



Welcome to the workshop

SOCIAL DIMENSION OF CIRCULAR ECONOMY

European Economic and Social Committee, JDE61

7 March 2019, 09:30 – 10:50

Objective

- **Share findings on the circular economy's impact on labour and discuss adequate policy responses**
- **Consider the key role a functional economy can play in spreading circular principles for social development**

Leaders

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industriAll [European Trade Union]

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Schedule

Welcome by the Leaders

Panel 1: What are the impacts of the transition to a circular economy on workers?

Introduction by the Moderator

Peter Schmidt

European Economic and Social Committee

@WorkersEESC

Findings on the *"Impacts of circular economy policies on the labour market"*

Dr. Carlos Montalvo

TNO [Netherlands Organisation for Applied Scientific Research]

@TNO_Research

Research on *"Benefits of longer lifetimes for products"*

Philip Summerton

Cambridge Econometrics

@CambridgeEcon

Discussion seeking input from the audience on the impact of circular economy on labour

Panel 2: What impact can a functional economy have in delivering a circular transition for society?

François-Michel Lambert MP

Institut National d'Économie Circulaire

@fm_lambert

Prof. Thierry Libaert

European Economic and Social Committee

@Eco_Circulaire

@Thierrylt

Dr. Eric Fromant

Stratégie d'Economie de Fonctionnalité Intégrée aux Organisations

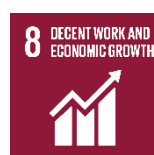
@DiversEESC

Discussion seeking further examples or sources of information on this potential impact

Summary and conclusions by the Leaders

Key Questions

- **How does the circular transformation of industrial value chains in Europe impact employment?** Do longer product lifetimes, designing for maintenance and stimulating repair, re-use and recycling have a positive impact on the labour market? **Can policy tools mitigate negative impacts?**
- **What does civil society expect from a circular transition?** Does this include rules stimulating consistent product labelling, actions limiting premature obsolescence and other regulatory steps?
- **Does the circular economy transition contribute to delivering Agenda 2030?** How can taking labour into consideration and paying due attention to societal transformation help achieve Sustainable Development Goals 3 (good health and well-being), 4 (quality education), 8 (decent work and economic growth), 10 (reduced inequalities)?





Setting the scene

The circular transition is happening: governments at all levels are developing and implementing policies that commit them to move up the waste hierarchy, while industry has begun using scrap metal as secondary raw material in manufacturing and is "closing the loop" in material flows. In theory, this transition to a more resource efficient Europe should thus reduce negative environmental impacts and contribute to higher employment, with increasing demand for labour especially in the repair and recycling sectors.

Recently, landmark studies have moved from charting the potential impact this transition will have on particular industries, and made steps towards outlining the necessary steps governments and industries must take to ensure workers have the necessary skills for circular manufacturing and citizens receive the education they need to be responsible consumers. Simultaneously there has also been a shift towards viewing products as goods that satisfy particular needs, thus enabling reframing as services that can be provided on-demand. Entrepreneurs are engaging their communities to launch product-as-a-service initiatives that deliver such a functional economy, but take up of and consumer trust in goods shared among peers remain low.

This workshop thus serves a two-fold purpose: first it aims to present key findings from recent studies on the labour market impact a circular economy will have and discuss adequate policy responses, then engage the wider societal perspective with particular attention being paid to the role a functional economy can play in moving from the linear consumption of products to circular use of goods. As the flow of resources and materials occurs across many companies and sectors, industrial value chains must collaborate from start to finish in delivering a circular economy. To ensure full cooperation in mobilising the private, civil and public sector towards making such networks effective and increasing the uptake of functional business models, societal buy-in is a precondition for a successful transition.

Coming up

- A **summary report** that highlights success stories in training and education, but also introduces new challenges in social engagement for the circular economy while be published on the ECESP website and sent to all conference participants
- **Presentations** will be published on the **conference webpage** upon authors' consent

About the workshop leaders



industriALL [European Trade Union] is a federation of independent and democratic trade unions representing manual and non-manual workers in the metal, chemical, energy, mining, textile, clothing and footwear sectors and related industries and activities. industriALL speaks for 7 million working men and women, united within 180 national trade union affiliates across 38 European countries.



The **Institut National d'Économie Circulaire [National Institute for Circular Economy]** is a multi-stakeholder association with 200 members spanning the range from companies to local governments, NGOs and schools. Being the reference point on circular economy in French, INEC has become the main partner for public authorities in defining and implementing the circular transition in France.

Want to keep the conversation going? Contribute your good practice on circulareconomy.europa.eu, join the online forum or drop us a line: CEStakeholderEU@eesc.europa.eu

