical limitations that prevent automatic content sharing, she believed the platform needs better visibility.</p> <p>Mr Cillian Lohan and Mr Peter Schmidt, EESC, emphasised the Platform's website has been successful, relaying positive feedback they had received in New York from European and American circular economy stakeholders.</p> <p>Mr Michael Kuhndt, CSCP, brought into the discussion the circular villages dimension and suggested inviting the youth community to a CG meeting.</p> <p>Mr Arthur Ten Wolde, Ecopreneur, also shared positive outcomes that resulted from Ecopreneur from being featured on the ECESP website.</p> <p>The Chair summarised this discussion with three key points that the Platform should focus its communication strategy on storytelling, language and media in order to better connect with the circular economy community and beyond.</p>	
<p>Breakout Groups</p>	<p>The participants split into 3 breakout groups to discuss a series of questions:</p> <p>A – How do you assess your CG membership and contribution to ECESP to date?</p> <p><i>Moderated by Harald Friedl, Circle Economy</i></p> <p>B – What should the CG prioritise in the final year of its mandate (incl. conference 2020)?</p> <p><i>Moderated by Arthur ten Wolde, Ecopreneur</i></p> <p>C – Which activities do you envisage for 2020 that could contribute to the Coordination Group?</p> <p><i>Moderated by Jean-Pierre Schweitzer, European Environmental Bureau</i></p>	

<p>Next Steps for ECESP</p>	<p>The Chair invited those moderating the breakout groups to present their respective findings.</p> <p><i>A – How do you assess your CG membership and contribution to ECESP to date?</i></p> <p>Mr Harald Friedl, Circle Economy, concluded that CG members were satisfied with fostering dialogue and enthusiastic about the annual conference and virtual platform, but simultaneously experienced frustration when attempting to collaborate due to a lack of financial resources dedicated to platform activities. Despite its widely acknowledged considerable potential, members have underused the Platform, particularly within their own organisations. In addition, the suggestion was made to allocate a budget to develop projects and studies, and for more meetings during the year (one per quarter)</p> <p>In reviewing the contribution to ECESP to-date, members expressed they could do more, and simple targets would help to achieve concrete results. Structural repositioning alongside strengthened internal dialogue, with greater support by the Secretariat, could support the CG in setting joint goals. This could further buy-in to the Platform and help develop an action plan capable of reaching communities on the ground. Moreover, some members stressed the importance of measuring and monitoring the social impact in the area of textiles.</p> <p>It was pointed out that part of the mandate for the CG was to identify policy gaps and that this had not been done enough.</p> <p><i>B – What should the CG prioritise in the final year of its mandate (incl. conference 2020)?</i></p> <p>Mr Arthur Ten Wolde, Ecopreneur, expressed that CG members appeared keen to develop joint political messages in the final year of their mandate. These could feed into policymaking on the next Circular Economy Action Plan (CEAP) and the wider Green New Deal.</p> <p>The CG also expressed a desire to develop closer links with Presidencies of the Council and other EU platforms. This could widen the Platform's reach, and support greater synergies with related policy fields such as climate change, food waste, raw materials, biodiversity and sustainable development.</p> <p><i>C – Which activities do you envisage for 2020 that could contribute to the Coordination Group?</i></p>	<p><u>Coordination Group</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - establish clear targets, set goals and develop action plan - meet more frequently - develop a joint position as CG's contribution to feed into the new Circular Economy Action Plan. <p><u>Website:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - set up a digital working group among CG members to map existing resources and share lessons learned - publish more inspirational content relating to cultural events, e.g. circular festivals - improve user-friendliness - explore new sections for toolkits & education - engage in the guidance regarding the good practices
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	<p>Mr Jean-Pierre Schweitzer, European Environmental Bureau, reported that CG members experienced a low level of awareness regarding each other's priorities and activities. To overcome this in 2020, members expressed a desire (a) to meet more often and (b) to improve the Platform's external communication. Initiatives such as a prize linked to the Platform could support the latter, while connecting with youth groups could also facilitate this kind of initiative.</p> <p>Listing which themes the CG members wished to focus on, these included: indicators, textiles, youth, food, green public procurement, regional characteristics (cities, mountains, islands etc.) as well as the overarching link between the circular economy and wider climate goals.</p> <p>Regarding the website, some CG members expressed a need for more user-friendliness and a section on toolkits.</p> <p>As with the preceding two questions, developing joint political messages to engage intergroups in the European Parliament and policy-making by the the European Commission also took priority.</p>	
<p>Next Steps for CE in Europe</p>	<p>Ms Fulvia Raffaelli, DG GROW, shared some insight into the forthcoming circular economy policy by the European Commission. As the incoming Commission President-elect already expressed in her political guidelines, the circular economy will have a key role to play in meeting long-term climate goals, with expectations that CE will be mainstreamed in policy-making within a wider sustainability dimension. When the new College of Commissioners comes into office, she expects a second Circular Economy Adoption Plan to be adopted relatively quickly – timeline still uncertain.</p> <p>Ms Raffaelli highlighted a few dimensions that will be taken into account into the new Circular Economy Action Plan, building on the implementation report on the current CEAP published in March 2019:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Climate neutrality requires circular economy, with the latter playing a key role in reducing indirect emissions. This will require, in particular, a sustainability-driven more ambitious product policy, implying further application of life-cycle assessment when producing goods and services. To increase understanding of how much CE can contribute to wider climate goals, a baseline must be defined using a common methodology. The Commission is launching a study on this. 2. Resource sourcing and use has a substantial effect on biodiversity, whose loss is driven by food waste, an unsustainable agriculture and forestry practices when it comes to organic resources and unsustainable mining when 	

it comes to mineral resources. Boosting circularity can be an opportunity to strengthen synergies with biodiversity policies, especially in the light of the 2030 Biodiversity Strategy included in the new President-elect's political priorities.

Ms Raffaelli said that strong stakeholder engagement opportunities will remain a defining feature of the EU's circular economy agenda and that the Stakeholder Platform will have a key role in this.

Mr Laurent Zibell, industriAll, said that product passports would be useful to keep track of the information throughout the lifecycle of a product with the aim of increasing quality and reducing cost; bearing in mind the cost for disassembly/reassembly.

On the social dimension, regarding market surveillance and customs, Mr Arthur ten Wolde, Ecopreneur, said there was a problem of resources and that more market surveillance and fines would be welcome in case of non-compliance.

3. CE provides sizeable opportunities for European industries: here action must increase the use of by-products and strengthen or create markets for circular products and services, including secondary raw materials. These must also not be limited to consumer goods, but include basic products at the beginning of the production chain as well.

4. Circularity (and climate-neutrality) also have to become the backbone of the upcoming EU's industrial strategy. This comes with a strong role played by digitisation to speed up the transition in the industry, while paying attention to the overall environmental impact of digital technologies.

Several CG members encouraged the European Commission to take further initiatives regarding Green Public Procurement. There was a wide consensus acknowledging the potential of digitalisation and Artificial Intelligence (AI) to accelerate the transition, in particular for improving transparency and information sharing along value chains. The question of putting more emphasis at the very beginning of the lifecycle, including at the raw material stage, was also raised. Ms Raffaelli recalled that, however important the early stages of the lifecycle are, waste management is still an area where improvement, including at regulatory level, is much needed. Last but not least, the trade dimension of circularity as well as market surveillance and current challenges to implement more stringent regulations were also briefly mentioned.

