



EU Circular Talks: Youth voices on Circular Economy

Opportunities, good practices and challenges for youth engagement in the EU circular economy

Introduction

Young people around Europe have already shown on numerous occasions their concerns on climate-related issues, as well as the implications therein. The youth engagement for ambitious environmental measures has been seen in climate movements such as Fridays for Future and in many youth organisations. Young people have also stood out as a result of their contributions to developing innovative circular business models so as to put an end to the destructive “take-make-waste” model. **Young people have an important role to play in the transition to a circular economy** as a representative of consumers with different and higher expectations than the generations before them regarding sustainability. They are also innovative entrepreneurs aware of the limit of the current economic model and ready to rethink production and consumption habits as they enter the professional world.

As a coalition of the largest youth networks at the European level **Generation Climate Europe** works everyday to make the voice of the youth heard across the continent. Generation Climate Europe has the ambition to empower young people, give them the keys to defend their ideals as well as to encourage their initiatives. We believe this European Union Circular Talk is a great opportunity to demonstrate how youth can play a key role in the transition to a circular economy in Europe.

Purpose

The objective of this Circular Talk is twofold. Firstly, it aims at highlighting how young people are involved and pushing for action in the area of circular economy through various projects and initiatives. Secondly this Circular Talk aspires to identify key areas in which the youth may play an active role in the circular economy transition in Europe.

Consequently, we will discuss the opportunities and challenges that young people encounter when deciding to get involved in projects linked to the circular economy. During this event, we will gather input from various stakeholders - ranging from policy makers to academics, entrepreneurs and activists - in order to discuss together the most effective way for the youth to engage in the political, economic and societal changes required to address the environmental challenges before us.

Organisation of the EUCT

This EUCT will be conducted through a four-stage process:

- **The first phase is an open online discussion, launched on the 17th of May.** During these two preliminary weeks, young Europeans are invited to share their thoughts on the priorities to be addressed at the EU level with regards to circular economy and how the youth can play an active role in encouraging the shift towards sustainability.
- **The second phase is a virtual event, held on the 3rd of June.** This virtual event will open on a panel discussion on the current state of play on Circular Economy within the European

Union, on the role the youth has played, and can play, in order to weigh in on the sustainable transition and what the European Union can do to encourage the youth engagement. The objective of this panel discussion is to gain a comprehensive picture of the situation. Therefore, our panel will be made up of policy-makers, activists, academia and entrepreneurs.

After having set the scene, attendees will join one of the four workshops dedicated to sectors we consider as priorities: Food, Digitalisation, Energy and Textiles. The objective of these workshops is to gather the opinions and priorities of young people on these key policy areas. Each workshop will host a discussion between two speakers who will share their knowledge, experience and advice on the current challenges of the priority sector with regards to circularity. Exchanges will also address what can be done by young people to promote change and what the European Union should do to encourage and facilitate youth initiatives.

- After the event, **the online discussion will remain active during phase 3 to act as a follow-up**, to pursue, enrich and react to the discussions we had during the online event.
- **The final phase of the EUCT is the publishing of an outcome document that gathers and synthesizes the discussions.** This document is meant to be a mainspring and a facilitator for youth engagement, as well as a resource document for policy-makers to identify key measures to support young Europeans' initiatives.

Organising team

Generation Climate Europe (GCE) is the largest coalition of youth-led networks at the European level, pushing for stronger action from the EU on climate and environmental issues. GCE brings together 460 national organisations across 47 countries in Europe. We are guided by the voices of 20 million young Europeans.

Date and time

3rd of June 2021 from 13:00 to 14:30 p.m. CEST.

Target Audience

This EUCT is primarily aimed at young people from secondary grade education to young professionals. However, people of any age with interest in the circular economy are very welcome. Generation Climate Europe's member organisations encompass a diverse range of young people. In the same logic, we believe our EUCT should be inclusive and should be the opportunity for all young people to actively engage, irrespective of their backgrounds and ages.

Joining details

The registration for the event will start on the 17th of May on the EU Circular Talks website. ZOOM Webinar will be used, hosted on GCE's members channels. The link will be shared soon.

Agenda

13:00 - 13:05	Welcoming of participants by GCE moderator
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13:05 - 13:35	<p>Opening panel discussion with representatives from the European Economic and Social Committee, youth activists, academics, and circular economy entrepreneurs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● State of play of Circular Economy at the European Union level, the Circular Economy Action Plan, and how this issue is interlinked with other EU strategies ● Exchange on the priorities for the European Union to address and what should be the vision of the future. ● Presentation of youth initiatives, discussion on concrete actions which can be undertaken, obstacles and opportunities ● Discussion on the role the European Union can play to accompany youth initiatives and ensure a stronger youth engagement in circular economy
13:35 - 14:15	<p>Four parallel workshops in breakout sessions. The objective of the workshops is to explain the current situation of precise sectors with regards to the circular economy and identify concrete actions for the youth to make change. We will present good practices and focus on enablers and challenges that young people encounter on their path, and how these challenges should be addressed by EU policies.</p> <p>In each breakout session, one expert and one young European engaged in the circular economy will share their knowledge and experience. The sessions will open with a brief presentation of what circular economy means for this precise sector, what actions have been undertaken and how the youth can engage. After that, Generation Climate Europe will moderate a discussion to understand what are the challenges the youth has to face when engaging, how to overcome these and what role the European Union can play.</p> <p>The audience will be invited to share their comments and questions in order to gather different opinions and widen the debate. The four priority sectors are the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Textiles: The textile workshop will focus on circular economy with regards to fashion ● Digitalisation: The workshop on digitalisation will engage discussion on ways for the youth to promote change within digital devices production and consumption ● Food: The workshop on Food will address food waste and food security ● Energy: The workshop on energy will concentrate on sustainable use and production of energy and how the Youth can engage to encourage the end of the predominance of fossil energy <p>Participants have the possibility to mention their preferred workshop focus in the registration form. We will respect the preferences as much as possible, whilst also paying attention to a participation balance between breakout sessions.</p>
14:15 - 14:25	Wrapping up of the discussions and final remarks
14:25 - 14:30	Concluding message