

SENSING THE ZEITGEIST

10 SIGNALS

**OF
THE**

Circular Transition

**Circular Change Journey & Impact
2016–2026**



Circular Change

Sensing the Zeitgeist

10 Years of Circular Change

We didn't start with a master plan. We started with a feeling.

In 2016, I drew a simple star — **a vision of what Circular Change could become**: a space connecting policy, business, creativity and people across borders, shaped by shared values, purpose and a way of working rooted in trust, collaboration and real impact.

Looking back, this was not strategy. **It was sensing the direction of change.**

Encounters with pioneers such as **Guido Braam in the Netherlands** helped shape this early direction, offering both inspiration and a sense of possibility. At the time, circular economy was largely associated with waste and recycling, but **the 2015 EU Circular Economy Action Plan** opened a much bigger space. It was a systemic shift and a new way of thinking about value.

It felt like stepping into something not yet fully formed. But **the direction was clear.**

Over the past decade, together with our community, **we followed that sense** - connecting people, shaping ideas, and turning them into action. **Storytelling** became **our way of making sense of complexity and inviting others in**, turning abstract concepts into shared narratives that people could feel, understand and act upon.

Along the way, this opened doors to collaborations, roles and initiatives that helped shape the circular economy landscape. From **chairing the European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform** to global recognition at **Davos**, and partnerships spanning **from Europe to Brazil, Japan and Australia**.

This journey has never been a solo one. My sincere gratitude goes to our **Circular Change Honorary Council**, the entire **Circular Change crew**, our **ECESP partners** and the **wider community**, including the **Circular Sisters**. For navigating this path together, with trust and persistence.

This is not only a story of what we did. It is a reflection of what becomes possible **when you trust the signals of the time and build on them together.**

Ladeja
Godina Košir



**FOUNDER & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF
CIRCULAR CHANGE / CO-CHAIR OF ECESP**

EMBRACE

2016



From vision to implementation

Embracing the circular economy

The first **Circular Change conference** was among the early international platforms dedicated to circular economy, at a time **when the concept was only starting to gain traction in Europe**. It brought together policymakers, businesses, researchers and innovators to explore how circular principles could **move from vision to implementation**, with keynote contributions including **Janez Potočnik**, former European Commissioner for the Environment.

From the outset, the focus was on **co-creation and systemic change**, positioning Slovenia as a proactive player within a rapidly emerging global movement, in dialogue with leading actors such as the **Ellen MacArthur Foundation**.



Circular Change

EXPERIMENT

20
17

Walking the talk: enabling circular transformation

The second Circular Change conference framed Slovenia as a **playground for circular economy transition**, bringing together diverse actors to test new approaches in practice. A defining moment was the dialogue between **Miro Cerar, Prime Minister of Slovenia (2014–2018)**, and a representative of the **World Economic Forum**, linking national ambition with global momentum.

Beyond the conference, Circular Change began to gain international visibility through **early global engagements and speaking contributions**, marking a shift from convening to active participation in shaping the emerging agenda.

500+ international participants at the CC Conference



Unfolding circular economy roadmaps

Circular Change co-created **one of the first national circular economy roadmaps in Europe**, laying the foundation for similar processes internationally. The topic took centre stage at the conference, which also expanded the narrative by linking circular economy with design and culture, including a **circular fashion show by Matea Benedetti**.

At the same time, the organisation assumed a **European leadership role by chairing the European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform (ECESP)** and gained global recognition with a **Circular Leadership Award nomination at the World Economic Forum in Davos**. International collaborations and industry projects further extended its reach.

5 National Circular Economy Roadmaps presented



PRACTICE

20
19

*Climate-KIC
meets Slovenia*



On the ground – everyday challenges of circular companies

The 4th Circular Change conference marked a decisive shift towards implementation, addressing **real-world challenges across supply chains, finance and markets**. It also connected Slovenia with **Europe's leading climate innovation community through Climate-KIC**.

This momentum translated into concrete action: developing **circular economy roadmaps for the City of Ljubljana, for Serbia**, and further extending this work across the **Western Balkans**, expanding collaboration with international partners, and deepening global engagement through **academia, including Doshisha University in Kyoto, Japan**. At the European level, Circular Change connected circular economy with creative industries through the **Creative & Circular initiative**, contributing to the emergence of the New European Bauhaus.



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IMAGINE

20
21



40+ circular
changemakers
featured in
Circular Insider

Unlocking circular creativity

Circular Change **contributed to the Slovenian Presidency of the Council of the EU** with a keynote **Sensing Circular Economy**, inviting a shift from understanding to experiencing circularity — through intuition, relationships and lived practice.

This perspective was further developed through the **publication Circular Insider**, featuring circular change-makers and new narratives for the transition. At the same time, Circular Change expanded its international engagement and partnerships, from **Nordic collaborations to global platforms such as COP26**, as well as contributions to international dialogues, innovation platforms and emerging collaborations across Europe.



Circular Change

Connecting circular networks and hubs

Circular Change evolved into a **key orchestrator of circular economy collaboration**, advancing the concept of a **network of networks** through its leadership within the European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform and initiatives such as EU Circular Talks.

From networks to global impact



Its influence extended globally, contributing to the **Global Circular Economy Roadmap initiative with Chatham House** and global partners, engaging with organisations such as **WIPO**, and collaborating in European innovation ecosystems. In parallel, the organisation continued to deliver, supporting **circular economy strategies in Montenegro and Kosovo** in collaboration with **UNDP** and **Deloitte**.

LIVE

2023

More than 5 million people in the EU took the PSLifestyle test



Living the circular lifestyle

Circular economy moved into everyday life. Through **Horizon Europe flagship project PSLifestyle**, Circular Change engaged citizens across Europe in exploring more sustainable choices, while **Boost4BioEast supported the bioeconomy transition**.

This translated into **action across diverse contexts** — through a keynote at **Iceland's national food systems conference**, the development of **Ljubljana's smart and sustainable tourism roadmap**, the launch of the **international educational programme Ecotopia**, and contributions to regional collaboration through **Austria Connect Southeast Europe**.



Circular Change

Empowering circular transition brokers

From experience emerged a new insight: **transformation needs dedicated roles**. Circular Change advanced the concept of **transition brokers** - actors who connect policy, business, finance and communities to enable systemic change, developed in collaboration with international experts such as **Jacqueline Cramer**.

This thinking was **grounded in practice**, from the **World Circular Economy Forum** in Brussels and the **Brazilian Circular Hotspot** to capacity building through the **Zasavje Circular Economy Academy** and exchange with Dutch partners.

Let's make transition brokers a profession



BRIDGE

2025



From circular economy to circular diplomacy



Advancing circular diplomacy

Circular Change brought its work to a new level by advancing **circular diplomacy**. This positioned circular economy as a framework for international cooperation in a shifting geopolitical landscape.

This vision came to life through global engagement, from **Expo 2025 Osaka** and the World Circular Economy Forum in **Brazil** to **Paris InfraWeek**, connecting **policy, investment and infrastructure**. In parallel, regional programme **Transformator** supported the transformation of business models towards circularity and competitiveness **across five countries**.



Circular Change

...and we go on

20
26

Over the past decade, Circular Change has worked with governments, international organisations, businesses and communities across Europe and beyond. **Building not only projects and partnerships, but a strong foundation of social capital.**

In times shaped by geopolitical shifts, resource pressures and growing uncertainty, this capital, rooted in shared values, trust, transparency, professionalism and humanity, enables us to continue working together, **co-creating the next phase of the transition.**

**LET'S MAKE THE WORLD
A PLAYGROUND,
NOT A BATTLEFIELD.**



In 10 years, our collaboration has resulted in:

1000+

Organisations
engaged

50+

Countries
reached

20+

Circular economy
strategic documents
shaped

5+

National circular
economy
roadmaps
co-created

5M+

Citizens reached
via PSLifestyle

**10
YEARS**

of (co)chairing the
European Circular Economy
Stakeholder Platform

100+

Articles & expert
contributions

50+

International
speaking
engagements
annually



Circular Change

HONORARY COUNCIL



Janez Potočnik

(President of the Council):

Co-Chair of the International Resource Panel /
Partner at SYSTEMIQ



Guido Braam

CEO Powered by Meaning / CEO Route Circulair



Prof. Jacqueline Cramer

Emeritus Professor of Sustainable Innovation
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Karin Huber Heim

Chair for Austrian Task Force of Circular
Economy / Executive Director Circular
Economy



Patrick Schroeder

Senior Research Fellow at Chatham House



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*Thank
you all*