



European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform

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1. Background

The European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform (ECESP) is a joint initiative steered by the European Commission (EC) and the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) to foster the Circular Economy in Europe.

The Platform aims to bring together European stakeholders active in the field of Circular Economy who are committed to improving Europe's resource efficiency. By working together, these stakeholders can identify challenges and opportunities for the Circular Economy implementation at EU, national and local levels, thereby supporting the transition to a more sustainable and resource-efficient and circular economy. This collaborative approach strengthens our joint efforts and underscores the importance of enduring partnerships and frameworks that drive progress in this area. The idea of a stakeholder-driven platform to foster the transition to a Circular Economy in Europe is a collaborative effort by the EESC and the European Commission¹.

Following the success of the European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform in 2017-2025, the European Commission, represented by DG ENV, and the European Economic and Social Committee

¹ The EESC suggested establishing a European Circular Economy Platform in an [opinion](#) adopted in 2014. The following year, the European Commission proposed engaging stakeholders through sectoral Platforms in its first Circular Economy Action Plan. The EESC [finetuned](#) the idea of an open European platform for the Circular Economy, bringing together stakeholders, including civil society. In a letter to the EESC dated December 2016, then-Vice-Presidents Frans Timmermans and Jyrki Katainen proposed setting up an inter-institutional cooperation. The EESC and the European Commission then organised ECESP's first annual conference and launched the Platform in March 2017. The Circular Economy gained momentum in 2020 when the European Commission identified the European Green Deal as the EU's sustainable growth strategy, and the European Commission referred to the ECESP in its [Circular Economy Action Plan](#) published in 2020.



(EESC), represented by the sections on Agricultural, Rural Development and Agriculture (NAT) and Single Market, Production and Consumption (INT) are committed to building on this well-established success story and to continue managing the Platform jointly in the future.

2. Objectives of the Platform

The European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform is a stakeholder-driven project enriched by bottom-up and top-down exchanges. The Platform is best described as the "network of networks" going beyond sectoral activities and highlighting cross-sector opportunities and challenges.

It is a hub gathering knowledge, a place for dialogue and a bridge between existing initiatives. By making the information more easily accessible and providing a framework for exchange and discussion, the ECESP contributes to disseminating the Circular Economy concept at national, regional and local level and connects with key policy fields such as bioeconomy, competitiveness and prosperity. The ECESP also supports the efforts of implementation and simplification of EU legislation.

The Platform aims to:

- Promote the Circular Economy concept across Member States, regional and local governments, civil society, and businesses, while also connecting with the global community.
- Strengthen cooperation among stakeholders' networks to facilitate the exchange of expertise and good practices related to the Circular Economy.
- Identify social, economic, and cultural barriers to the transition towards a Circular Economy, highlight existing or new solutions, and propose initiatives that promote the Circular Economy.
- Bring the voice of stakeholders from national, regional and local level to EU policymakers.

3. Structure of the Platform

The Platform is open to all Circular Economy stakeholders. The ECESP is structured as follows:

3.1 Stakeholder Policy dialogue (Pillar I)

The policy dialogue reflects the Platform's unique bottom-up/top-down approach. This pillar of the Platform aims to unite stakeholders and facilitate the exchange of views, knowledge, and experiences, to accelerate the transition to a Circular Economy.

The main feature of this policy dialogue is the Platform's annual conference. The event is organised jointly by the European Commission and the EESC, who will strive to involve the country holding the presidency of the Council of the European Union.

This conference is a flagship event for the two institutions and the Circular Economy community at large. The conference gathers stakeholders from the EU and beyond to engage and exchange on the Circular Economy.



The Platform also organises other activities to promote further dialogue and interactivity, thus encouraging research and innovation. These activities, such as the #EUCircularTalks, gather stakeholders such as businesses, trade unions, civil society organisations and public authorities.

3.2 Coordination (Pillar II)

The Platform is governed by a **Steering Group** (SG), composed of European Commission and EESC representatives, which provides a coordinated strategy for the ECESP.

The Steering Group selects and appoints Circular Economy stakeholders as members of a **Coordination Group** (CG) to coordinate the Platform's activities².

The **ECESP Secretariat**, hosted by the EESC, assists the Coordination Group and facilitates the information flow between the Coordination Group and the Steering Group.

a) Steering Group

The ECESP Steering Group, composed of European Commission representatives and EESC representatives, provides a coordinated strategy for the ECESP. Regular meetings of the Steering Group will ensure an open communication channel between the two institutions.

Decisions in Steering Group meetings are made by consensus between the Head of Unit representing the European Commission (DG ENV in the lead), and the EESC Members. The Steering Group may invite and consult with the Coordination Group Chair(s) where appropriate.

The Steering Group selects and appoints through an open call of expressions of interest Circular Economy stakeholders as members of a Coordination Group to coordinate the Platform's activities. In agreement with the Coordination Group, the Steering Group may invite specific organizations which do not qualify to become full members of the Coordination Group to join the Coordination Group as observers to support and contribute to the Platform's work.

The Steering Group itself supports and contributes to the Platform's operational work through the Coordination Group, with each institution adding unique value to the Coordination Group's efforts based on its specific role. The European Commission develops and implements EU legislation, while the EESC enriches the process with its advisory role in the policy-making landscape. As the voice of civil society, the EESC brings a stakeholder-driven approach, bridging the gap between policy and practice, and acting as a facilitator between stakeholders and EU institutions. This allows the EESC to request input from the Coordination Group to develop EESC policy recommendations. The EESC's

² The selection procedure is conducted following an open call for expression of interest.



advisory role and interaction with the European Commission ensures that the perspectives of those directly involved in the Circular Economy are well represented and integrated into EU policies. This approach will ensure alignment of top-down and bottom-up approaches when the EESC delivers its recommendations to the Commission.

b) Coordination Group

The role of the Coordination Group (CG) is to act as ambassadors of the ECESP and to contribute to the implementation of its objectives, building on the work done in previous mandates. It brings together circular economy-related multi-stakeholder networks and platforms. The Coordination Group may also express positions on matters promoting the Circular Economy and produce joint declarations to foster debate among the Circular Economy community.

The Coordination Group should be composed of a balanced number of representatives from the following categories:

- businesses: this category refers to groupings/organisations of businesses and extends to trade unions and civil society organisations.
- public authorities: this category can refer to public authorities in all levels of governance as well as EU networks of public authorities.
- knowledge: this category can comprise organisations such as civil society organisations, think tanks, youth organisations and research centres.

The composition of the Coordination Group should reflect the diverse range of Circular Economy stakeholders across the EU in a balanced manner, encompassing factors such as geography, gender, and sectoral representation. This approach ensures that all relevant perspectives are included, promoting a comprehensive and inclusive dialogue.

Observers to the Coordination Group, appointed by the Steering Group, may join to support and contribute to the Platform's work.

The Coordination Group selects one of its members as Chair.

c) Secretariat

The EESC hosts the ECESP Secretariat, which is the leading facilitator for the Platform. It oversees the preparation of meetings and events, coordinates the Platform's activities, manages its communication and ensures business continuity.

The Secretariat:

- facilitates the communication between the Coordination Group and Steering Group members, and between the European Commission and the EESC in the context of the Platform.



- is the contact point for the Coordination Group and provides active support to the Coordination Group, in particular to its Chair(s).
- facilitates communication between the Coordination Group members and third parties in the context of the ECESP (e.g. with EU institutions, networks, civil society organisations, ...).
- supports the preparation and implementation of the Coordination Group work plan and contributes to the Annual Activity Report.
- selects and reviews submissions (e.g. good practices, news, knowledge items) and publishes circular content from the Coordination Group and other stakeholders on the ECESP website.
- manages the ECESP communications channels (incl. Website, social media and newsletter).
- organises the annual conference in close collaboration with the European Commission, the EESC and the Coordination Group.

The standard working language of the Platform is English. Additional languages may be used on a case-by-case basis, especially for communication purposes.

3.3 Knowledge, strategies and good practices (Pillar III)

a) Website

The ECESP website, hosted by the EESC, is a one-stop shop for the Circular Economy in the EU. It showcases Circular Economy-related content such as news, strategies, good practices, studies, events and a toolbox, submitted by Circular Economy stakeholders and processed for publication by the ECESP Secretariat.

The website links with other relevant Circular Economy platforms, networks and initiatives and will integrate them as appropriate.

b) Communication

The Platform has its own visual identity and communication channels to support the implementation of the ECESP objectives. This consolidated approach increases impact through coordinating messages and delivering them in a structured way to the target stakeholders.

The participants in the Platform will be encouraged to advertise their participation in the Platform both on their websites and in their own events related to the Circular Economy. They are also encouraged to promote the goals of the Platform and express their views on the development of the Circular Economy and submit for publication on the ECESP website all the relevant documents/news/projects produced by their organisation.

4. Duration and review of the inter-institutional cooperation



The present terms of reference are concluded for an initial duration of 2.5 years (starting on 1 October 2025), with automatic prolongation by periods of 2.5 years, unless the European Commission or EESC requests a revision three months before the end of the mandate.

The activities of the Platform will be reviewed in the Annual Activity Report, which may contribute to assessing Circular Economy policy development and lead to adjustments in the interinstitutional cooperation on the ECESP.