



Coordination Group meeting – 16 March 2021 from 14:30 to 16:39

Participants:

- CG members: Alberto Arroyo Schnell (IUCN), Piotr Barczak (EEB)*, Mercè Boy Roura (Interreg MED Green Growth community), Eva Brunova (Circular Change)*, Núria Cases i Sampere (ACR+)*, Lieze Cloots (OVAM), Marie-Céline Falisse (Generation Climate Europe)*, David Fitzsimons (Conseil Européen de Remanufacture), Ladeja Godina Košir (Circular Change), Kari Herlevi (Sitra), Mark Hidson (ICLEI), Cliona Howie del Río (EIT Climate-KIC), Emmanuel Katrakis (EuRIC - European Recycling Industries' Confederation), Michael Kuhndt (CSCP), Michael Laermann (Ecopreneur.eu)*, Guido Lena (SMEUnited), Isabelle Maurizi (EuroCommerce), Philippe Micheaux Naudet (ACR+), Sarah Miller (Rediscovery Centre), Oana Neagu (Copa and Cogeca), Mariana Nicolau (CSCP)*, Jean-Pierre Schweitzer (EEB), Agnieszka Sznyk (INNOWO), Anca Turtoi (Holland Circular Hotspot)*, Arthur ten Wolde (Ecopreneur.eu), Freek van Eijk (Holland Circular Hotspot), Carsten Wachholz (Ellen MacArthur Foundation), Marline Weber (INEC)*, Jana Zurkova (RREUSE)* (* = back-up)
- European Committee of the Regions (CoR): Mailys Kahn (secretariat), Tjisse Stelpstra (member)
- European Economic and Social Committee (EESC): Anders Ladefoged (member), Cillian Lohan (member), Maria Nikolopoulou (member)
- European Environment Agency (EEA): Almut Reichel
- European Investment Bank (EIB): Pia Nieminen
- European Commission (EC): Eva Dalenstam (ENV), Florika Fink-Hooijer (ENV), Katerina Fortun (CLIMA), Petra Goyens (RTD), Emmanuelle Maire (ENV), Petros Mamalis (RTD), Luca Marmo (ENV), Paola Migliorini (ENV), Pavel Misiga (RTD), Maria Rincon Lievana (ENV), Ann Sander Nielsen (ENV), Anna Tosetto (ENV)
- ECESP secretariat: Sophie Birmann, Aleksandra Blazeusz, Janine Borg, Gaia Bottoni, Anna Cameron, Lukáš Durech, Satu Kankala, Anna Krasny-Pal, Alice Senga, Clara Villaresi

Item	Discussion	Decisions
<p>Welcome</p>	<p>CG Chair Ladeja Godina Košir (Circular Change) opened the meeting at 14:30 and welcomed the participants.</p> <p>European Commission DG ENV Director-General Florika Fink-Hooijer said that she was engaged in promoting both the concept and importance of the circular economy on a daily basis. She sought to help other stakeholders understand what the circular economy meant for every sector. Ms Fink-Hooijer said that the ECESP was a vital ambassador for the circular economy which was itself an enabler for escaping the current crisis and triggering a real transformation. The planned eight Leadership Groups and the EU Circular Talks were very important.</p> <p>Half of GHG emissions and 90% of biodiversity loss were due to resource processing, demonstrating how crucial the circular economy was. Accordingly, since the November 2020 meeting, the European Commission had been working on relevant legislation, producing a regulatory framework for batteries, involving mandatory requirements for all batteries which were key to future technologies. The Commission also launched the Global Alliance on Circular Economy and Resource Efficiency (GACERE) in February. So far, 39 countries had joined. Circularity also played an important role in the Chemical strategy, promoting a toxic-free environment and use of safe secondary materials.</p> <p>Major Commission initiatives this year included the sustainable products initiative, which takes a design-based approach seeking to reduce the environmental impact and the amount of waste produced. The Commission was also aiming to produce further legislation in the field of empowering and informing consumers, waste, and reuse and repair. The transformation would take time but was essential and the ECESP contributed to promoting knowledge and ownership of this process.</p> <p>EESC vice-president Cillian Lohan welcomed the participants on behalf of the three EESC members. The ECESP had been working on responding to the Commission's legislative proposals, while the secretariat focused on building connections and reaching out to other networks.</p> <p>Ms Godina Košir pointed out that institutional stakeholders were crucial, and introduced CoR member Tjisse Stelpstra who had joined the team after working as rapporteur for an opinion on the new Circular</p>	<p>Meeting was opened at 14:30.</p>

	Economy Action Plan. He introduced himself, saying that local and regional representatives could be instrumental in promoting circularity at grassroots level.															
Adoption of agenda and revised Rules of Procedure		The agenda was adopted unanimously. The Coordination Group adopted the revised Rules of Procedure unanimously.														
Annual circular economy stakeholder conference	In preparation for the next annual conference, Emmanuelle Maire (ENV) said that stakeholders were tired of big online events, and were interested in opportunities to network. Many major circular economy events would take place over the next few months. The flagship sustainable products initiative would be ready by the end of 2021, and so the Commission felt that the next annual circular economy stakeholder conference should take place, physically, in the first quarter of 2022. The online EU Circular Talks would feed into this and build momentum.	The next annual circular economy stakeholder conference would take place in the first quarter of 2022.														
Coordination Group 2021: Taking ECESP to the next level	<p>Leadership Groups</p> <p>The Leaders of the ECESP Leadership Groups presented the topic for which they were responsible. (See PPT presentations for content.)</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Leadership Group topic</th> <th>Leader</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Retailers, Consumer, Skills</td> <td>CSCP</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cities & Regions</td> <td>ACR+</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Circular Procurement</td> <td>OVAM</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Food waste, Food systems & Bioeconomy</td> <td>INNWO</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Construction & Infrastructure</td> <td>Holland Circular Hotspot</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Textiles</td> <td>RREUSE</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Leadership Group topic	Leader	Retailers, Consumer, Skills	CSCP	Cities & Regions	ACR+	Circular Procurement	OVAM	Food waste, Food systems & Bioeconomy	INNWO	Construction & Infrastructure	Holland Circular Hotspot	Textiles	RREUSE	The themes of the Leadership Groups were presented. New participants were welcome.
Leadership Group topic	Leader															
Retailers, Consumer, Skills	CSCP															
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Network Governance & CE Hubs	Circular Change
Economic Incentives	EURIC

EU Circular Talks

The eight Leadership Groups had met and established their priorities. Two to three EU Circular Talks would be organised for each group, with at least one week between each Talk in the run up to the Conference. It was emphasised that additional EU Circular Talks were proposed by coordination group members who were not in the Leadership Groups, that the choice of topics should be geared towards the Conference in consultation with the Commission and that synergies between the Talks should be ensured, with a view to avoiding overlaps in terms of topics discussed.

Emmanuelle Maire praised the work and interaction between the Leadership Groups. The secretariat would schedule the events accordingly and lay out the timetable in an online document.

A discussion then took place on the details of the topics and the interaction between them. It was pointed out that the ECESP needed to focus on the circular economy (incl. bioeconomy). In conclusion, **Emmanuelle Maire** said that everyone was asked to consider the EU Circular Talks plan, focusing on the major CE events of the year, factoring in proposals from the ECESP members and the Commission, and working with the secretariat to build an appropriate schedule which led up to the conference in 2022.

All the activities of the CG (EU Circular Talks, launches or publications of projects, reports etc.) would be compiled into a rolling plan, ready by 18 May.

The ECESP secretariat would make a proposal to organise the schedule for the EU Circular Talks, depending on when those involved were available, making it available in an online document.

Synergies with forthcoming Commission initiatives

The Climate Pact (DG CLIMA)

Katerina Fortun, policy officer at DG CLIMA:

What are the three key ingredients for building a strong and resilient society that works for people and the planet?

- 1) Vision, an action plan, the European Green Deal
- 2) Funding: NextGenerationEU, multiannual financial framework
- 3) Ensuring that no one was left behind. How could this be achieved?

The Climate Pact aimed to give everyone a voice and a role to play in combating climate change, it had to design new climate initiatives such as climate pledges from communities, cities, businesses and enterprises, and it had to be a way to share information and showcase best practices. Basically, it was about raising awareness about climate action.

One way to engage was to become a Climate Pact Ambassador. For further information on the Pact and how to get involved, Ms Fortuna could organise a follow-up meeting. She suggested that DG CLIMA could collaborate on a circular economy and climate month in May in the form of EU Circular Talks. She asked how the ECESP members felt that the two sides could cooperate.

Emmanuel Katrakis: How could the CG support the initiative in practice, since circular issues went hand in hand with climate ones?

Katerina Fortun: They could cooperate on circular economy and climate month and the EU Circular Talks. A workshop could be held to discuss in greater detail how this cooperation could be organised. Options included becoming an ambassador, who acted as bridges on the ground between their community/field of activity and the Commission. This would help build connections at regional level. The Pact had also set up a movement called "Count us in", focused on people. This city-level movement had been active in Amsterdam, for instance, where it urged Uber to commit to having electric cars by 2025. It had a more individual focus than the Pact itself, and aimed to get people involved in environmental pledges.

Eva Dalenstam: DG ENV and DG CLIMA had been discussing how to cooperate: one option was the EU Circular Talks: these could take the form of thematic months, such as "CE-Climate Month". The other option was for CG members to become Climate Pact Ambassadors and represent the ECESP within the

Climate Pact. She asked those interested in either option to inform the ECESP secretariat.

Global Alliance for Circular Economy and Resource Efficiency (GACERE) (DG ENV)

Luca Marmo:

GACERE is a deliverable of the March 2020 Circular Economy Action Plan. The reason why the European Commission has proposed the establishment of such an Alliance is to advocate at multilateral level for a global just transition to a resource efficient and circular economy. GACERE brings together third-country governments, supported by global stakeholders involved in discussions at international level and by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO).

GACERE aims to bring the circular economy concept in multilateral fora such as the UN Environment Assembly in Nairobi and the General Assembly in New York, and groups such as the resource efficiency-oriented G7 and G20 in order to endeavour to steer them towards circularity. GACERE will also cooperate with regional initiatives in Latin America & the Caribbean and in Africa, which have a more practical, locally-based focus.

When GACERE was launched on 22 February 2021, it had 11 countries and the EU; since then, Morocco had also joined. The Alliance is set up in cooperation with the UNEP and UNIDO, and both of these should help implement GACERE's work. Strategic partners included the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, PACE and the World Circular Economy Forum.

Piotr Barczak (EEB): How could the Alliance and the European Commission cooperate with the ECESP?

Sitra and the Ellen MacArthur Foundation were involved, but how could other organisations get on board?

Emmanuelle Maire answered that this initiative was geared towards governments, but it might be possible to appoint one ECESP representative as the platform had a lot to offer.

Circular Cities & Regions Initiative (CCRI) (DG RTD)

Pavel Misiga:

	<p>This initiative was based on understanding how the transition to the circular economy could happen. We needed to reconfigure the currently linear patterns of consumption and production, by means of policies and incentives. It was important to experiment with possible solutions; the number of initiatives should grow until they became the mainstream and changed dominant patterns.</p> <p>The landscape was encouraging in terms of EU and national level strategic objectives and the various policies being shaped. What was still needed was support for local initiatives to enable them to be successful and inspire others to revolutionise the system. The first half of Horizon Europe would focus on supporting local and regional circular economy projects.</p> <p>The CCRI was a scheme to support circular economy deployment at regional scale, providing comprehensive support for regional initiatives. It planned to allocate EUR 250-300 million from 2020 to 2024, and the scheme might be extended to 2025-2027. It would focus on providing financial support for demonstration projects, with the first call for projects launched in 2020 under the Green Deal. It planned to allocate EUR 200 million of grants to regional initiatives in the first five years; the remaining funds would go to technical assistance. The EIB had agreed to provide financial advice for projects, and the OECD to assist with assessment tools. CCRI was keen to work with other partners as well.</p>	
<p>A.O.B – Dubai expo 2022</p>	<p>Freek van Eijk (Holland Circular Hotspot): The EU had to look outside its borders on circularity issues; international outreach was thus vital. The Dubai Expo was a huge event: it was the first Expo in the Middle East region, 192 countries would be present and sustainability was very high on the agenda. Two of its thematic weeks were relevant to the circular economy: HCH proposed that the ECESP focus on the week in January 2022 and organise a series of events in pavilions hosted by EU countries as there was no EU pavilion. The Dutch, Finns, Slovenians and French had volunteered. One idea would be to have rotating events related to the European Green Deal and the circular economy, framing it as a business opportunity rather than an expensive environmental measure. This would have to be organised quickly in collaboration with the host countries.</p> <p>Ladeja Godina Košir said that this would be a good opportunity for ECESP members to cooperate on a global project and that Freek van Eijk was the coordination point.</p>	

Closing remarks by the Chair	Ladeja Godina Košir thanked the CG members and said that the rolling plan needed to be consolidated by 18 May. Any CG members interested in getting involved with the projects presented should inform the secretariat.	The meeting was closed at 16:39.
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Interpreting was provided in EN and FR.

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