

CIRCULAR INSIDER

A Speed Date With Circular Economy Frontrunners

No. 1

June 2021



Circular
Economy

Circular
Culture

THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY – WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?

Be inspired by the true changemakers!
Business case studies, initiatives, personal
stories and much more.
Shape your circular lifestyle!

Circular
Change

**There is
a crack in
everything.
That's how
the light
gets in.**

**Leonard
Cohen**

Dear readers of Circular Insider,



The world is facing the Covid-19 pandemic and its consequences. The pandemic has forced us to act quickly and adapt to the new reality. Moreover, it has made us rethink our way of life and the future of development.

A period of social, cultural and economic recovery lies ahead. Many activities that form an integral part of our lives have been greatly affected by the pandemic despite displays of solidarity and mutual assistance, which proved to be indispensable in these difficult times.

As we take on the recovery, we must not forget that we, in fact, live in a time of two great world crises – the health, social and economic crisis caused by Covid-19, and the climate crisis. Both are serious and highly complex global problems that can only be solved if we work together and take timely and well thought out action.

The concurrence and intertwinement of these two crises presents a unique global challenge, which is why we must be extremely careful not to let the solution of one crisis result in the worsening of the other. Cooperation and coordination between countries and within the international community are of central importance.

A welcome example of such action is the assistance offered to Member States by the European Union in the form of the recovery and resilience facility NextGenerationEU. Its emphasis on sustainable and inclusive recovery and society's green and digital transformation gives Member States an important incentive to see the post-pandemic recovery process as an opportunity to abandon old, unsustainable practices and adopt new ones that are environmentally-friendly.

In the second half of 2021, Slovenia will hold the Presidency of the Council of the European Union. Our country assumes this role with full responsibility at a moment that is of critical importance to our future. The future of Europe must be green and sustainable. Slovenia is committed to this pledge, which will serve as a guide during our Presidency, taking into account the Sustainable Development Goals, the Agenda 2030 and the goals of the Paris Climate Agreement.

We will do our best to lead by example, as Slovenia is made for sustainable development. We have the necessary natural resources as well as capable and dedicated people who know how to use them responsibly. We do not consider sustainable development a threat to our current welfare but rather as an opportunity for creating new

jobs, for greening and requalifying our workforce from unsustainable to more environmentally friendly industries. I believe that the circular economy will have a central role in this social and economic transition.

Such change is not easy and does not happen overnight, but it is absolutely necessary. Scientists and young people all over the world have sounded the alarm. They are calling upon the decision-makers to start taking climate change seriously and adopt effective measures to mitigate its consequences. I take this issue very seriously – which is why, nearly two years ago, I created the Standing Committee for Climate Policy, striving to do everything in my power to ensure the best possible future for our children.

The time to act is now. We have the knowledge, the experience and, above all, the opportunity to make the world a better place. The responsibility lies with every one of us, with our countries and with the entire international community. I call upon each and every one of you to accept this responsibility and, together, we can create a future in which all of us can live in a clean, peaceful and safe environment.

With my best wishes,

Borut Pahor
President of the Republic of Slovenia

By Ladeja Godina Košir

Tell me something... ..about the circular economy.

What's in it for me?

This question is still often raised by the different people I interact with. I cannot imagine a better answer than introducing the stories of those who are already implementing circular solutions. Sometimes small but significant “cracks” are enough to make innovative and creative spirits find a way to initiate a circular transformation.

The best time for the Circular Insider is NOW!*

There is never a right time to start something new. You can wait for that perfect moment when everything is just as it is supposed to be before you take action. Or – you follow your intuition and simply make the first step, not knowing what exactly will follow. This is how the Circular Insider was born – and then the idea was warmly welcomed and supported by the circular changemakers you can meet while diving into the content of this very special issue. We are super-grateful to all of them!

*5 reasons WHY:

- 1 In Europe, we have adopted an ambitious programme – **the European Green Deal**, a plan to make the EU's economy sustainable. We can do this by turning climate and environmental challenges into opportunities and making the transition just and inclusive for all.
- 2 The Covid and climate crises are calling for action – **the Green Recovery Programme** offers a variety of resources to reinvent our economies within environmental boundaries. Right now, we are making decisions that will have a long-term impact.
- 3 Only by knowing our good, sustainable and circular economy practices can we position sLOVEnia in the international arena as a “**Green. Creative. Smart.**” country. At the time of **Slovenian Presidency of the EU council** (second half of 2021) it is even more important since the circular economy is one of the priority topics.
- 4 As interconnected and interdependent as we are – at the national as well as at the international level – we will strengthen our potential by **true collaboration and co-creation** that is only possible when we get to know each other.
- 5 **Shared values, purpose and vision** is needed for the super-demanding transformative journey that is ahead of us. By bridging the circular economy, circular culture and circular change, systemic change can evolve.



Enjoy your circular lifestyle!

With this issue of the Circular Insider we aim to achieve demystification of the term “circular economy” and encourage YOU to explore the best entry points for YOUR OWN circular economy journey. Driven by passion, curiosity and creativity, we are looking forward **to helping you begin to discover and enjoy the circular lifestyle**. Let's jointly walk the talk. Together we can pave the way towards a thriving society and economy.

The current system is no longer working for businesses, people or the environment.

We take resources from the ground to make products, which we use, and, when we no longer want them, throw them away. Take-make-waste. We call this a linear economy.

We are disrupting the system

The linear economy has to change.

We must transform all the elements of the take-make-waste system: how we manage resources, how we make and use products, and what we do with the materials afterwards. Only then can we create a thriving economy that can benefit everyone within the limits of our planet.

The new system is called the circular economy

It's a new way to design, make, and use things within planetary boundaries.

Shifting the system involves everyone and everything: businesses, governments, and individuals; our cities, our products, and our jobs. By designing out waste and pollution, keeping products and materials in use, and regenerating natural systems we can reinvent everything.

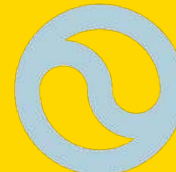
The circular economy represents systemic change. It goes beyond fixing current issues and incremental improvements. It's based on three principles



**Eliminate
waste and
pollution**



**Keep products
and materials
in use**



**Regenerate
natural
systems**

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The Ellen MacArthur Foundation develops and promotes the idea of a circular economy. It works in Education & Training, Business & Government, Insight & Analysis, Systemic Initiatives and Communications to accelerate the transition to a circular economy.

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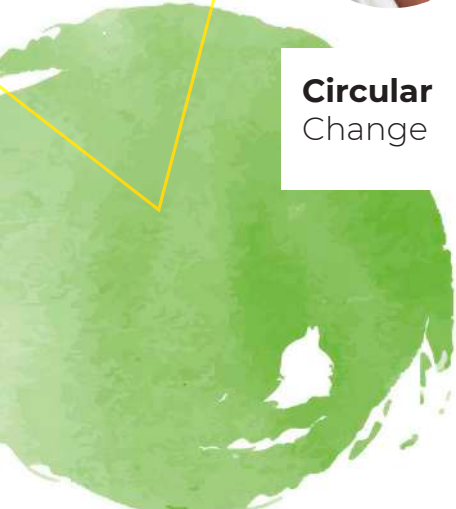


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The Future We Want

Earlier maybe than we expected, we are confronted with a choice: should we treat the symptom of the existing pandemic, or look deeper to find the cause and create the paradigm shift necessary to recover and prepare against future shocks?

Recently, I heard one of the respected climate activists from my country, Slovenia, Boštjan Videmšek, summarising wisely that times in our part of the world are, and will be, marked by **two major flows. Water flows from north to south**, based on the melting of the icecaps, and **humans flow from south to north**, based on the climate and other safety and security concerns and threats.

The lessons learned from the management of the Covid crisis are a clear signal, or even more, an alarm not to be ignored, that we must **acknowledge the seriousness of the challenges we are facing without delay. Collaboration** is needed at all levels, but mostly at a global level. For the first time in human history, we are living in a socio-ecological space of planetary scope. We can manage the problems we have created only by sharing sovereignty and addressing them together.

It is hard to imagine that we can channel our societies and economies in a sustainable direction without a real system transformation. An important part of the behavioural riddle guiding the development of human wellbeing in the right direction is the **market signals to producers and consumers**. We should stop giving producers signals that destroying natural capital is free of charge, and we should stop confusing consumers by asking them to behave responsibly, but requesting them to pay more if they do so. I would be the first to claim that **nature has an intrinsic value that we must respect and protect, that**

we must prize it, and that pricing it is a perverse way of doing that. But until, as so nicely put by Joseph E. Stiglitz, "The invisible hand (of the market) is invisible because it is often not there." This is, in the very words of Arto Paasilinna: a Charming Mass Suicide.

To get the market signals and related policies right, **deep political and cultural transformation** is needed. Only through a holistic health-check, only with the right diagnosis, can one begin to develop the right cure.

We need to **challenge ourselves**. We need to revalue what really matters and regenerate the notion of true happiness. We need to rebuild the world around the common good, and rethink the way we are managing the risks – as individuals, and collectively as private companies and public policy makers, locally and globally. We need to collaborate more to build resilient societies, adapt markets to our needs by aligning the signals given to the private sector with the public interest, and be better prepared for the unwanted, but likely. We need to accept our responsibility to govern the Future we Want. **We can start right here, right now.**



Let's welcome Circular Insider as a kind of door opener, as a source of inspiration on this journey. The journey of a thousand miles begins with one step (Lao Tzu).

Janez Potočnik
Co-chair UNEP International Resource Panel and Partner SYSTEMIQ

We are the people we have been waiting for

A circular economy means **taking responsibility for the products you make and the products you own**. In a world with limited resources, making the transition towards a circular economy drives us to **re-evaluate how we make and use our everyday products** – from building houses to the clothes we wear.

Whereas recycling was our top priority, giving garbage a second life, we are now looking towards the beginning of a product's life cycle, using different materials to reuse products more often, and being able to recycle even more.

In the Netherlands we are in the transition towards a full circular economy by 2050. Companies and the government are working together on solutions and reshaping products. **The initiatives are inspiring...** from jeans that are recycled into new ones, to a construction industry that invests in, for example, energy-generating windows.

My role in this transition is to bring people together, from all layers of society, to help each other in making the most impact and therefore contributing to an acceleration towards a circular economy. As an entrepreneur, I am looking at how we can create a system breakthrough for the better on a daily basis. As a proud member of the Honorary Council of Circular Change and a Board member of the Holland Circular Hotspot, I hope I can inspire and help people to set the transition in motion. Let's stop talking and start doing, because we are the people we have been waiting for!

Guido Braam, a circular economy expert
Member of the Honorary Council of Circular Change,
Supervisory Board of Holland Circular Hotspot,
Co-owner of Power by Meaning Group





CIRCULAR *economy*



By Boštjan Kralj

A sustainable concept for a green tomorrow

Lumar Zero Emission Living®

LUMAR is the leading Slovenian manufacturer of prefabricated, sustainable buildings. From the very beginning sustainability has been recognized as one of the key building blocks around which their business story has been evolving. It has been Lumar's main driver of innovation, with countless pioneering and pilot projects. However, sustainability is not just a principle that adds value to their production programme – it is the way they live and develop.

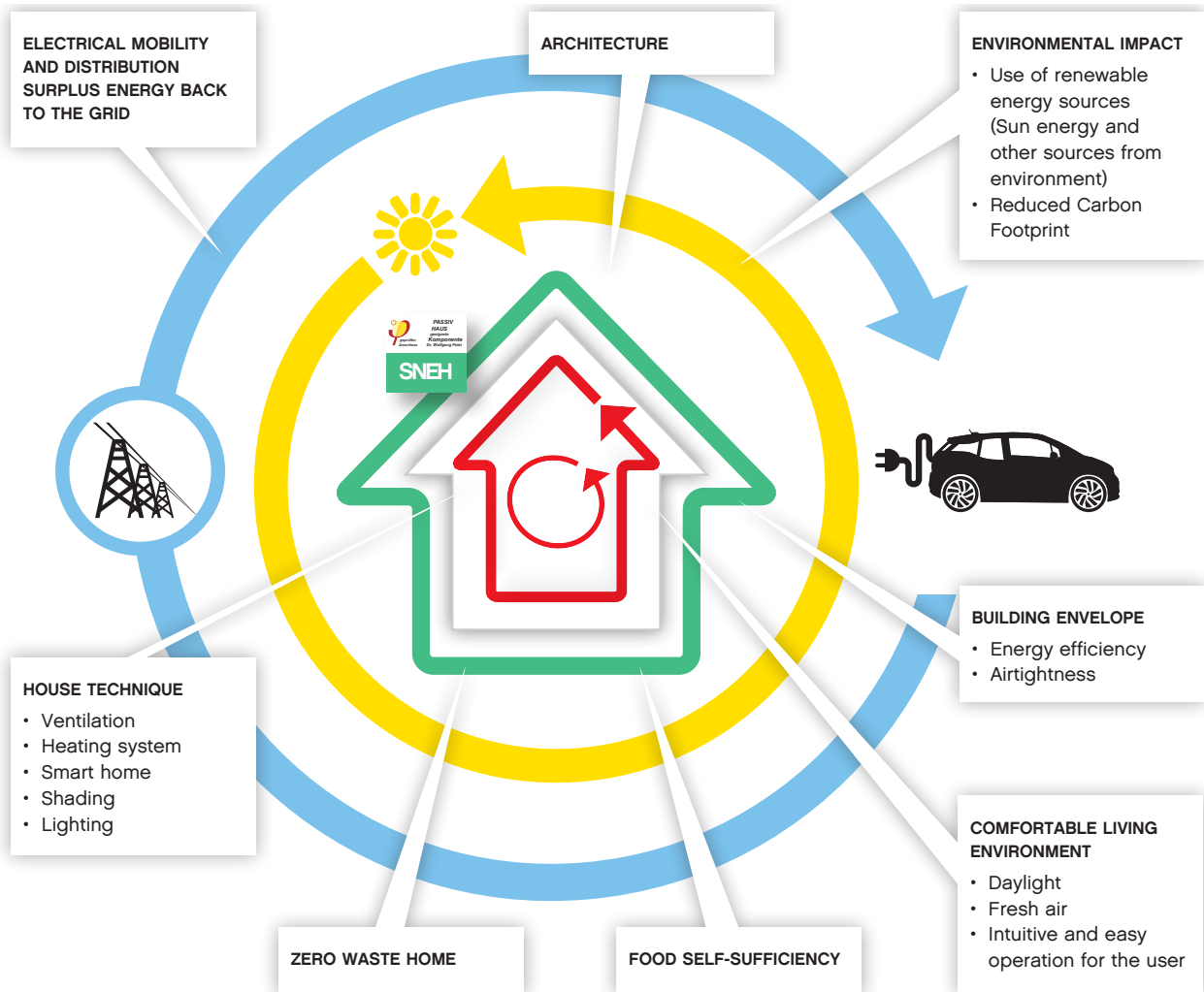
Everyone wants to live the best quality of life. Through our daily actions and decisions we co-create the image of the environment in which we live. The challenges of modern times call for comprehensive and innovative concepts in sustainable construction which provide us with comfort, safety, secure and comfortable living, and quality work from home.

Zero emission living

Trends show that we are once more turning back to nature. The concepts of self-sufficiency in housing are evolving in the fields of construction, energy supplies for building operations, electricity storage, food production, and so on. Home today is no longer simply a place where we spend time with family and friends; it is becoming an intersection of various technologies in the concept of sustainable living. All of this is combined in the Lumar Zero Emission Living® concept: a solution that comprehensively and holistically addresses all the aspects that affect our lives - sound, fresh air, temperature, daylight, the cost of operation throughout its life cycle, the use of renewable energy sources and more, creating a sustainable home for living comfortably without emissions.



Lumar Zero Emission Living®





Marko Lukić,
Director of LUMAR IG d.o.o.

In everything I do, I draw my inspiration from my mountaineering career and the time I spent in nature. I am very much aware that we are one with nature. This is why both I personally and the company are doing our best not to burden nature and natural resources any further.

Above all, I want our homeowners to feel comfortable and safe. The house is their nest of comfort, their shelter, and the built-in technology should serve them, and not the other way round.

The home of the future today

The solutions of the **Lumar Zero Emission Living®** concept can be experienced in the Lumar Primus-R 150 iEDITION model house in Dragomelj near Ljubljana. **With photovoltaic panels** on the carport, it can generate electricity for the operation of the house and charging the car. The electric car can drive up to 15,000 kilometres using the electricity surplus. **An installed green roof** on the model house returns the green areas taken away by the construction to nature, and at the same time it brings other environmental benefits, including air purification, reducing water run-off, regulating the ambient air temperature, and creating a living space for insects. **Lumar Zero Emission Living® solutions and their model house have successfully integrated the key criteria of sustainable construction: comfort of living, energy efficiency and environmental impact.** It was awarded a certificate by the organization Active House in Brussels.

High quality of life in contact with nature

Our generation spends most of its time indoors (about 90% of the time), so it is important that our homes are designed to offer the user healthy and comfortable living conditions. According to numerous

studies, daylight and fresh air are the key parameters for wellbeing and comfort. Another aspect is the use of natural materials in construction. Wood, as the core material in the construction of a prefabricated house, is a natural material, an insulator that retains heat yet makes the house airy. Such a house is environmentally friendly in both construction and demolition, as all materials are natural and do not burden the environment. Wooden construction takes a leading role in quality, almost zero-energy building in Slovenia and around the world, thanks to its energy management efficiency. Thoughtful planning, including the architectural design, the use of selected and tested materials, and a refined concept of ventilation, natural lighting and interior acoustics, ensure a high quality of life throughout the year.

A pioneer of sustainable construction

Lumar is a leading promoter and integrator in the field of sustainable construction. The company develops and connects various industries and technologies in Slovenia. In the last 15 years they have embarked on numerous pioneering or pilot projects and have created national trends in prefabricated and sustainable construction of both private and public buildings.

DONAR

Starting as a small business, Donar has developed into one of the key players in design furniture with the highest environmental standards. They follow the 'cradle to cradle' model with design thinking (Double Diamond) principles, focusing on design management. Their flagship products are NicoLess, ChatLoop, and Collodi, all made from recycled felt (PES) using waste as an industrial material of the future.

Re-thinking our philosophy of socially responsible and sustainable design, we have made the decision to invest ourselves in building a carbon-neutral, environmentally conscious society.

We have developed a strategy that integrates the principles of the Circular Economy into all our products and services, and broken it down into three simple guidelines: environmental awareness, social impact and an excellent user experience.

In three words: Earth. Intelligence. Comfort.

Why choose between business and the environment? The environment is our business!





Matej Feguš, Owner and Design Manager, DONAR:

“Design is not just lines and beauty – first and foremost it is about the social impact.”



Luxury

can be

The leading ethical
luxury brand of
Slovenian designer
Matea Behedetti

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Matea Benedetti is an award-winning Slovenian designer, the founder of the sustainable and animal-free luxury fashion label Benedetti Life, and a pioneer in sustainable luxury fashion. Luxury aesthetics, environmental awareness, responsible consumerism and ethical business practices are at the centre of her craftsmanship.

Can you explain to us how luxury and sustainability can actually work together?

Sustainable luxury in the Benedetti Life case means that we choose rare, carefully selected materials with the intention of producing a responsibly made product. When sourcing for our designs, we prioritise cruelty-free, ecologically certified, recycled, and biodegradable fibres. We print carefully selected textiles with eco-friendly, water-based dyes, and all the production is local, made in Italy. In our eyes, luxury also means sustaining others through fair relationships and fair trade. Benedetti Life is a luxury brand, but it is also sustainable and animal-free.

The circular economy is a recognised principle in different areas – design, in general, is one of the basic foundations for circularity. But what does circular mean for a fashion designer like you? How do you integrate circular orientation into your work?

Recycling, upcycling, the circular economy, and regenerative fashion all have the same thing in common: the idea of prolonging or giving new life to old textiles, fishing nets, plastic bottles, old clothes, etc. – anything that was once used by humans. Our sources have limitations, but we are solving this big issue even in the fashion industry with the circular economy. I have worked with apple skin leather that was made from waste from the food industry – the same with pineapple leather. My knitwear has been made with recycled plastic bottles and recycled cotton, and there are textiles made from fishing nets that work very well for swimwear.

Your sustainable fashion pieces are recognised by the public and have also won awards. However, what is the real acceptance of your clients – how do they feel about sustainable fashion? Are there any particular segments of people more attracted to your fashion?

The biggest challenge for me is to get my products into the shops. They are still afraid to open the door to unknown brands, even if they are biodegradable or made with recycled textiles. Direct sales, for now, work much better for me. When both women and men touch the textiles I work with, and hear the story of the animals I dedicate the collection to, they almost can't go home without buying a piece or even more. My fashion is timeless, honest, pure, healthy, noble, and with a mission.

Where do you as an advanced fashion designer see opportunities for sustainable fashion? What should be changed or pushed forward to attract clients or change attitudes?

People must understand that buying cheap, unsustainable products is a short-term win. To understand this we must teach them the true difference between sustainable and unsustainable textiles, and what has a low CO₂ impact on the planet. Today there are so many brands promoting sustainability, but the percentage of their impact on the planet is very different from brand to brand. Here we, as consumers, must be more active and learn who to trust and who not, because marketing is one of the most powerful tools of manipulation. Knowledge and transparency are important.



By **Alenka Recelj Mercina**, MSc, NLB Group Sustainability Coordinator

Supporting the transition to a **low-carbon economy**

NLB Group on the path to sustainable banking

A circular economy is very much about reduce, reuse, refill, repair, repurpose, replace, recycle and so on. But what about banks? Can banks re-something which makes a significant impact on climate change mitigation or adaptation? Banks can *reorient* financial flows, and this is one of the circular economy related concepts that the NLB Group wants to be associated with.

The NLB Group adapting its business model:

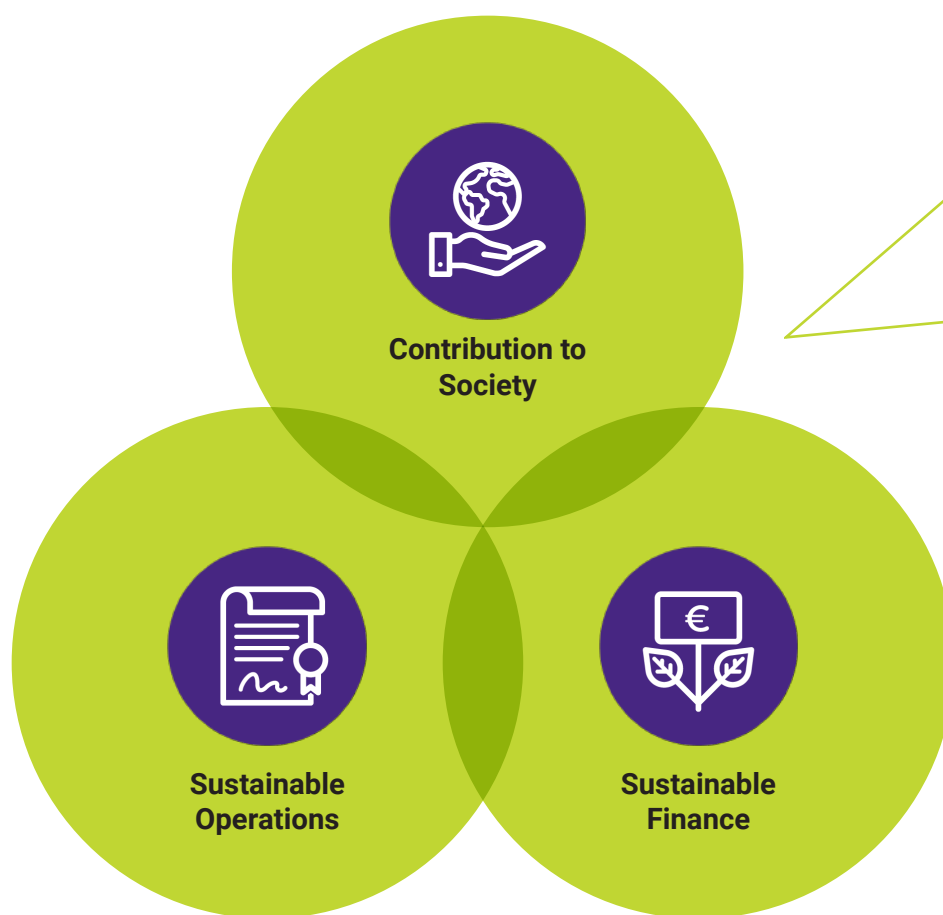
- not only to support the effective **reorientation of capital flows** towards sustainable investment to achieve sustainable and inclusive growth,
- but also to **manage financial risks** stemming from climate change, resource depletion, environmental degradation, and social issues,
- and to **foster transparency and long-termism** in its activity.

All of these are also objectives of the **EU Action Plan on Sustainable Finance**, released in 2018 with the purpose of channelling private financial flows towards investments supporting the **UN Paris Agreement** target of a neutral-carbon economy by 2050, and more broadly the **UN Sustainable Development Goals**.

The NLB Group is the largest banking and financial group in Slovenia, with a strategic focus in selected markets of SE Europe. It is present in markets with a total population of around 17 million residents.

The three pillars of NLB Group sustainability

NLB Group records sustainable financial performance and actively contributes to a more balanced and inclusive economic and social system.



Key impact areas:

Environmental

Climate Mitigation & Adaptation
Biodiversity
Resource Efficiency & Circular Economy

Social

Gender Equality
Human Rights
Financial Inclusion
Decent Employment

Internal Change

Strategy Alignment
Impact and Targets
Clients and Customers
Stakeholders
Governance and Culture
Transparency and Accountability

With the adoption of the NLB Group's Sustainability Programme at the end of 2020, the bank has moved from the phase of raising awareness to the phase of actively implementing sustainability elements into the business model. The goal of this organisation-wide initiative is to ensure the sustainable financial performance of the bank by considering social and environmental risks and opportunities in its operations, and to actively contribute to a more balanced and inclusive economic and social system.

Pillar #1: Contribution to society

We actively contribute to broader socio-economic development through our Corporate Social Responsibility activities, with an overarching focus on education in the communities in which we operate. In addition, we also support a range of external initiatives such as social and humanitarian projects, arts and culture, health and the environment, and sports.

Pillar #2: Sustainable finance

Sustainable finance integrates environmental, social, and governance (ESG) criteria into our business and investment decisions for the lasting benefit of our clients and society. Embedding sustainability practices within our lending, investments, products, and services is the most significant way to support our national and global sustainable development goals. It also enables us to manage risks to our own financial performance and profit from business opportunities emerging from the transition to a greener, more inclusive economy.

Pillar #3: Sustainable operations

'Sustainable operations' refers to the management of our direct ESG impacts, and ensuring we operate ethically and efficiently. Our aim to improve sustainable operations is accomplished through measurement, management, and reporting performance in alignment with relevant EU regulations and UNEP FI.

The NLB Group sustainability pledge

- By 2025 the NLB Group will fully align its business model with the UN Principles for Responsible Banking.
- To the best of their ability, awareness of sustainability will be raised throughout the entire Group through educational programmes for employees and customers.
- For the most part, the Group CSR activities such as donations and sponsorship will be performed in accordance with UN Sustainability development goals.
- The overall risk management framework will be additionally enhanced by integrating assessment, monitoring and management of ESG risks.
- The Group will disclose and report its metrics and performance against targets used to assess and manage relevant environmental and social risks and opportunities, where such information is available.
- NLB Group will lower its carbon footprint:
 - Directly, through sustainable functioning of the organisation: digitalisation, paperless offices, remote work, etc.
 - Indirectly, through lending and investing activities: restraining from coal-related business, financing projects related to the low-carbon economy, such as renewable energy production, energy efficiency improvements, cleaner transportation, etc.



Blaž Brodnjak, CEO: "In the NLB Group we have put the sustainability of our business decisions and actions at the very centre of our operations. As a systemic player, we are in a position to truly influence the environment in which we operate and to fulfil our mission to impact the quality of life in our home region. We have also committed to this by aligning with the global United Nations Principles for Responsible Banking, another in a series of the Groups' initiatives that demonstrate we really care, and that binds us to further intensifying our work in sustainability in a systematic, engaged, and continuous way."

UN Principles for Responsible Banking

NLB is the first bank from Slovenia to commit to the UNEP FI Principles for Responsible Banking.

With minds focused on the future of this region, the NLB Group is committed to creating a better life for present and future generations. Because this region is not just a spot on the map – this region is our home.

For more information refer to NLB Group Sustainability Report 2020: <https://www.nlb.si/sustainability-report-2020.pdf>

By Polona Wallas

The circular power of digitalisation

Siemens' contributions to a liveable and sustainable future



With both their technology and their people, “our biggest strengths and assets”, Siemens brings solutions to life that transform the way we use resources, the way we go to work, the way we are connected, and the way we shape business models to foster decarbonisation and sustainable development.

“We are doing this by building technologies with purpose – technologies that can impact the world in a positive way”, stresses Medeja Lončar, CEO of Siemens Slovenia and Siemens Croatia, on the importance new technologies play in the race for our sustainable future.

Siemens' continued efforts in the area of environmental protection relate to the entire value chain. They range from decarbonisation initiatives to innovative business models around the circular economy, as well as targeted biodiversity measures and initiatives in the conservation of resources, both on their own sites and in customer solutions.

First industrial company to commit

In September 2015, Siemens was the first global industrial company to commit to carbon neutrality by 2030. The goal is clear: **all Siemens production facilities and buildings worldwide are to achieve a net zero-carbon footprint by 2030.** This programme not only benefits humanity and the environment, but also comes with sustainable economic advantages for the company. Siemens has already reduced 54% of their carbon footprint.

Throughout the entire value chain

One way Siemens specifically supports the development of eco-efficient solutions in their business is through their environmental programme **Eco Efficiency @ Siemens**, which includes not only their own operations (efficiently managing their own production sites and offices) but also responsible product development and a clean supply chain. Lončar adds an emphasis on a new leverage: *“Having established global strategic initiatives for the design and the end-of-life phases of our products and operations, Siemens businesses use disruptive technologies and innovative business models to take advantage of the circular economy”.*

The power of digitalisation

Digitalisation and automation not only help to make production more flexible, enabling it to quickly adapt to changing requirements and demand, they also minimise the use of resources by analysing and optimising operations in the virtual world. *“We use our digital portfolio to help our customers shift to more efficient, less resource-intensive (production) practices and use environmentally friendly materials”,* explains Lončar.

Dashboards show when, how, and where the most energy is used. Data acquisition and analysis show which components in a system are not running optimally and where improvements are needed, while virtual prototypes replace the need for physical models. With a digital twin – a virtual model of a product or a process – you can test and adapt various designs to meet new requirements. At the same time, you can plan production processes

93%
share of recycling
and recovery from
total waste

Environmental
Portfolio achieves
149.6
million
metric tons of CO₂
savings for their
customers

54%
of own operations
carbon footprint
reduced by more than
half between 2014
and 2020



How can we know a product's true carbon footprint?

Siemens digital factory in Amberg developed a blockchain solution to track emissions along the entire value chain, so they can find ways to address this. They not only sought greater transparency in their own supply chain but planned to develop a scalable solution for the entire industry. After all, everyone faces the same problem: on average, 90% of emissions are produced in the supply chain, not in a company's internal production.

To push their already much smaller CO₂ footprint towards zero, their colleagues in Amberg will be able to use local carbon sinks such as sustainably managed forests in the future. In the end, the customer will get a CO₂-neutral automation control, a truly "green" product.



First industrial use of hybrid water heating system

Siemens has supported the development of a ground-breaking greentech solution called **HERU** which converts what was everyday rubbish into energy. The HERU Hybrid Water Heating System is equipped with Siemens technology, e.g. the **SIMATIC controller** which, in the eyes of the inventor, is the 'brain' of the device. Siemens will be one of the first companies in the world to use this innovative technology in an industrial setting.

HERU significantly reduces the amount of valuable resource, which cannot be recycled, from being sent to landfill. It can generate up to two times more energy than is required to operate it, which means a reduction in energy bills and CO₂ emissions.



Medeja Lončar, CEO of Siemens Slovenia and Siemens Croatia

digitally and adapt them to new needs before you even touch a real sheet of metal or a screw. Machines don't have to drill countless holes in a workpiece until the optimal drilling or milling positions are determined; that is all done beforehand, using a virtual machine tool. This practice

Siemens digital factory in Amberg

obviously reduces material rejects and waste, saves energy and time, and reduces CO₂ emissions. Data can also flow from operations back to the developers to help them improve a product's design and plan its production. As a result, there is continual optimisation in both the consumption of resources and the product's ecological footprint.

"For more than 170 years Siemens has been driven by the idea of improving the lives of people all over the world through our technologies. We see it as our job to contribute to a liveable and sustainable future," concludes Lončar.

By Mojca Markizeti

Smart City, Better Life

Digitalized solutions combining smart home, smart grid and smart city with energy IoT solutions

Energy demand represents more than 75% of the EU greenhouse gas emissions. "How to achieve climate neutrality by 2050 and lower CO₂ emissions for 55% by 2030?", is an equation in which cities play an important role?

Throughout history, cities have been a key driver of change and innovation. Today, they must play one of the most important roles in the fight against the climate crisis by adopting multiple solutions to mitigate risks and achieve carbon neutrality.

Cities are changing, evolving and growing at a rapid pace.

- It is estimated that 2/3 of the world's population will live in cities by 2050 that is approximately 6,5 billion.
- In Europe, 85% of people will live in cities by 2050.
- Cities cover about 3% of the Earth's land area, but consume more than 75% of all natural resources available to the whole world and produce about 72% of all global greenhouse gas emissions.
- A total of 93% of EU citizens consider climate change to be a serious problem and a clear majority of the EU population would like to see increased action against climate change (recent Eurobarometer survey)

There are countless opportunities and challenges for urbanization and digitalization that can contribute to the sustainable development of cities around the world to ensure a higher quality of life. As the density of users and infrastructure is higher in cities, there is also a better potential for cross-sector integration and complex infrastructures such as smart grids. If we combine smart home, smart grid and smart city with energy IoT solutions, we can achieve many sustainability

goals and cities can actively fight the climate crisis.

As a society, we are entering a decade where we will make it or break it. It is time for action. **Iskraemeco's Smart City approach is an ecosystem of solutions that connects all vertical and horizontal ecosystems with various stakeholders such as residents, societies, local utilities, municipalities and businesses.**

SMART CITY INFRASTRUCTURE

Smart City concept is one of the best tools to mitigate existing climate and other challenges of the city. We are creating an ecosystem that works in the best interest of infrastructure, communities and people. Iskraemeco combines physical and digital products, diverse solutions, services, technologies and available data to provide innovative solutions aimed at sustainable development and efficient use of energy and water.

DIGITAL GRID

Iskraemeco is developing tools and end-to-end Digital Grid solutions that solve customers' biggest challenges by leveraging the power of information. Our company helps distribution and grid companies build a future-proof business, support a future-proof community and realize energy efficiency potential. We are empowering the grid of the future.



SMART METERING

In the age of IoT, Iskraemeco's solutions offer a comprehensive range of remote monitoring and alerting capabilities as well as powerful data analytics tools that allow organizations/companies to optimize their electricity, water, gas, or heat consumption and demand in real time.





We do climate solutions, what about you?

About Iskraemeco

Iskraemeco has been delivering quality products, solutions and services that make efficient energy and water use a reality worldwide. Digitalized solutions based on IoT, digital grid, and smart cities give utilities, infrastructures, and communities the necessary data to manage energy and water use, anticipate demand, and optimize costs. It also empowers the consumers, enable them to act more sustainably. With a focus on meeting their customers' needs, they constantly seek new opportunities to expand their expertise in existing and emerging markets. Facilitating their mission of supporting their customers, Iskraemeco became a global company with a strong presence worldwide.

By Daška Levstik & Špela Krašovec

Responsibility for green energy

GEN-I sets an example in promoting green transformation

The GEN-I Group will supply **more than:**

3,150

million kWh of carbon-free electricity

and will reduce the carbon footprint of their customers by

1.65

million tonnes of CO₂

40 %

of the electricity supplied to Slovenian households will have lower carbon footprint

2.5 t

lower will be the carbon footprint of an average GEN-I electricity customer



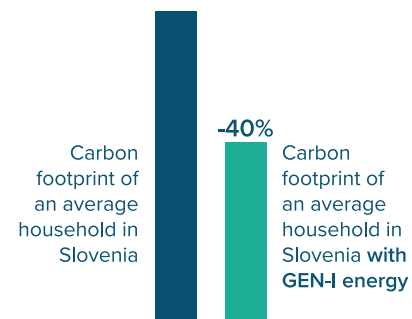
The consequences of global climate change are becoming more visible and pronounced, affecting humans and the environment. Energy is one of the key sectors of the economy responsible for increasing carbon footprint. In recent years, the energy sector has reached the turning point and set the focus on its decarbonization as a priority.

By completely abandoning electricity produced from fossil fuels at the end of last year, the GEN-I Group is rising to this challenge, accepting its share of responsibility for the green energy transformation. They believe that only by actively stepping up into a green future and empowering the individual this goal can be achieved.

Since the beginning of 2021, the largest electricity supplier in Slovenia has been supplying exclusively electricity produced from clean sources - **solar, hydro and nuclear energy**. With its decision to decarbonise all its customers without exception, the **GEN-I Group decarbonized as much as 40 percent of the electricity supplied to Slovenian households.**

The decarbonisation of 40 percent of the electricity supplied to Slovenian households is the biggest step made by GEN-I as a promoter of green transformation this year. Beyond that, the company has a sustainable operation written in the very core of its organization. They have set a long-term goal of sustainable development, which they also intend to achieve by changing their own operations - leading by example, investing in innovation and developing and creating products for the transition to a new era of energy. Solutions for more sustainable lifestyles based on renewable energy are not only being developed, but also used and marketed. Through innovation, they are realizing their mission of enabling green transformation based on stable business growth and business-sustainable solutions.

Carbon footprint of an average Slovenian household



GEN-I offers exclusively carbon-free energy



SUN



WATER



NUCLEAR

In the year 2021, the GEN-I Group saved over **840,000,000 kg CO₂ emissions.**



This is equivalent to emissions from driving **6,950,000,000 km** by car.

Lowering the carbon footprint by eliminating fossil fuels

The supply of electricity produced exclusively from carbon-free sources is an important step that leads a company or an individual towards a green future. At the same time it simply reduces the carbon footprint of Slovenian citizens without their special investments or dilemmas. In the first year of carbon-free energy supply alone, the GEN-I Group will supply **more than 3,150 million kWh of electricity** to its households and business customers. This will **reduce their carbon footprint by 1.65 million tonnes of CO₂** compared to 2019. An average GEN-I electricity customer will thus reduce his carbon footprint by 2.5 t per year. The electricity from renewable sources will be secured from small local electricity producers.

With a green bond to the solar power plant for everyone

With the clear goal to accelerate sustainable development, GEN-I adopted an initiative years ago to promote technologies that reduce CO₂ emissions from electricity production. They have included the solar power plant service **GEN-I Sonce** in their offer, which made solar power plants accessible to practically anyone through their affordable financing schemes. As an active promoter of solar energy, today GEN-I is also the largest service provider for energy self-consumption based on solar PV electricity generation in Slovenia.

In order to encourage investments into renewable energy, a green bond was issued in 2017, purpose of which is to enable favorable financing of ecologically efficient products and technologies. **The green bond, with which they have secured EUR 14 million in financial**

resources, is the first green bond issued by a Slovenian company and also one of the first in Central and Eastern Europe.

By issuing the green bond, the GEN-I Group provided customers with favorable sources of financing of sustainable green investments, and the entry threshold for the purchase and financing of solar power plants for customers has been lowered significantly.

One year after the bond was issued, the group's sustainable financial strategy was also recognized by the Climate Bonds Initiative, which awarded the company the prestigious **Green Bond Pioneer Award** for companies, financial institutions and governments for their achievements in the development of green bonds. In April 2019, the bond was awarded an excellent rating by the credit rating agency Moody's from New York.

Achievements that reinforce the green consciousness

Energy production, traditionally based on centralized systems, large power plants, intensive CO₂ production, pollution and fossil fuels, must become a thing of the past. Ahead of us lies a decade of energy revolution and Slovenia's largest electricity supplier, GEN-I, is fully aware of this. As a leading representative of the energy sector, **GEN-I is committed to actively contribute to the creation of success stories on the path to a carbon-neutral future and a clean environment.** By setting an example and creating product offerings around this new paradigm, it is already proving today that by responding quickly to the opportunities offered by the development of new technologies, green transformation is not only feasible but also economically justified.

GEN-I proves that the transformation into a green future is achievable today. As a leading provider of innovative products and services in the European energy market, it will continue to promote green transformation, sustainable development and the digitalisation of the industry. Through their efforts, they want to remain the exemplary company of the transition to a carbon-free society. With an inclusive approach, they are not only ready for change but are already actively shaping it. The future is green, they are convinced in GEN-I.



By Jernej Jakop

Zero environmental impact

Novo Nordisk's bold environmental strategy: *Circular for Zero*

The first milestone has been achieved – 100% renewable power is being used across the global production facilities of healthcare company Novo Nordisk. Their ambition is bold and simple – to have zero environmental impact.

Novo Nordisk is a leading global healthcare company, founded in 1923 and headquartered in Denmark. Novo Nordisk's affiliate in Slovenia has been driving change to defeat diabetes and other serious chronic diseases such as obesity and rare blood and endocrine disorders for almost 30 years.

Environmental challenges have never been more critical than they are today. Growing consumption, industrialisation and urbanisation threaten not only the sustainability of the environment we live in but also the health of people around the world.

Every year Novo Nordisk uses billions of litres of water and vast amounts of energy and resources to manufacture medicines. Their CO₂ emissions have continued to rise, especially in transportation. They distribute hundreds of millions of vials and injection pens to people who

need them, and demand for their life-saving treatments is growing.

Their products are made of high-quality materials, but after use most of them end up in landfill. This puts them at the frontline of some of the biggest environmental issues: climate change, water and resource scarcity, pollution and plastic waste.

To lead the way and be at the forefront of change, they have taken a bold and company-wide approach to solving environmental issues, and in **April 2019 adopted a new environmental strategy, called Circular for Zero.**

How will Novo Nordisk get to zero?

They are already taking the first steps towards zero environmental impact – but they are always searching for new ways to do more. They believe the answers will come as they adopt their business to a circular mindset that keeps their products and materials in use.

Switching to renewable electricity

- In 2020 they achieved their goal of using 100% renewable electricity across their global production – the first pharmaceutical company in RE100 to do so.
- Their facility in North Carolina, US, uses 100% solar power, production

sites in Tianjin, China, and in Europe use 100% wind power, and Brazil's site in Montes Claros uses 100% water power. The next step is to transform their business processes to eliminate the environmental footprint from their operations altogether.

Designing eco-friendly products

- They are re-designing their existing and future products to reduce waste.
- They are working to solve the end-of-life challenge of devices so materials can be recovered and recycled into new products.

Working with suppliers who share their mindset

In order to achieve zero impact both up and down the supply chain, it is crucial to work with suppliers. In September 2020 Novo Nordisk announced that it will work with all 60,000 of its direct suppliers globally to ensure they are supplying the company based on 100% renewable power by 2030.

Creating change across the value chain

Novo Nordisk's actions are already creating change across their value chain by minimising consumption, reducing CO₂ and reducing waste. Lessons learned can inspire other companies to find entry points for their green and circular trans-

“By committing to achieve zero emissions across our operations and transport by 2030 and by applying a circular mindset across our entire business, we are working towards a day when we will be able to say that Novo Nordisk is a company with zero environmental impact.”

Lars Fruergaard Jørgensen,
Novo Nordisk President and CEO and the Chairman of the Government's Climate Partnership*.

*This initiative brings together business leaders across 13 industries to collaborate with the Danish Government to solve climate challenges and drive the green transition to a climate-neutral economy.

formation. Here are some areas that have been successfully addressed:

Minimising consumption:

- Designing products so they can be recovered, recycled or reused
- Replacing plastic cutlery, cups and balloons with sustainable products and working towards using sustainable materials
- Recycling IT equipment and moving from purchased single-use to rented reusable boxes for clinical trials
- Energy saving projects implemented in 2019 are expected to result in annual savings of 72,000 GJ

Reducing CO₂ together:

- They are members of the global EV100 initiative and are currently transitioning their existing fleet of 8000 vehicles to electric and hybrid cars
- The Kalundborg Symbiose, an industrial cluster of 11 companies, provides, shares and reuses resources to create shared value – a perfect example of a circular economy
- There has been an annual reduction of ca. 800,000 tons of CO₂ at Asnaes power plant as a result of conversion from coal to wood chips – the reduction corresponds to the annual CO₂ emissions of >400,000 cars, done in collaboration with the Kalundborg symbiosis.

Reducing waste across the organisation:

- Recycling 94% of all production site waste and using it for biogas production or for incineration in waste-to-energy plants

- Eliminating water waste at their production facilities in Brazil and China
- Exploring ways to recover, reuse and recycle used Novo Nordisk pens (a take-back pilot was launched in Denmark last December (returpen™), and in 2021 pilots will run in the UK, France, the US, China and Brazil.)

Novo Nordisk Slovenia going green

All over the world patients and health-care professionals are concerned about climate change and the environmental impact of medicines. In Slovenia the Circular for Zero strategy was launched in early 2020 and the local Environmental Management Plan engaged both internal and external stakeholders in order to transform their local operations and business processes to reduce carbon emissions and minimise waste.

Some of the 2021/22 targets include:

100% renewable power in Slovenian offices; a substantial reduction in business flights compared to 2019; replacing current company cars with hybrid and electric ones; a substantial reduction in paper waste and regular use of recycled paper; selection of external vendors on their sustainability values/green certificates; and the launch of the take-back insulin pen programme.

A clear vision for the future, and highly motivated people taking conscious actions throughout all the processes – these are the important strengths that lead Novo Nordisk Slovenia on the way to completing the **Circular for Zero strategy**.



By Maria Giovanna Sandrini

Sustainability as a way of being

Aquafil's initiatives embrace the circular economy



Could you ever have imagined that we would be able to turn waste into nylon? Did you know that old fishing nets that can no longer be used and textile production scraps can be recovered and transformed into a new, high-quality yarn with the same characteristics as nylon made of virgin raw material? **This new yarn is now widely used in a textile industry seeking new sustainable materials, in manufacturing superb carpets, and even in high fashion, designer bags, sneakers, branded sportswear and more.** This is one of the core projects of Aquafil, which has become an important circular influencer we can all learn from.

Aquafil was established in 1965 in Arco, Italy, where its headquarters is still located today. The surrounding environment (very close to Garda Lake and surrounded by the Dolomites) and the need to preserve it have had a notable influence on the strategic development and vision adopted by the Group; today, **sustainability and the circular economy are at the core of Aquafil.**

This was possible particularly because of **Aquafil's Chairman and CEO, Giulio**

Bonazzi, who claims that *"Sustainability is not a goal to be reached, but a way of thinking, a way of being, a principle we must be guided by"*. To achieve this objective, the Group began **a renovation process to make its business more sustainable** and to make its operations less dependent on crude oil derivatives. By embracing circular economy and sustainability principles, in 2007-2008 the Group began this journey by launching two main initiatives:

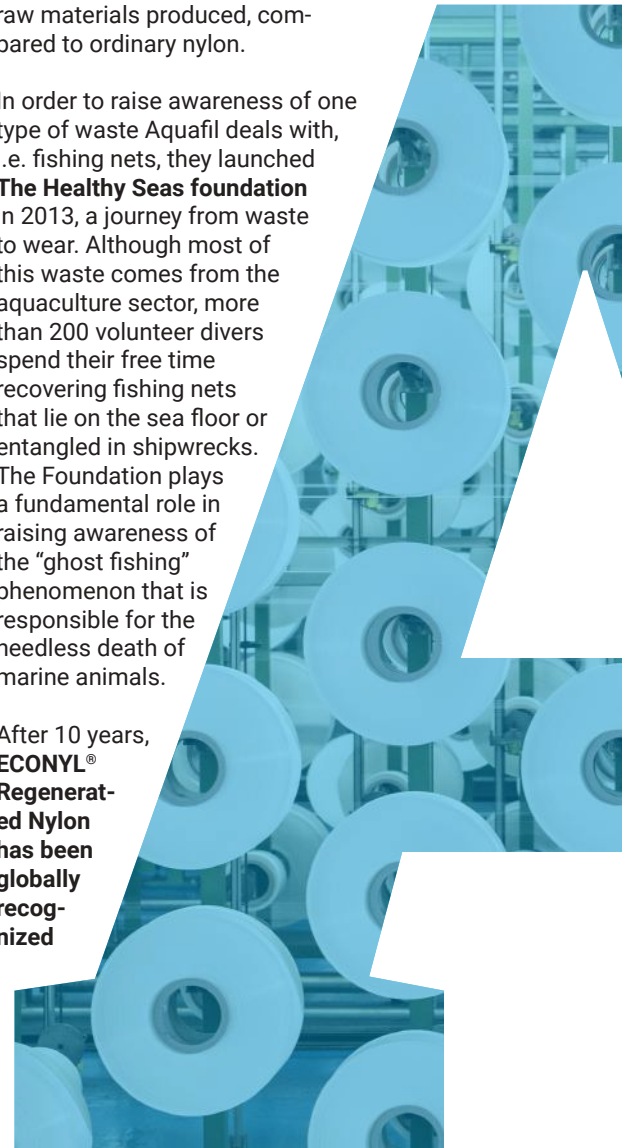
- The definition of the **ECO PLEDGE®**, Aquafil's path towards full sustainability;
- The creation of the **Energy & Recycling unit** to develop and promote projects, technologies and skills to improve the sustainability of the Group's products and processes.

A few years later (2011), the Aquafil Group achieved the first big milestone in its journey towards sustainability by launching the **ECONYL® Regeneration System (www.econyl.com)**, **an innovative system for producing 100% regenerated Nylon 6 from waste materials.** The system gives new life to nylon waste, such as discarded fishing nets, carpet fibres, textiles and plastic components, regenerating them into new raw material. The process is endless, allowing the recovery of materials which would otherwise pollute the Earth. It grants significant environmental benefits — about 70 barrels of oil and 65,100 tons of CO₂-eq emissions saved per 10,000 tons of regenerated

raw materials produced, compared to ordinary nylon.

In order to raise awareness of one type of waste Aquafil deals with, i.e. fishing nets, they launched **The Healthy Seas foundation** in 2013, a journey from waste to wear. Although most of this waste comes from the aquaculture sector, more than 200 volunteer divers spend their free time recovering fishing nets that lie on the sea floor or entangled in shipwrecks. The Foundation plays a fundamental role in raising awareness of the "ghost fishing" phenomenon that is responsible for the needless death of marine animals.

After 10 years, **ECONYL® Regenerated Nylon has been globally recognized**





With 16 plants in 7 countries across 3 continents, the Aquafil Group is one of the leading Polyamide 6 fibre and polymer manufacturers worldwide. Its products are destined for two main sectors, textile flooring and apparel, and are used by all the major brands of the luxury, fashion and carpet sectors. **The Slovenia-based AquafilSLO leads the centre of excellence for the Group's policies of sustainability and innovation, with a plant that can produce the raw material essential for the Group's operations from post-industrial and post-consumer waste made from Polyamide 6.**

as a sustainable ingredient used in the manufacture of carpets, apparel, and accessories. However, despite continuous efforts in investments to improve and increase the ECONYL® Regeneration System's capacity, regenerating waste would probably not be enough to remove crude oil derivatives altogether, and to reach the goal of decoupling its production processes from fossil-based raw materials. Indeed, it is reasonable to assume that the growing population at a global level will lead to a continuous demand for new products and, even assuming that all products currently produced will be available and suitable for recycling in the future, this growing demand will necessarily result in the use of new resources.

To address this need for new materials, in 2018 the Group began an ambitious new initiative towards a fossil-free production model by establishing a strategic partnership with Genomatica, one of

the world's leading companies in bio-engineering, with the ambition of developing a first-of-its-kind technology to produce the first bio-based Nylon 6 from renewable plant-based resources. This bio-based nylon will keep all the properties and performance as that made from crude oil (including the possibility of being regenerated) but, despite the current benchmark Polyamide 6, will have a better environmental profile (fewer emissions, fewer by-products, and no chemical hazards).

The Aquafil-Genomatica partnership was then extended to the whole supply chain to demonstrate not only the production of bio-based Nylon 6, but also its validation into final products. In this view, **Project EFFECTIVE** was launched with the ambition of demonstrating at a pre-industrial scale the production of bio-based polymers and their validations in the manufacturing of carpet, garment, and packaging solutions. **Project EFFECTIVE** (<https://effective-project.eu/>) is a Research & Innovation initiative funded by the Bio-Based Industries Joint Undertaking (BBI JU) under the H2020 programme, which involves 12 European partners from 7 EU countries, covering the whole supply chain from feedstock producers up to renowned brands.



Aquafil's Chairman and CEO, **Giulio Bonazzi**: "Sustainability is not a goal to be reached, but a way of thinking, a way of being, a principle we must be guided by."

ECONYL® regenerated nylon grants significant environmental benefits:

about
70,000
barrels of crude
oil saved
(for every 10,000 tons
of ECONYL® raw material)

65,100
tons of CO₂
eq. are avoided
(for every 10,000 tons
of ECONYL® raw material)

It reduces the global
warming impact
of nylon by up to

90%
compared with
the material from oil



What happens after we flush the toilet?

A LuxVerte Technologies' circular solution for waste sludge management

By Eva Brunova

Have you noticed how many of our everyday problems can be made to magically disappear? Let's take waste, for example – one of the things we create in abundance. But once we empty the bin, once we flush the toilet – it is all gone. We have mastered the “out of sight, out of mind” way of living, and it has been going really well for us.

This was also the Slovenian attitude, until Hungary put a stop to being Europe's waste sludge dump. Until 2019 the vast majority of Slovenia's almost 119,000 tons of wet sludge was exported, which cost up to €240 per ton, according to the Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Most ended up in Hungary, while 9% was incinerated, and 3% ended elsewhere. Soon after the Hungarian decision to prohibit the import of waste sludge, the storage areas of water treatment facilities across Slovenia began to fill with thousands of tons of sludge that was not going anywhere, causing a potential environmental threat and a headache for municipalities both large and small.

The LuxVerte proprietary technology can process biological or industrial waste sludge from sewage, paper mills or red muds, with industrial ash.

According to the principles of the circular economy, waste should be seen as a valuable raw material, processed and re-used in a cost-effective way. One of the optimal solutions is recycling the sludge, which is put together with a suitable additive (such as ash) and processed into a construction composite. To put it simply, from two kinds of waste materials, an added value product is created. Win-win?



This certified technology is based on the patents of LuxVerte Technologies and is the fruit of Slovenian knowledge. Not only is this solution for waste sludge management interesting because of the re-use of waste material, which is required by the EU directive on waste recovery, but it has less CO₂ pollution impact compared to other technologies and is more affordable.

The LuxVerte proprietary technology can process biological or industrial waste sludge from sewage, paper mills or red muds, with industrial ash. The resulting composites can be used to build a flood embankment or as backfill for the rehabilitation of degraded areas, roadbeds, bed construction for sewage pipelines, and water impermeable landfill capping, among other things.

“From a technological and financial perspective this is a very cost-efficient option for waste sludge management for local communities. For companies that produce this type of waste, recycling with this technology is very affordable and money-saving. At the same time, we are actually solving the problem of two kinds of waste, creating a new, valuable product such as construction material. Plants with our technology are successfully operating across Europe.”

Ivan Bednjički,
Board of Directors, Praimgest

As the waste sludge problem is here to stay, and there is a need for rapid, proven solutions, similar processing plants could be set up faster and significantly more cheaply than incinerators. The technology is here now, ready to be used. A true circular solution to our linear waste management problems.

By Barbara Šubic, M SORA d.d.

The never-ending life of wood

The circularity projects of M SORA

M Sora is a Slovenian window manufacturing company, which is known for its broad knowledge of traditional materials and craftsmanship, and respect for quality design. M Sora is fully committed to research and development at all levels of the production equation, and is actively participating in larger innovation and development schemes and initiatives, striving to embed circular economy concepts into their mindset and development. Here are some representative projects which show how wood can be a fundamental material in circular production.



Oversized windows and sliding walls with a winning circular twist

The WoodCircus project brought together 17 partners from seven EU countries in a quest to find best practices in the circular economy in wood industries. Using innovative high-tech and traditional knowledge of wood processing with the inclusion of used wood was the inventive and sustainable combination which secured the main prize for M SORA.

That's what we call a new perspective.

myWater – smart water filling stations at EXPO 2021 in Dubai

These charming hydration stations made from sustainable and recycled wood provide access to quality potable water on the go and reduce the need for single-use plastic bottles.

- Each station is fitted with advanced nanotechnology water filtration, so it provides safe potable water anywhere
- Local, controlled water quality 24/7
- Placed in public places and accessible to all
- Filling is non-contact and thus prevents contamination
- Raises awareness of environmental impacts
- Efficient, affordable and energy-free.
- Saving the world from plastic, one bottle at a time!





Turning sawdust into paper

The Institute of Pulp and Paper produced 247kg, about 3,000m² of office paper, from sawdust. Once a residual waste, now a resource! Sawdust is turned into paper, and then made into A4 office paper and envelopes. Leftovers in production can transform and come to life again in a new, sustainable form.

Wood Phoenix – a second life for wood

Sitting down on a comfy bench, resting on a sunbed near a rippling river – have you ever thought of how these are made? This urban furniture was designed and manufactured from used wood in Žiri municipality, bringing community and companies together. The Wood Phoenix project not only gives a second life to wood, it educates and raises the awareness of the local people of the circular economy. It aims to protect the environment by reducing the amount of waste, preventing its generation and re-using materials.

In a circular economy, the phoenix never stops rising!



Modern interiors spiced up with reclaimed timber

Reclaimed wood adds character, comfort and history. Take used wood from local surroundings, from haystacks and roofs, and it will tell its own unique local story.

crafts manship



By Ram Dušić Hren

Where craftsmanship meets hip culture

Skateboards can be responsible too

Efforts towards a sustainable economy come in many varieties. But there is no doubt that it all starts with the right values and commitment to a higher purpose than just profit. The founder I talked to for this article is phenomenal for two reasons: first, his dedication to making long-lasting, locally produced products, and second, the age at which he started the company.

We don't often read stories about high school graduates taking a year off before going to college to devote time to their growing business. This is one of those rare stories.

Not only is Jakob Hočever running a successful business at the age of 20, his skateboard company, JH Boards, is founded on strong values of craftsmanship, quality and local sourcing.

"I didn't start making skateboards for money, but because I really enjoy it."

His craftsmanship quickly gained recognition and the hobby turned into a business. He now designs and builds high-quality personalised boards, made of local wood with an FSC certificate for sustainable forest use.

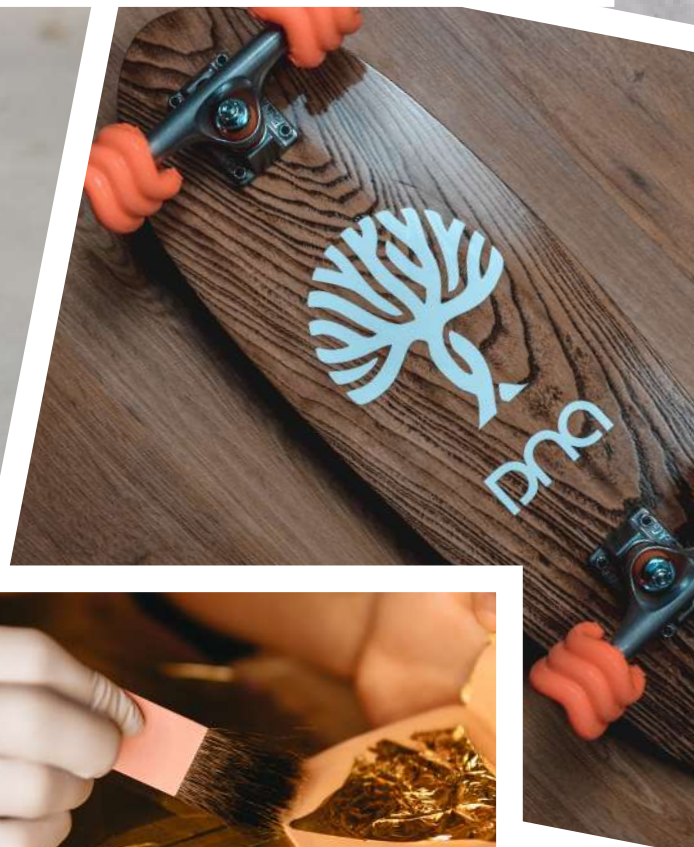
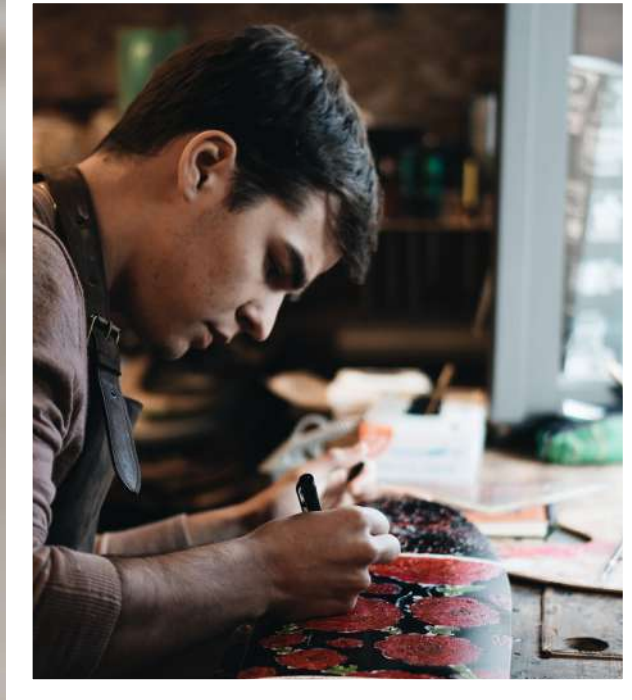
"At one time, I came close to starting a mass-produced series. But I decided that's just not what I want to do. People appreciate high-quality local production, and they are willing to pay for it."

He is optimistic that the era of cheap mass production and fast consumption is passing away. Customers want high-quality long-lasting products, and care about their origin and the responsible use of materials. He counters mass production with personalisation – having a close relationship with the customer, making custom designs, and ending up with a unique board that they can't buy anywhere else.

"The bigger the challenge, the more I like it."

He has become known for his unique creative projects; some of the designs have even featured details like 24-carat gold leaf and pieces of an actual basketball imprinted into the board.

Even though the company is growing, and he can't do everything on his own and by hand, that doesn't compromise his values and principles. His many plans for the future include establishing a team, building a series made of recycled materials, and tackling creative collaborative projects with celebrities and charities.



By Alenka Rozman

Brewing a better world

Sustainability is the path to the future of Pivovarna Laško Union

PLU's achievements in 2020:

more than **120** measures to promote health and safety at work

8% water consumption reduction

27 tons less paper used

200 tons of local malting barley from Slovenia used

3 million EUR donations and sponsorships

1250 hours of volunteer work in Savinja valley hop fields

Pivovarna Laško Union (PLU) has inherited nearly 200 years of Slovenian brewing tradition, originating from its two manufacturing plants in Ljubljana and Laško. As part of the Dutch international brewer the HEINEKEN Company, PLU actively contributes to the achievement of sustainability and responsibility ambitions, from barley to bar.

In Spring 2021, HEINEKEN launched a renewed sustainable strategy – 2030 Brew a Better World – and raised the bar with new commitments to the environment, social sustainability, and responsible consumption on a path to a net zero impact, fairer and healthier world. And, of course, PLU is on board!

Pivovarna Laško Union was established in 2016 by the merger of the two main pillars of the Slovenian brewing story – **Pivovarna Laško** and **Pivovarna Union**. It is the largest manufacturer of beverages in Slovenia and employs more than 570 people. Slovenia occupies a strategic position, as Pivovarna Laško Union constitutes an important **regional export hub**. PLU continues to build on a rich heritage, while injecting freshness into its brands to bring enjoyment of life to its consumers, domestically and internationally.

The commitments from the **2030 Brew a Better World** programme reflect the **EverGreen balanced growth strategy**, which applies to PLU as part of HEINEKEN, where sustainability and responsibility are at the heart of all operations. The 2030 ambitions build on progress made since the Brew a Better World programme was originally launched in 2009. HEINEKEN has made significant progress globally over the past ten years and decided to raise the bar of expectations and achievements even higher in the new decade.

Efforts under the renewed sustainability strategy are closely connected to the business, and address three key areas: **environmental protection, social sustainability and responsible consumption for a more responsible, fair and healthy society**.

As part of their **environmental commitments**, at PLU they are making a contribution to achieving carbon neutrality across the value chain, maximising circularity and reducing water consumption. To demonstrate **social sustainability**, they are committed to brewing a culture that embraces inclusion and diversity, fostering a workplace that is both fair and safe, and supporting communities. While promoting **responsible consumption**, they will continue to address the harmful effects of alcohol consumption and offer non-alcoholic versions of beverages, always giving consumers a choice.

While ambitions inspire them, it is actions that define PLU. Over the past years they have contributed to the delivery of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) by focusing on six key areas.



Tanja Subotić Levanič, Corporate Affairs Director at Pivovarna Laško Union: “At PLU we are building on nearly two centuries of brewing heritage, knowing that we can only succeed in the future if the planet and our communities are also thriving. We are committed to brewing with pride, passion, innovation, and devotion to quality from grain to glass. By raising the bar of sustainability and responsibility, we want to continue to have a positive impact on the social and natural environment in this decade. We are also aware that without sustainability, it is not possible to grow. Successful business growth can only be achieved with sustainable solutions. This is the only way for the next 200 years of Pivovarna Laško Union.”

Despite unprecedented challenges, 2020 was also outstanding in a positive way for PLU. More than 120 measures were implemented to **promote and improve health and safety** at work and beyond the working environment. In order to **protect water resources**, annual water consumption was reduced by 8% compared to 2019. A lot of attention has been paid to **reducing the carbon footprint** of all the processes in the supply chain. With the redesign of the Union brand and the abolition of rear labels on returnable bottles of Laško beer, they reduced the amount of paper used by more than 27 tons. Striving for **sustainable sourcing**, PLU used 200 tons of malting barley produced in Slovenia. Care for the environment is also woven into its products, demonstrated by the production of Laško Medeno beer, a project with a purpose which combines beer from Slovenian hops with honey from the apiary that stands in front of the Laško brewery, and the immense passion of everyone involved.

Thanks to the committed PLU employees and partners, they can proudly share their achievements.



The PLU footprint in **growing with communities** is best seen through sponsorships and donations, as over three million euros have been dedicated for various initiatives in 2020. During the Covid-19 pandemic, they focused on helping the most vulnerable groups, such as Civil Protection and health workers. PLU employees and Laško brand sponsorship partners volunteered for more than 1,250 hours in the Savinja Valley hop fields. They have continued to **advocate for responsible consumption** by raising awareness through partnerships and projects, and by expanding the range of non-alcoholic beverages, such as Laško Zlatorog 0.0%.

When considering the next steps, and how the 2030 Brew a Better World am-

bitions can and will positively impact the entire Heineken ecosystem, environment, and communities in this decade, thinking big and acting holistically is the way forward. However, achieving real and lasting change is only possible through collective effort. At Pivovarna Laško Union, they believe that all good things start in a good company.

On their path forward, they are dedicated to making positive changes in cooperation with employees, partners and suppliers, NGOs, governments, local communities, and other stakeholders.

Get inspired at www.pivovarnalaskounion.com and join them while they **brew a better company and society**.



5,5%
of the annual
beverage cartons
used nationally are
already transformed
to hygiene paper

By Špela Gutnik

Turning used beverage cartons into hygiene paper

Material cycles in Slovenian municipalities: an innovative solution for reusing waste packaging for local communities

Since the amount of municipal waste and waste packaging is constantly growing, it is very important for municipalities to develop a clear circular strategy – including solutions for processing those types of waste that can be reused or recycled.

Circular Shield d.o.o. from Ljubljana is a Slovenian circular economy facilitator which has introduced an innovative solution for reusing waste packaging. The solution is simple, effective, and easy to implement – it activates municipalities, public waste management companies and local public institutions as key actors in designing a Municipal Material Cycle (MMC) for beverage cartons and hygiene paper in the local community, thus helping to revitalize the circular economy. In other words, instead of using valuable primary resources (such as cellulose from wood), in MMC areas napkins, toilet paper and paper towels are made from recycled cellulose from used beverage

cartons (UBCs) that the same residents dispose of in waste containers. The primary users of these products are public institutions, such as municipal offices, schools, kindergartens, health centres and cultural and sports facilities, and in some cases also private companies in participating municipalities where MMC projects are already established and operational.

Municipal Material Cycles of used beverage cartons make an important contribution to the development of a circular culture and circular economy in Slovenia, and contribute to several positive environmental effects, such as:



- Saving trees, protecting forests and conserving biodiversity,
- Reducing CO₂ emissions,
- Reducing the amount of landfill waste and waste incineration,
- Increasing the proportion of recycled waste.

The role of residents – the local people – is crucial in this project. They are the ones who provide UBCs and for whom the end products are intended. To estimate the support and opinion of the local population, Circular Shield recently conducted market research in eight municipalities with active MMCs. Their results show very high public support for the project. People are proud of their local public institutions and companies that use recycled hygiene paper made

from locally obtained UBCs, and they are ready to pay even more attention to their personal waste separation, since they know that the waste packaging will be recycled and reused.

An MMC can be set up in any municipality or city in the EU where there is an active waste separation system. Circular Shield plans to replicate this circular practice on a large scale across Slovenia and other EU countries.

Residents in municipalities with active MMCs – both children and adults – can learn about the circular economy from this practical case and from their own contributions. The hygiene paper dispensers installed in participating public institutions are equipped with the information that the paper products are made from recycled beverage cartons.

Municipal Material Cycles (MMC) are already successfully operating in 10 Slovenian municipalities, and the project is about to expand to at least 10 more by the end of 2021. By activating these new municipalities, this circular economy project will cover more than 30% of the population of Slovenia and transform around 5.5% of the annual beverage cartons used nationally.

The innovative approach and the effects of this circular business and material model have received international recognition and acclaim, including Highly commended status obtained at “THE CIRCULARS 2017” competition held by The World Economic Forum, for the pioneering MMC project in Novo mesto, Slovenia.

By Ram Dušić Hren

Zero waste. Local. Sustainable. Eco.

Interview with Primož Cigler from Rifuzl, the first retail shop in Ljubljana without plastic packaging.

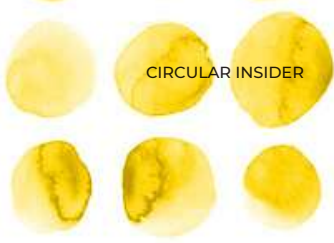
Primož Cigler is an entrepreneur and co-founder of Rifuzl, the first home supplies store in Slovenia that uses no plastic packaging. Alongside Rifuzl's mission to cut the use of single-use plastic, they are focused on locally and regionally produced organic products, thus providing everything the household needs in the healthiest and most environmentally-friendly manner.

When you walk through the door of Rifuzl, you see a beautiful organic-looking design with refill isles, refundable glass jars, and even zero-waste supplies such as wooden toothbrushes and compostable sponges. But there's much more to it than what your customers see. How did you set up your supply chain so that all the products reach your store with the minimum amount of waste?

After two years experience, the brief answer is: with short supply chains, it is possible to source products without plastic (or any) packaging. Simple, unprocessed foods like grains, tea, vegetables, fruit, chestnuts and so on come to our store in containers which we return to the producer.

The more complex the product gets and the longer it travels before it arrives at Rifuzl, the more challenging it is to do it without waste, especially plastic waste.

To us, it's equally important that we source the products we sell in a sustainable way, without plastic packaging. So, once we begin working with a new supplier, we send them a document explaining our mission and suggesting ways of working with them so that as little waste is produced in the supply chain as possible - ideally none. It would be almost impossible to supply everything completely without waste. We could source only locally, but that would have severe impacts on the breadth of our range, and therefore the very existence of Rifuzl and the viability of our business model.



All in all, probably it's a mix of everything described which makes people feel that we are honest to them and to ourselves and that a great deal of energy, enthusiasm, hard work and knowledge is required for a shop like Rifuzl to exist.



Photo: Rifuzl archive

On our website, we list the 10 principles by which we do business. A little while ago we also held a 30-day challenge, where we took a photo of our trash in the shop each day and commented on what ended up in it and why.

The concept of your store is a novel one, and it certainly required a lot of innovative approaches to make it work. What would you say was the biggest challenge, and how did you overcome it?

The biggest challenge is being honest to ourselves and our rules of sourcing and offering, while still being competitive on the food market and thus having a viable business model.

Sourcing locally means having lots of small suppliers, and generally each one of them is hard to work with, because they are not business people – they are farmers. They don't understand how pricing works, or how selling products to a

shop is different from selling at home or at the farmers' market. There is a lot of overheads and manual work. Thankfully I have knowledge of software development, so I've already automated a large part of it. But still, there are parts that cannot be automated, for example, when a farmer runs out of a product we are selling in the middle of the season and doesn't tell us in advance, so we need to find another one quickly before the customers get upset.

It would be soooo much easier if we only had a handful of professional B2B suppliers like the bigger non-zero waste shops usually have – they offer more competitive prices, you can source everything from one business, and they can keep everything in stock. But that usually means products of lower quality, packaged in plastic or some other kind of packaging, and the customers don't know who produced this food or whether they were paid and treated fairly, or if the land where this food grows is treated well or getting more contaminated with pesticides every year.

You have received a lot of support from the community and continue to foster a very loyal customer base, which is a very important factor for success. How did you build this awareness and such a passionate following?

People tell us a number of reasons why they love Rifuzl so much. Mostly it is because people can really relate to our mission. Some know that it's a lot of work to run such a shop. Some are persuaded by the personal, friendly and warm approach our assistants have in the shop – we are continually improving our service. Some love our range – what we offer in the shop. Some believe that our prices are very good (they really are, if you take into consideration the quality we sell and the service we provide). Some love our style of online communication.

All in all, it's probably a mix of all this, which makes people feel that we are honest with them and with ourselves, and that a great deal of energy, enthusiasm, hard work and knowledge is required for a shop like Rifuzl to exist.

Circular alternatives



By Nina Vodnjov

Lušt tomatoes stay fresh longer in a biodegradable paper bag

Slovenia's largest tomato producer, Paradajz d.o.o, produces more than 4,500 tons of branded Lušt tomatoes annually. Inside their greenhouses the tomato plants are replaced once a year. Until recently, 400 tons of discarded plant material was composted or burnt in biorefineries.

In a collaboration with the Pulp and Paper Institute, Ljubljana, researchers found an innovative way to process tomato stems into a biodegradable paper bag. In this way, organic plant material previously considered waste has become a resource in paper production.

The paper actively regulates humidity, keeping it optimal, so helping the tomatoes to stay fresh longer. In the test series they were able to produce more than 26,000 paper bags from 700kg of dry biomass.

These alternative paper bags are now being used in their retail shops, and as they are fully biodegradable, with only natural colours and starch used, they can be freely composted at home.

Paradajz d.o.o. is an agricultural company specialising in integrated vegetable production. They are best known for their premium tomato brand, Lušt, which they grow in indoor facilities heated by geothermal energy using cutting-edge and environmentally friendly technology. They are located in Pomurje, one of the most promising regions for specialised agricultural production in Slovenia.

in packaging

By Eva Štraser

EveGreen's innovation for easily compostable bioplastic materials

Food and beverage producers currently have a problem disposing of their industrial waste such as rice husks and coffee bean husks, which are difficult to recycle economically. Whilst some waste can be used for biofuels, other substances are not suitable for this and end up in landfill.

EveGreen has developed an innovative method of creating bioplastic material for organic single use plastic items, which are then easily compostable without additional processing. This gives food processing companies a very valuable option for their organic waste management, turning a business cost into

a green imperative. Food processing companies will not only find an economically viable method of dealing with waste, but will also be able to commission disposable items made of bioplastic for sale to their customers, which they can claim are 100% recycled from their manufacturing by-products.

EveGreen is a Slovenian family startup founded by Eva Štraser and her husband, and they have found a method to replace plastic with organic source materials. The startup was selected as one of the top 30 social innovation projects in the EU in 2019. Their agro flower pot was one of the TOP 43 national innovations of the Slovenian Chamber of Commerce and Industry in 2019, while their sustainable cemetery candle was one of the TOP 44 national innovations of the Slovenian Chamber of Commerce and Industry in 2020.



FLOIOS

Floios

In nature, the concept of waste doesn't exist. Everything is food for something else. A leaf falls from a tree and feeds the forest. A flower in bloom or the touch of a herb feeds the creations of a skilled craftsman. Instead of designing for "less harm", we should be doing "more good".

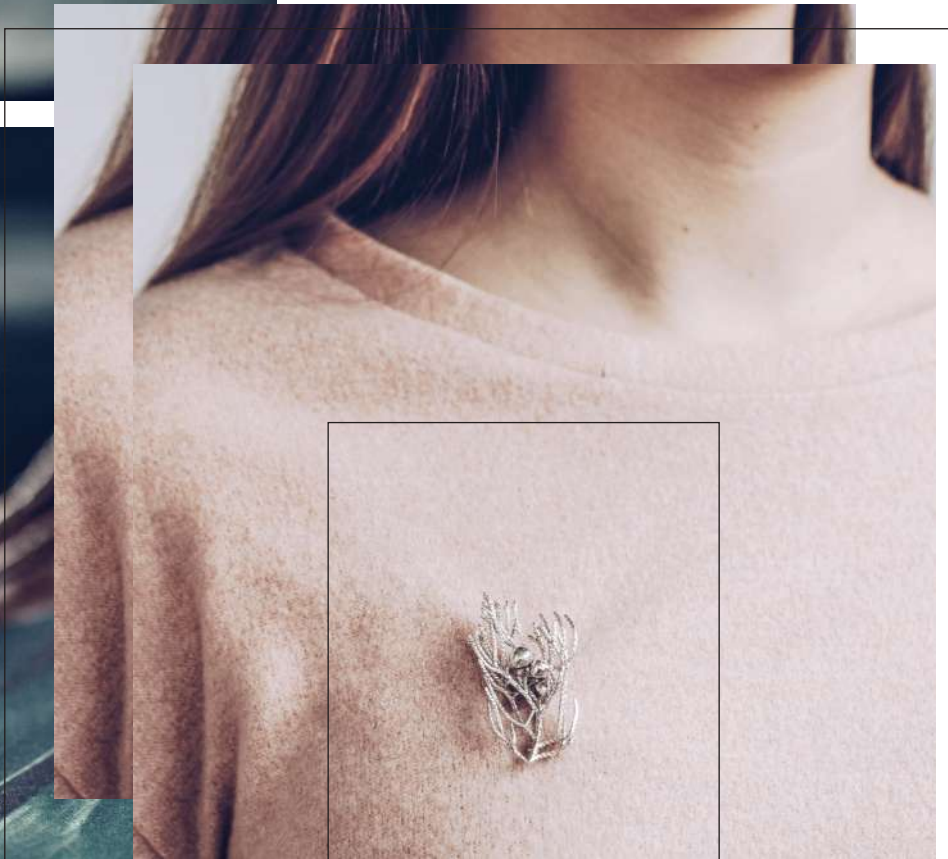
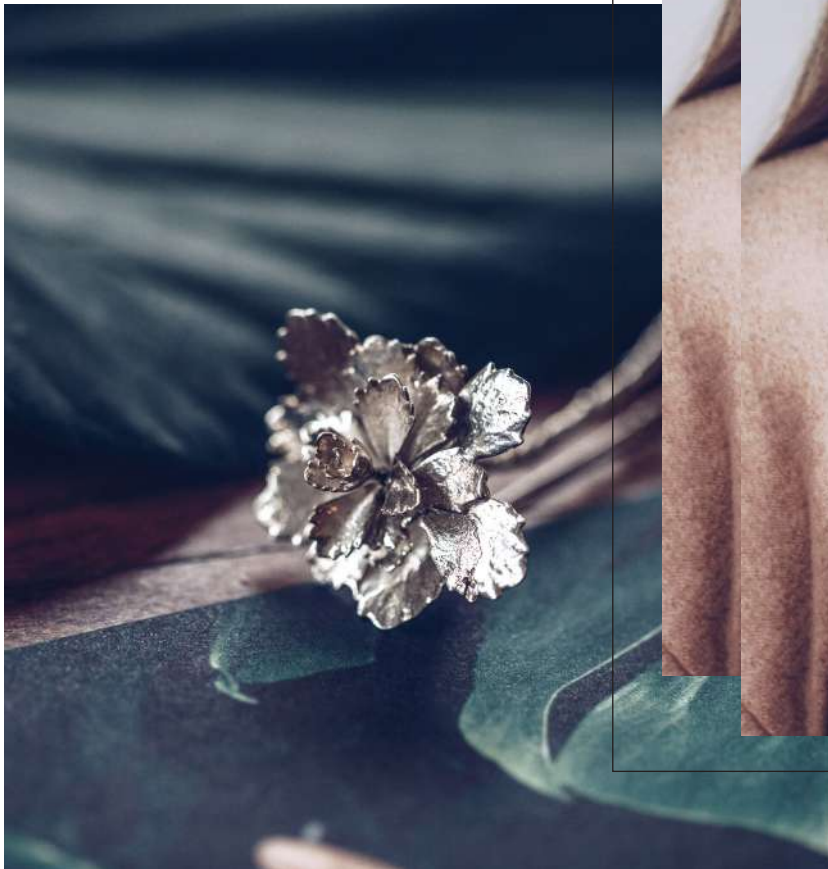
At Floios studio, handmade sustainable jewellery is created from recycled silver recovered from electronic waste. The jewellery pieces are minimalistic unaltered forms of nature, their shape forever captured in a shell of silver.

Each piece comes with a story: the date and exact location where the leaf, bark or branch was picked. Every one has a message and an intention.



Tina Košak, Founder and Chief Forager:

At Floios we believe that nature is created in golden proportion and shouldn't be changed by people. We respect and admire it. It is our home. We want those who wear our jewellery to feel connected to and by nature – to be aware of its beauty.



Sustainability is our family commitment

Marko Lotrič's family business – a company based on values

Sustainable business means it is here to last. Stories of successful family companies show they are dedicated to long-term business. However, many of them face a big challenge as the generations change and their longevity is at stake. Those families that succeed in passing the business on to the next generations build their companies on clear, positive and sustainable values. Here is the story of one of them, as told by their owner and general director, Marko Lotrič.



LOTRIČ Metrology is a family company from Selška dolina, which has three decades of experience with testing and calibration, as well as the development and implementation of metrology products and solutions. Today, the group unites over 170 experts in the field of metrology, with employees in seven countries. The essence of LOTRIČ Metrology is clearly visible: it lies in the people they employ.

It's been 30 years since you started your own family business, LOTRIČ Metrology, and your whole family has been deeply involved in the company; today it is led by five members of the Lotrič family. In recent years you have become a synonym for successful family business, and have even received the Family Business Award of Excellence 2020 by EY Slovenia. What do you believe is the secret of successful family companies and their longevity?

A family business is a mix of values, and we are aware of both the emotional and the rational basis that guides us in this. It is a long-distance run, which in my opinion is a privilege, because the leaders of family businesses do not only have a few years to prove themselves, and success is not measured only by financial indicators. In the current situation, our main effort has been to preserve all jobs.

We have achieved this by focusing on new areas of operation and developing products and services in response to the situation.

Family businesses have the desire to survive written into their DNA. The nobility of family businesses lies in the pursuit of success in the home environment, as we are aware that, like the company, the families of our colleagues must survive. United in a common desire and effort, we don't usually look for a solution, for example, in the relocation of production abroad, which in my opinion represents an important contribution of family businesses to the Slovenian economy.



The elements of life

The philosophy of the company is embraced in **the elements of life – water, earth, air and fire. This is how they define it.**

- In the element of the **earth** that feeds us, we have personified ourselves with the values of professionalism, honesty and purity.
- It is also our tribute to our partners who trust us, appreciate our quality and accuracy – which represents the values embodied in the element of **water**, which is the source of life.
- In the element of **air**, where we expand our path to the breadth of the spirit, we are guided by innovation, openness and infinity.
- With **fire** in our eyes, we ourselves add the fourth element of life.

Your values express your company's sustainable orientation. Can you explain more about your strategies for implementing circular principles in your business? What are your concrete goals in the next ten years?

The impact that our business leaves on the environment is increasingly put ahead of financial results. This is not a choice but a necessity, and it is important to transfer zero impact to the envi-



ronment from our strategy into our daily business.

The company has defined the sources of our carbon footprint, which we are reducing by restructuring our business processes. By the end of the year, we will mainly use an electric vehicle for deliveries in cities. Over a period of two months, we will install three charging stations for electric cars, and over the next two years, a solar power plant. With the annual calculation of our carbon footprint and financial support for carbon offset projects, we will neutralise the company's carbon footprint by 2031, thus achieving zero impact on the environment.

You own an international company; however, you are deeply involved in the local Slovenian environment and society. You collaborate with other Slovenian companies, interest associations and institutions. Where do you see the biggest opportunities for the circular economy in Slovenia to become more incorporated into our daily lives and business?

The demands of our business partners related to the field of sustainability are increasingly coming to the fore. If a larger company announces that they want to achieve zero environmental impact in five years, and their suppliers will only achieve this in 10 years, this is an important direction for us all.

When we start to really think about sustainability and circularity, we quickly realise that it represents the only possible path, which, among other things, means a reduction in costs in the long run. Of course, additional financial incentives are also welcome in this area. The state is already announcing quite a few vouchers for various measures – we suggest, for example, the inclusion of a project to calculate the carbon footprint or establish a methodology. Special attention should also be paid to co-financed development and research projects, with the question of how the new product will help reduce the carbon footprint.

Associations also have a great influence. They can help their members on this path with the help of quality education and examples of good practice.



At LOTRIČ Metrology we are committed to achieving zero impact on the environment by 2031, with the help of the circular economy. Our priorities are set within the framework of the Sustainable Business Strategy for the period 2020-2025. This includes, among other things, the development of innovative sustainable products and services, the optimization of business channels, paperless business, and integration into the circular economy.

The latest socially responsible projects

In cooperation with partners, the company has developed the **DIHAM medical respirator**, which is primarily a response to the current pandemic situation. With the establishment of a laboratory for testing masks, they offered a boost to Slovenian production and consequently increased the possibilities of self-sufficiency in this field. They have installed their own EXACTUM system free of charge at their local school in Selca, which includes CO₂, temperature and humidity sensors, and enables monitoring of the air quality in the classrooms.

As Gandhi said, "Be the change that you wish to see in the world." Can you tell us how you personally are changing things? How do you as a family man try to live sustainably? And how do you as a known businessman encourage change?

Change can cause uncertainty for individuals. This is why I think it is important to involve as many individuals as possible in the process. This gives us a broader insight and, consequently, faster acceptance of change.

As the head of a family business, sustainability is a commitment to ensuring that the business continues to operate successfully. In 2017, members of the Lotrič family signed the family constitution – a document that sets out values, guidelines, commitments and decision-making processes. It was signed by all the members of the family, thus committing us to following the guidelines both at work and outside of it.

As a company, we are part of various initiatives. In cooperation with the company Novo Nordisk and Ladeja Košir, we are a part of an important initiative that will certainly have a significant impact on the sustainability of Slovenia in the future.

What makes a sustainable brand successful?

Entrepreneurship embodied in sustainability by Equa

Success is a subjective matter. It is not only measured in the form of profitability, but also in the impact that it has on people's lives. Stella Korošec and Anže Miklavec have been running the environment-first company Equa for more than 10 years now. Building a team of more than 40 people while still staying true to their core philosophy of "creating a product that's good for your health and nature's wealth" was challenging indeed, but following their passion for making an impact and doing good was a strong enough driving force to keep the company growing to this day.

Everything that Stella and Anže make starts with a big dose of **curiosity**. **Can this be done better? Can we create a product that people will want and which will enable them to live a more sustainable lifestyle without thinking about it? How can we use marketing and branding as a means for good, not only as a means of increasing consumerism?** Questions like these are incorporated into the com-

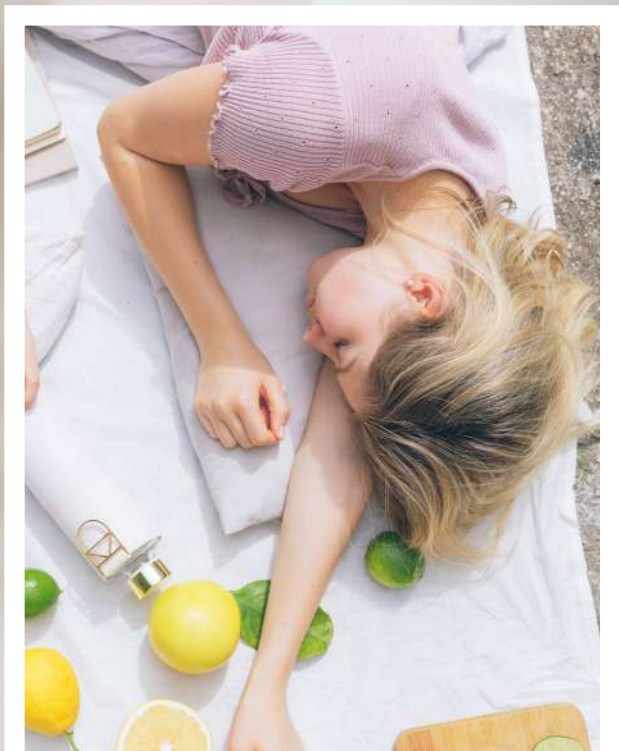


pany's culture and discussed on a daily basis. "Something we truly want to instil in our team is knowing that whatever you say or do will not be punished. We would rather see 100 questions being raised than none. And critical thinking is expected of everyone." **Through this curiosity the company has recently expanded its product** range from offering high performance reusable water bottles packed as a fashion accessory to a revolutionary line of personal and home care products. These are free of water, which makes the EquaCare products 8 times lighter and smaller to transport, thus reducing the CO2 footprint by 6 times in comparison to traditional cosmetics products.

In order to stay on top of their game, the forefront of Equa has always been **innovation**. "We began by being able to (just) think creatively. But several years in, we have now built a team of top engineers and scientists that bring our crazy ideas into reality. Having all this know-how in-house, I believe, will enable us to play with the big guys in the future," says Anže. **Some of the recent innovations include (1) changing all of their shipping packaging to completely plastic free; (2) building a Smart bottle with built-in sensors that track your water intake throughout the day; and (3) reaching full circle with EquaCare soap dispensers now made of old single-use plastic bottles found in landfills around Europe.** All of this is supported by two in-house laboratories – one dedicated to developing formulas for new cosmetic products, and the other for testing, printing and engineering all of the hardware projects. On top of this all of their products are assembled and packaged in their headquarters in Ljubljana.

There is a **purpose** behind every step this company makes. **"We do not build our strategies on sales tactics, but rather on helping raise awareness and knowledge around the problems of single-use plastic. We understand that not everyone is ready to commit to a change in lifestyle. But we believe that a conscious consumer is a consumer of the future, and we're here to pioneer for the early adopters and impact the beginning of a new industry standard."** In 2019 the company worked with National Geographic on their "Planet or plastic" campaign. They are continually working with local and global environmental organisations to help give back to people and nature in different ways. They also support several smaller organisations that help spread the idea of "reduce, reuse, recycle" to a wider audience.

So, will being a sustainable brand be the norm for all future brands? If you ask them, it already is, but it's not nearly enough to make a brand successful. "If we could ask ourselves 'How can we be better humans today than we were yesterday?' and then act on it, that would make a far bigger impact on the success of the company than anything else."





CIRCULAR *culture*

By Slovenian Tourist Board

Slovenia **is green.** Slovenia **acts green.** Slovenia **promotes green.**

Slovenian tourism feels and lives green.
Green is soothing, invigorating, inspiring.
It is a symbol of sustainable development and a happy future.

Slovenia is the green heart of Europe, so it is not surprising that green has become the symbol of the wishes and efforts of the people of this small but geographically, climatically and biotically very diverse country to keep it green.

Thanks to almost
60%
of its land being covered with lush forests and boundless meadows, Slovenia boasts all shades of green.

The Pantone U377 shade of green is even the official colour of the country's brand, which has established itself mainly in tourism. This light green, with the "I feel sLOVEnia" slogan, is the symbol of the various attractions of the country and reflects the sustainable operation of all shareholders involved in tourism. They recognised long ago that Slovenia is not suitable for mass tourism, megalomaniac accommodation or entertainment complexes, but for an approach to tourism that gives importance to individualised offers and unique personalised experiences.

Exceptional opportunities

In addition to the rich ethnological, cultural and artistic heritage, most of the exceptional experiences in Slovenia derive from green living.

The unspoilt green nature has enabled the development of various sports and recreational activities that can take place outdoors throughout the year. Swimming, skiing, cycling, hiking, mountaineering, rowing, horse riding, and playing golf are just some of what nature offers, out in the fresh air that clears your head and fills your lungs with freshness.

Nature has blessed Slovenia, which is the only country that includes such different worlds as the Mediterranean, the Karst, the Alps and the Pannonian Basin in just 20,000 km², with thermal and mineral water enabling the development of spas and various programmes for maintaining and improving health and wellbeing. A good third of Slovenian land is protected as European areas of Natura 2000, with as many as 14 primeval forests preserved.



The value of local supply and culinary surpluses

The essence of Slovene cuisine, which has preserved the originality of flavours and true nutritional value, also derives from a green way of life. Fresh ingredients combined with a rich culinary tradition and the creativity of modern chefs have convinced even strict gastronomic critics to put Slovenia on the map of the finest foodie destinations, with high scores in various rankings: the arrival of guides like Michelin and Gault & Millau, and the title **Slovenia – European Region of Gastronomy 2021**.

The supply of fresh local produce is extremely important, and the short distances between the urban and ru-

ral environments allow people to enjoy fresh organic products from nearby farms every day. Since Slovenian cities also offer many opportunities for **urban gardening**, many residents grow their own vegetables. Slovenians also express their connection with nature and its preservation by caring for bees. Slovenia was the initiator of **World Bee Day** on **May 20th**, with the aim of raising awareness of the importance of all pollinators for humanity and the need to protect them.

A green, healthy and safe destination for the discerning visitor

Holidays in Slovenia can be very healthy, safe, and first and foremost green; this is confirmed by various certificates

and projects with the aim of sustainable development of the entire country at various levels. Slovenia has developed a national certification programme called the **Green Scheme of Slovenian Tourism**, which combines all the efforts towards the sustainable development of tourism in Slovenia and its promotion under the umbrella brand **Slovenia Green**. It offers providers concrete tools to assess and improve sustainable performance, while giving guests relevant information about the green ranges on offer.

Slovenian tourism quickly responded to the new situation following the Covid pandemic in 2020. The GREEN & SAFE label indicates and emphasises high hygiene standards, protocols and sustainable recommendations for tourism providers and destinations with the aim

The Green Scheme of Slovenia has led to different awards for Slovenia, such as the National Geographic World Legacy Destination Leadership in Best of Europe as part of the 2020 Sustainable Top 100 Destination Awards, and it was also the reason that Slovenia – the entire country – was the first to receive the prestigious title of Green Destination.



of increasing guests' trust in Slovenia as a safe green tourist destination. Slovenia was one of the first countries in the world to acquire the global safety stamp "Safe Travels" of the World Travel and Tourism Council WTTC.

Slovenia feels and lives green. It strives to make both its guests and residents feel safe, healthy, and special. Its vision is to further develop its tourism as a **green five-star destination for discerning visitors** who are looking for sustainable products of higher added value that provide peace of mind, benefits for guests and the local population, and preserve natural resources. Those who visit will go back home with their body and soul balanced in harmony, and mind full of memories of green Slovenia.



By Špela Hudnik

In the search for an answer, we are still wondering about our living spaces

In the economic-political context, society is still unsustainably interfering in all layers of the Earth's crust while at the same time looking for global solutions in the fight against climate change. Using digital technology, it offers solutions and establishes parallel living spaces that require critical and responsible reflection and public discourse. Architecture and cities are not just the domain of politics, economics and smart corporations, but of all of us. To the questions 'How would you live? What city would you like to live in?' it is necessary to respond through all segments of society.

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The built environment is not just simply built and inhabited but is formed based on and in interaction with the given political, social, technological, and economic conditions, public discourses, concepts, artistic and scientific production.

P. & A. Smithson, 1970

”

I wish they were hiring architects, at least that would be a good start in trying to learn about how cities actually work. In my experience, these companies have no basis for assessing or understanding what everyday people want or need. They are not consumer-facing companies, they sell to enterprises in the private sector, and in government. So they need to be told what to build by city governments that are aware of and listening to the needs of people.

Anthony Thousands, 2013

”

Cities need ‘acupuncture’ much more than any other places on the planet. They are polluted, destroyed by globalism... All nature on the planet is unified by a shared consciousness with which cities have no link. This is humankind’s mistake. But I want to change this situation; I want to make cities part of nature, part of the single consciousness. And I think this is possible.

Marco Casagrande, 2017

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“In the early part of the 20th century planning, and especially planning on a larger scale, was part of the way to deal with urgent issues like climate change and food production. We’ve kind of lost the ability to be involved in that form of large-scale planning. And most of the elements that cities need, to accommodate our lifestyle in the city, are actually happening in the countryside. Ignoring the countryside means that we are ignoring the opportunity to be involved in that part that sustains urban life.

Rem Koolhaas, 2020

Ljubljana – Circular City



In Ljubljana we are convinced that the shift from a linear to a circular economy has a significant impact not only on production but also on the whole social order and our mentality. We inform, educate and encourage all our public employees to behave sustainably, in a circular manner, and to make green decisions. At the same time, we are building interdisciplinary value chains, having in mind their economic, social and environmental benefits. We are introducing responsible management of

all resources (from financial to human) and strengthening innovation and competitiveness in all areas of the city's management.

Ljubljana has been following a systemic, holistic, strategic approach for more than 14 years now, and in this way the City is repeatedly confirming that by adopting long-term sustainable and circular solutions with the involvement of our citizens, we and our environment both come out as winners.



Zoran Janković, Mayor of Ljubljana

“In 2016, Ljubljana held the prestigious title European Green Capital, which gave us additional drive to make an even stronger commitment to the sustainable development of our city. We are aware that only by taking responsibility for our fellow humans, nature and material goods can we enter into the future worthy of a decent and full life for all of us. **If we want to preserve our planet for future generations, all cities worldwide must live according to the European Green Capital rules. In Ljubljana we respect those rules.** In the future, we will stay firmly committed to our pledge to pass on to the coming generations at least as well-preserved an environment as is in our care now. I am proud that **Ljubljana remains an open city where everybody is welcome, as we know how and are able to live together with respect for our differences.**”



By Marko Guček

Thinking mobility of the future

Smart mobility solutions require a broad spectrum of transport options

Transport is still the only European industry that has failed to reduce its carbon footprint since 1990, instead increasing emissions due to the growth of the industry. What can be done in the transport sector to move towards carbon neutrality and to encourage positive changes in the daily behaviour of citizens, especially car owners?

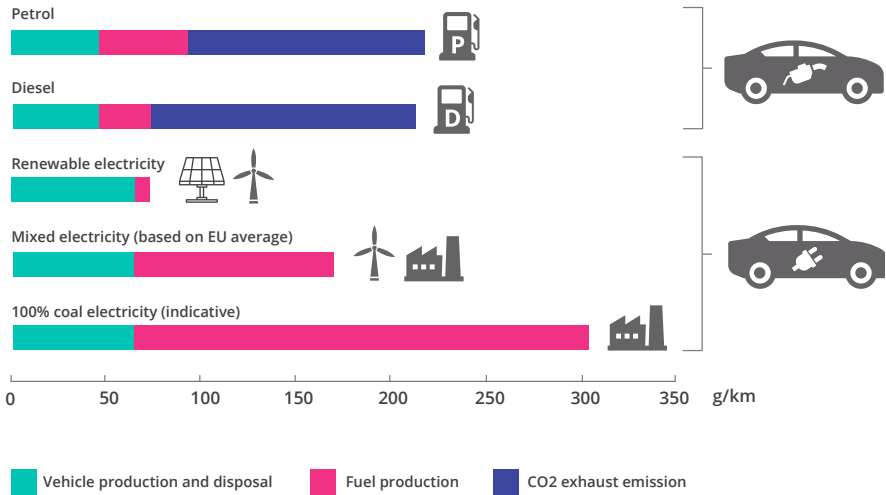
According to the European Environment Agency (EEA), road transport accounts for 71% of EU greenhouse gas emissions in the transport sector, of which 44% are from passenger car use. If a significant change in EU emissions is to be made, **an alternative to the personal car is required**. However, the average EU citizen relies heavily on their personal vehicle, so change, in our opinion, will require the introduction of alternatives that are similar in terms of **convenience, price and user experience**.

The key EU target for 2030 is reducing greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% compared to 1990. Transitioning to

renewable energy and fuels in transport is a crucial step towards a safer and liveable future. However, simply achieving the EU climate target for 2030 will require a rapid and comprehensive set of changes and improvements in transport, as well as in people's daily travel habits. In such a short period of time, it is not possible to replace all existing vehicles with electric vehicles (EV) and given the current breakdown of average sources of energy production, an EV only brings around 23% of emission savings compared to the average internal combustion vehicle, including the production and decommissioning emissions.



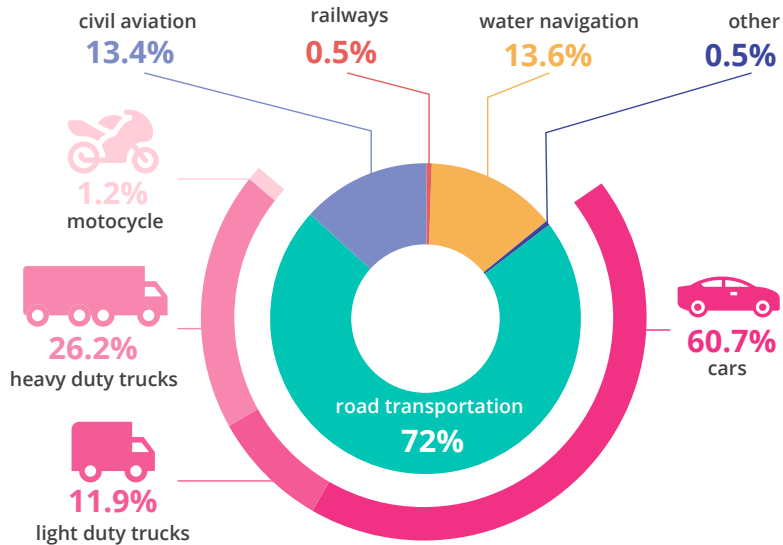
Based on current energy production, electric vehicles help but not enough.



Personal cars are major polluters.

Existing alternatives have proved insufficient

Encouraging people to switch to electric vehicles and rely more on walking, cycling and existing public transport is not enough to achieve the desired reductions in emissions. Many people in large urban areas will choose to walk distances of up to one kilometre or cycle up to five, but the largest proportion of the movement of the average population implies travel over longer distances. Additionally, a personal vehicle is still the main choice for most people on wet and cold days, even for the shortest distances. Data show that two factors are the most important to people when it comes to choosing transport options: **the speed of the journey**, which for most comes first, and **prices and costs**. Current modes of public transport are inefficient since they cannot provide a high frequency of direct connections between all the different parts of a city. They are not as reliable or comfortable as personal vehicles, and therefore it will be difficult to persuade car users to switch to other means of transport unless they are offered an **equally convenient and efficient solution**. **The effective alternative that is missing.**

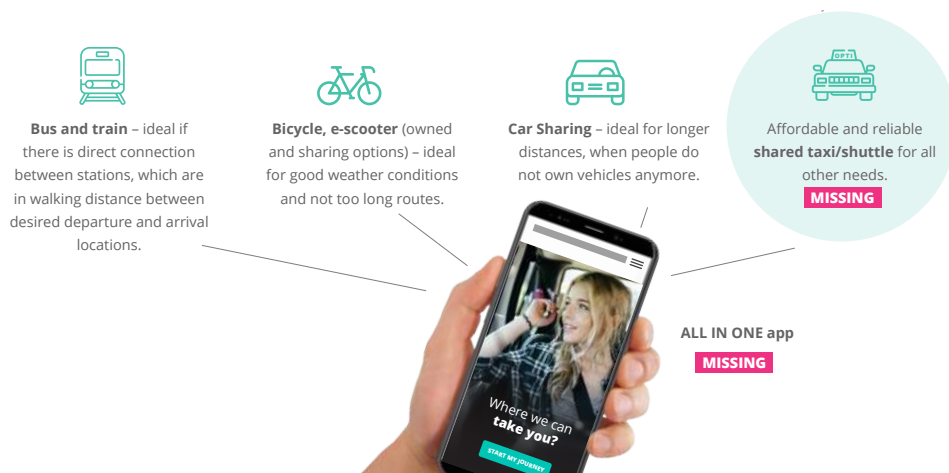


Source: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/headlines/society/20190313STO31218/co2-emissions-from-cars-facts-and-figures-infographics>

If we want to reach the EU's climate target for 2030, we urgently need to provide clever alternatives that are tailored to people's daily lives, meet their needs, and ensure both comfort and sustainability. We need a **set of mobility solutions that complement each other well**. For shorter distances, it is important to develop an infrastructure of ordinary and electric bike and scooter hire; for business purposes, a system of renting EVs is required, while

for longer distances outside the established routes, **rent-a-hybrid can provide a solution**. High-frequency bus and train routes can connect the busiest hubs, but these alternatives, even in combination, do not cover all needs, situations or weather conditions, and they are often not suitable for socially disadvantaged groups, such as the elderly, very young people, or people with disabilities. To fill the gap, we need to create a reli-

Public transportation and smart mobility solutions together need to provide a service better than or equal to personal cars.



The Slovenian capital, Ljubljana, has set itself the goal of reducing the use of personal vehicles by 20% by 2027. To achieve this goal, GoOpti estimates 1,000 vans would be required to connect Ljubljana with the rest of Slovenia. Along with other modes of transport, they would be able to provide a reliable alternative to the personal car in regional connections and within the city, reducing emissions in the city, as well as slashing the cost of the daily commute for tens of thousands of people, without any loss of convenience.

The goal of the proposed solutions shouldn't be to eliminate the private car, but it should be to use it for what it is good for, and to turn to other, modern solutions that make use of new technologies to reduce urban congestion, emissions and waste. We should all follow a vision to build sustainable cities to ensure a better tomorrow for everyone.

able service that will always be available; a comfortable taxi at the cost of a bus, offering door-to-door rides. All of these options should be united as one user experience via an app that simultaneously provides carbon-neutral options, public transport, various forms of vehicle sharing, and, ultimately, a reliable shared taxi or shuttle.

The next step? A DEMO project

There are some initiatives offering alternative smart solutions. In Slovenia, GoOpti is preparing a demo project in a selected municipality or neighbourhood. The first step is to identify the routes where they can achieve satisfactory occupancy, then they will look for local people keen

to benefit from the service. Depending on the distance, the vehicles will support one to three commutes to work in the morning, and back in the afternoon. In the meantime, they will serve local transportation needs in the community offering shared shuttle or taxi transfers.

In this way, they can achieve a low cost per kilometre and good vehicle occupancy, and consequently 60-70% lower emissions for each passenger per kilometre, which is two to five times lower, incidentally, than the reduction in emissions expected from switching to single passenger EVs. Passengers, meanwhile, receive reliable door-to-door transportation at their desired time. At the same time, they will be creating new jobs in smaller towns and rural areas.



The case of GoOpti

In Slovenia, GoOpti's service of airport transfers has been able to reduce carbon emissions while maintaining levels of convenience and comfort. So far, they have transported more than 2 million passengers, 76% of whom would have otherwise travelled with their own car. They ensure reliability through a franchise system that allows the franchisees to organize transportation in their area, fully supported by their large network.

GoOpti's smart pricing models allow them to reward both organized and frequent customers who plan their rides in advance, such as daily commuters, and those who have a more flexible timetable, because flexibility increases the possibility of pooling passengers together. The result is 75% average occupancy, and their average carbon emission per passenger-km is 28g, which is less than most public transport options, and 60-70% less than if people were driving alone in their own vehicle. Obviously, once EV options are available, emissions from GoOpti transfers will be further reduced (EEA)¹.

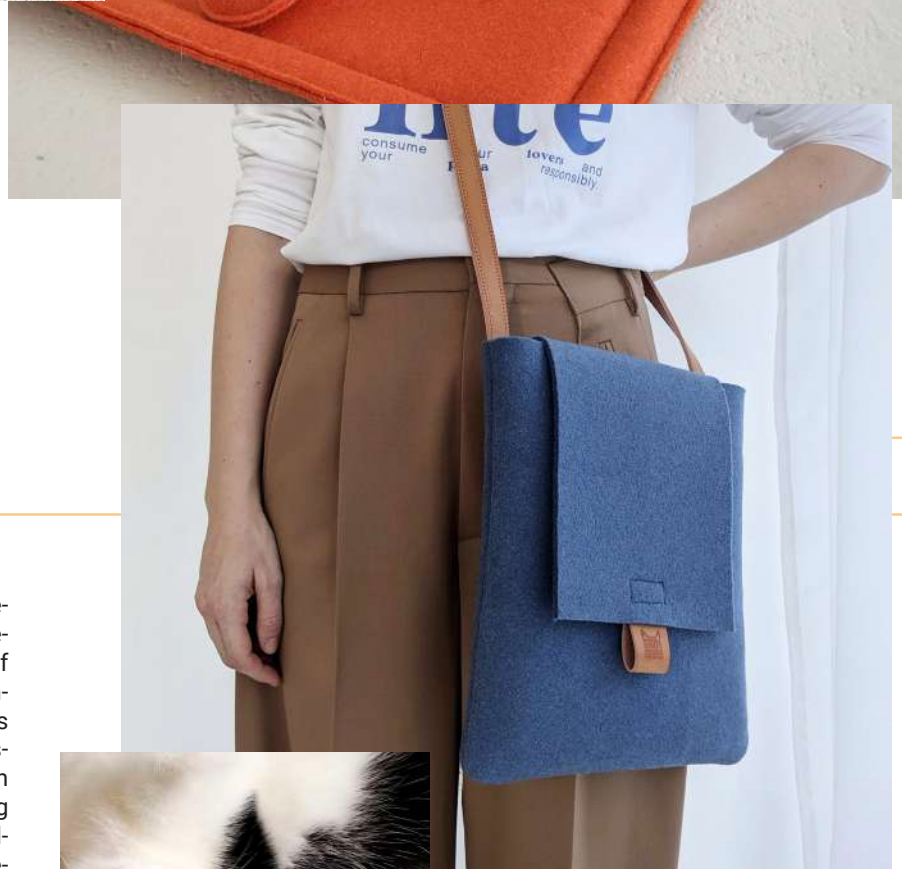
¹<https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/electric-vehicles-from-life-cycle>



Hi, we are Molly & Cooper!

meow

Molly & Cooper is a new sustainable lifestyle brand for pets and their people creating thoughtfully designed accessories of recycled materials. Their first collection includes minimalist daybeds, nests and toys for cats and dogs as well as home accessories. All products are handmade of vegan leather and felt derived from the recycling of plastic bottles. The materials are carefully chosen and each detail meticulously decided so pets can enjoy multifunctional accessories that are warm, easy to keep clean and seamlessly fit into a modern home. The Molly & Cooper strives to leave as little impact on the planet as possible. Therefore at the end of their life cycle, the products can be sent back to the brand's workshop in Slovenia where they get repaired or recycled into a new fabric.



By Ram Dušić Hren

The down-fall of the plastic bag

What can we learn from the story of plastic bags?

Problems arise when things become too cheap. In an economy that makes decisions based on financial metrics, it is inevitable that anything with a small financial value will become waste.

When it comes to environmental impact, few things have as poor a reputation as single-use plastic bags. But it hasn't always been this way; in fact, plastic bags were originally designed to help the planet.

Plastic bags were introduced in the early 1960s to replace paper bags, which were believed to have a harmful effect because so many trees had to be cut down to produce them. It seemed like a great alternative. They were lightweight, durable and did not require trees to be cut down. So how did a material with such great properties become a modern day synonym for waste?

We would argue that the answer has nothing to do with the quality of the material itself, and everything to do with the economic forces at play. Problems arise when things become too cheap. In an economy that makes decisions based on financial metrics, it is inevitable that anything with a small financial value will become waste. After all, would you throw away a plastic bag, or buy a new one for each trip to the store, if it cost you €20 every time?

Instead of complaining about the evil ways of capitalism, though, let's learn something and make it better. How can we use this knowledge when solving the problem of plastic waste? One thing we can learn is that finding alterna-

tive eco-friendly materials is not enough. A truly sustainable solution includes rethinking business models, relationships with customers, financial incentives, economies of scale and much more.

That's exactly what we're doing. Circular Change recently signed the European Plastics Pact (<https://europeanplasticspact.org>), which brings together governments and frontrunners from across the whole value chain. It aims to design a European circular plastics economy and build a new circular default for all to follow.

Changing business models goes along with changing consumer culture. More and more business models are shifting so that the product sale is not the end of story; customers play an integral part in the loop. The use-once-and-bin culture is a modern phenomenon that resulted from abundance, but it can be unlearned. Even the inventor of the plastic bag himself stated that he would never consider throwing the bag away! He would always carry one in his pocket.



**THERE COULD
BE MORE
PLASTIC
THAN FISH
IN THE OCEAN
BY 2050**

Ellen MacArthur
Foundation



**EVERY
SINGLE PIECE
OF PLASTIC
EVER MADE
STILL EXISTS
TODAY**



**MORE THAN
ONE MILLION
PLASTIC
BAGS ARE
USED EVERY
MINUTE**

clothing

By Lea Pisani

The more I know, the less I need

Clothing tips for better living



The shelves in our cupboards sway under lonely clothes that we've never worn. If everyone in the world lived like we do in the developed countries, we would need two more planets as big as Earth to sustain ourselves.



The textile industry is one of the largest polluters and consumers of water in the world. Cotton is one of the thirstiest plants there is, and in addition to large amounts of water, growers use pesticides, mineral fertilizers and various other chemicals for cultivation, leaving devastation behind.

To make an ordinary T-shirt, 2700 litres of water and 30 to 50 different chemicals are needed to process the material.

How many unused bio-cotton promo tees do you have in your cupboard? As a gift, offer quality chocolate rather than a T-shirt – unfortunately, the price does not differ much.

Lea Pisani is a renowned image consultant and clothing expert, who has been involved with fashion and raising people's awareness of better clothing for over 20 years. She is the author of the first, bestselling, Slovenian handbook on clothing: Dress Codes for All Occasions. She designed the course entitled Fashionable Styles and Contemporary Fashion at the Academy of Design. Her guideline is "the more I know, the less I need", and when it comes to consulting her clients, her advice always leans towards making eco-friendly, high quality choices that lead to fewer discarded and unused clothes and greater satisfaction for the user.



The more I know, the less I need

I invite you to follow my mantra, "The more I know, the less I need", which I am convinced is the right way to go. The most affordable and least painful solution is prevention.

The following five tips will help you create a harmonized wardrobe of clothes that will make you happy and will comfortably be worn until they start to wear out:

1. Follow your natural gifts; find the cuts, colours and patterns that suit you. If you're wondering what colours suit you, look at your eye colour; it's part of your colour chart.
2. Everyone has their own style when it comes to clothes, it just needs to be defined and nurtured. Fashion today is democratic; everyone can express their style. Choose a fashion icon to guide you.
3. Always buy in a set. In this way you can harmonize the colours, materials and proportions of the individual garments you will be wearing together as an outfit.
4. Every brand has a designated target customer, so find one that suits your natural shape, lifestyle and pocket.
5. Even if you already know a lot about the dress you are buying, sometimes it still doesn't fit. Return it and ask for your money back or a credit note.

How should we take care of our clothes?

Households can be big polluters of water and the earth because of reckless use of detergents, frequent washing and incorrect use of the washing machine. We can all contribute a lot to a less polluted environment – right at home.



Clothing care tips

1. Before washing, check the care labels.
2. Load just enough laundry into the machine for the drum to be a little over half full. If the machine is too full, it won't wash well, and if it is not full enough, it will use too much water and electricity.
3. Use the amount of detergent specified in the instructions, or less.
4. Clothes are not usually very dirty, so they don't need to be washed at high temperatures.
5. Tumble dryers pretty much destroy clothes – use them as little as possible.
6. Wash delicate materials by hand to save water and extend the life of your clothes.
7. Turn clothes inside out before washing to minimize damage.
8. Fasten buttons, straps and zips, which could damage your clothes.

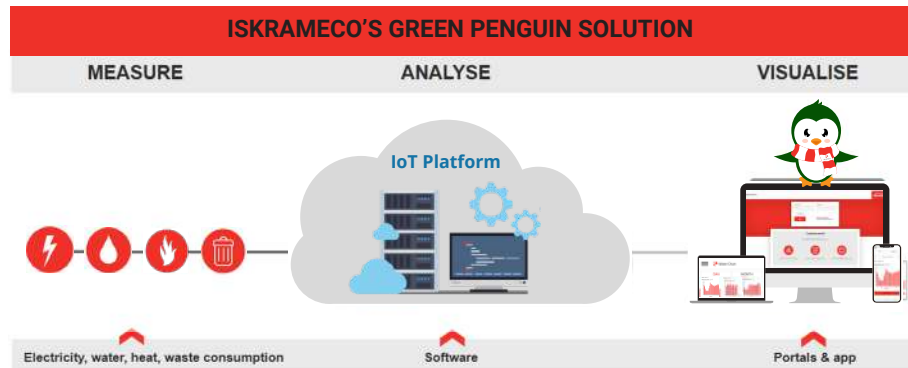
How can we help the state of the planet?

Buy thoughtfully and less than you want, increase the price range, return them if they don't fit, pass them on, and most importantly – do not hoard. **If you wear everything you have, regardless of its price range, you are already environmentally friendly.**

By Mojca Markizeti

Let's play 'Green Penguin'! Technology moves science, but stories and games move cultures!

The Green Penguin, a solution designed by Iskraemeco, combines smart technologies with the gamification to build environmental and digital literacy, starting with the younger generations and gradually including also businesses, city infrastructures and residents.



Cities are currently responsible for more than 70 % of all emissions, and as this share continues to grow, decarbonization remains the biggest strategic challenge. Smart and intelligent technologies can help cities fight the climate crisis significantly, in this view EIT Climate-KIC Climathon recognized the Green Penguin as one of the Most Transformative Ideas of 2020.

Solution

1. Measure resource consumption (e.g. energy, water, heat, food waste, waste) of schools in real-time.
2. Analyze and visualize data with benchmarks in the Green Penguin application.
3. Educate schools, teachers, and children using the Green Penguin application as a source of learning materials and practical ideas for reducing the CO₂ footprint.
4. Gamify and compete – Schools can compete by comparing their CO₂ footprint reductions. These are then recalculated into ice not melted and penguins saved.

The Green Penguin is making children life-long stewards of our planet. Children will spread their habits to their households and include other generations in the transformation. The best part is that the idea applies to other city infrastructure (public buildings, hotels, retail stores, industries). The competition can

be carried out at any level – city, region or country – all following the common goal of minimizing the carbon footprint.

Implementing the Green Penguin brings numerous benefits to cities, their communities, and the environment:

Social benefits

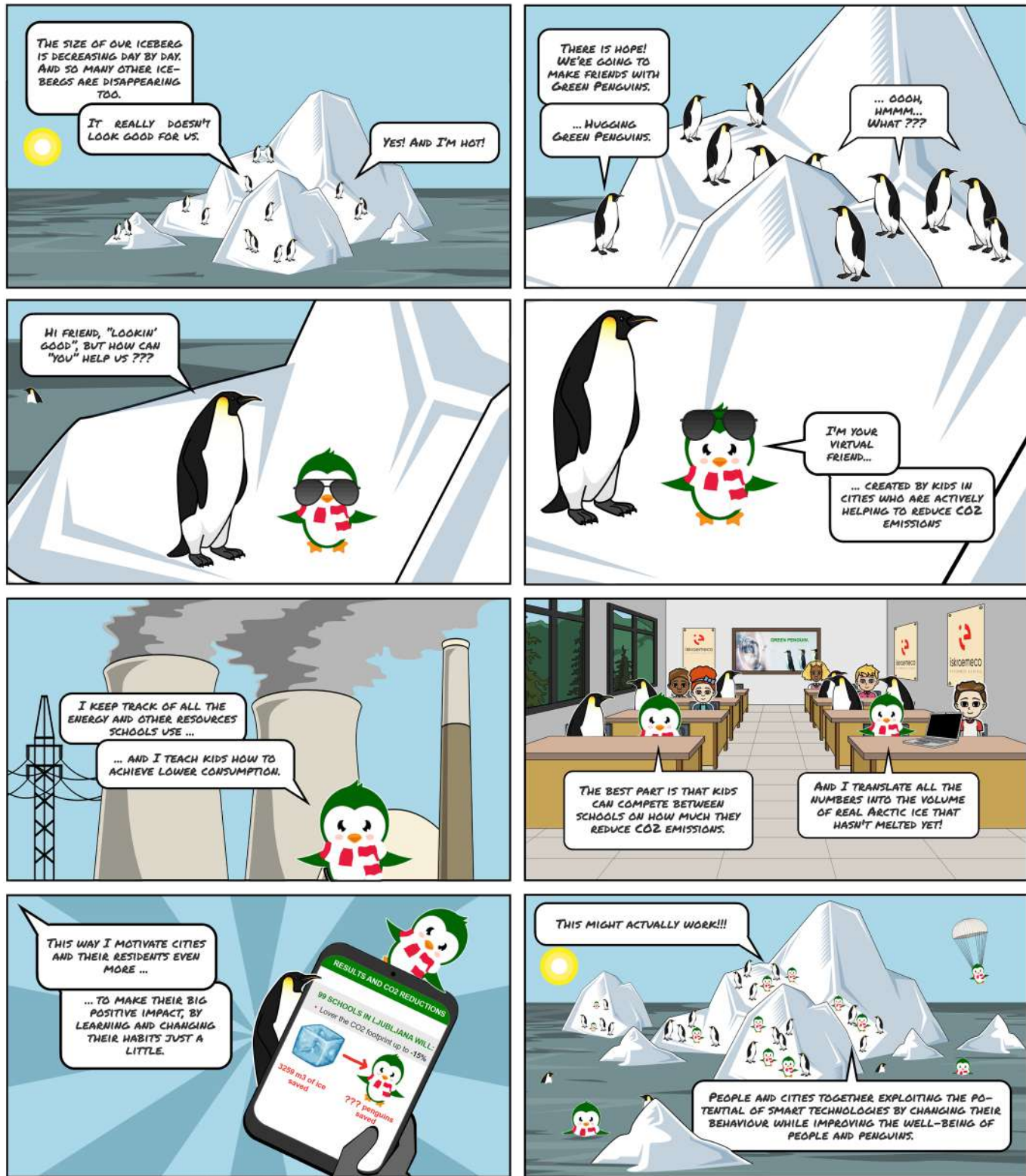
- Environmental literacy, starting with children, continuing with adults.
- Municipalities will benefit from engaged citizens, improved quality of life, and changed behavior patterns, which are all crucial steps on the way to becoming carbon-neutral.

Environmental benefits

- Easy-to-understand CO₂ emissions concept for the general public (emissions become tangible, e.g. 1 liter of water).
- Changes in behavior and efficiency improvements will reduce electricity, water, heat, and gas consumption and lower waste emissions. The CO₂ footprint will decline.

Financial benefits

- Upfront, accurate reports and consumption profiles for public buildings will be available to the city to help determine potential improvements and savings.
- Lowering resource consumption brings financial benefits.



How we came up with our idea?

Iskraemeco, a company that brings intelligence to energy, teamed up with company Klappir, who is developing smart sustainability solutions, in Climathon Ljubljana last November. The challenge they addressed was how to decarbonize the city, build citizens' engagement, and introduce smart digital technologies. The Green Penguin won the Climathon Ljubljana challenge and placed in the top three Most Transformative Ideas of 2020 in the Global Climathon, among 107 competing ideas that received the highest number of public votes. This led to increased national and international recognition and the project is already nearing realization in several EU cities. Green penguin solution is still under development. More about Iskraemeco on page 22-23.



By Lucija Marovt

The Eco-Schools programme empowers and inspires circular economy education

From circular lessons to circular school action plans and design challenges

Today's youngsters are the change-makers of the present and the future. The Eco-Schools programme has begun to empower teachers and young people to commit to circularity and to create a circular present and future.

The Eco-Schools programme is the world's leading and most widespread educational programme for sustainable development in the world, involving more than 20 million children, pupils and students, one million educators and teachers, and more than 50,000 institutions in 68 countries around the world. It stimulates, empowers and supports teachers and young people to integrate environmental education and the principles of sustainable development into their daily work and learning. When a participating school achieves the set goals, it receives the international environmental label Green Flag. It is a sign of commitment to sustainability both locally and globally.

Introducing the Circular Economy in schools: an evolution not a revolution

The programme Eco-Schools Slovenia introduced the principles of the circular economy to teachers five years ago. The theme was integrated with a selected project, at that time primarily focused on awareness raising of waste management and recycling of PET bottles and paper. The project was structured in such a way as to be attractive, understandable and playful for the youngsters involved. While teachers were equipped with educational tools and a presentation of circular cases in practice, schools were invited to participate in a separate collection of selected waste materials in which a wide range of stakeholders (parents, local communities, local waste collection companies, waste management companies as Eco-Schools supporting partners) were involved. Additionally, it was a part of a charity activity, making donations to Slovenian hospitals and young athletes.



The project was successfully repeated for three years and more than 30,000 youngsters were involved, learning about the basic principles and examples of the circular economy.

From learning to acting: school circular action plan and design challenge

In the school year 2019-20, Eco-Schools Slovenia, together with the Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE), which coordinates the Eco-Schools programme globally, made a step forward and launched a systematically developed two-year pilot project to prepare the younger generation with knowledge of the circular economy and to empower them to take positive action. The Eco-Schools Project for Advancing the Circular Economy (E-SPACE) is a pilot being initiated in the Eco-Schools of Slovenia and Latvia with support from LUCART Professional. The project aims to develop a curricular framework for school education on the



"This was a valuable experience, as well as precious lessons learnt when designing and producing our RE-Covers. The E-SPACE project motivated us and offered many useful resources for developing our solution. We learnt how important it is to think about the LCA of the product, including raw materials, design, more durable solutions, and recyclability after use, and also that we need to collaborate with different experts. A great experience – we have decided to look for new solutions in the future!"

Petra Debelak, mentor, Ob Rinži Kočevje Primary School, Slovenia



circular economy, including an exemplary educational kit; to train teachers in teaching the circular economy through the Eco-Schools Seven Step framework of project-based learning; and to raise awareness among stakeholders on the production cycle, from the raw material to the final product, its use and ways to reuse, reduce and recycle/upcycle, taking into consideration all the processes concerning resources such as energy, water and so on.

In two school years, more than 250 lessons and activities about the circular economy were implemented in Slovenia and also in Latvia. The schools also developed circular action plans and participated in the first Design Challenge. In Slovenia, more than 50 solutions were proposed, in which students shared their circular ideas and improvements as the part of their school community or everyday lives.

We are proud that Slovenian teachers and students were empowered, and in the

next few years could inspire millions of students and teachers in the global Eco-Schools network. Growing awareness and sharing of experiences and good practice give us hope that the network of students and schools in the following years will grow, and make circularity a way of creating, working and living simply and naturally.



The seeds of the future

The young will shape the future and, judging by these bright individuals, the future is looking promising. We present just a few of the many who have not hesitated to raise their voices and step into action to ensure that the future they are heading towards is one they can look forward to. We wanted to get a feel for their perspective on sustainability, what they want to change in the world, and how they and their peers are doing it.

Tamara Tomanič

Tamara is 14 years old and in the 8th grade of primary school. She lives in the small town of Kamnik, where she started an initiative with week-long ecological challenges. She is the youngest member of the movement Youth for Climate Justice.



When I was in the 4th grade, I started to raise awareness of the issues around palm oil in my classmates, but they laughed at me. I cried a lot because of the animals in the rainforests losing their homes just because of human greed. But now I notice that the teachers in my school are trying to teach us about climate change. I think that my classmates now understand why this fight is important.

I will fight, without fear of embarrassing myself – whatever they think. I believe that we can stop global warming. With my actions I hope that people will change their attitude towards nature and be more responsible consumers.



Žana Radivo

Žana is 20 years old and currently studying medicine in Ljubljana. Critical thinking is one of her main strengths. Her major goal is to be kind and help the people around her. She is a member of a youth organisation for climate justice and has helped organise two climate strikes in Ljubljana, along with a couple of other environmental actions.

I'd like society to understand human beings as social and empathic – the idea of us being greedy, cruel and unjust only perpetuates the cycle of violence and prejudice. We need to understand ourselves as part of a community and the biosphere. If it wasn't for Mother Nature and the people who came before us or who are living alongside us at this very moment, we wouldn't have achieved anything. Actively caring for each other and our planet, active empathy, is the change I want to see in this world.

All the information we are constantly being bombarded with can take a big toll on our mental health, but at the same time it enables so many young people to raise their concerns and become activists for our planet and a just society.

Miha Mikelj

Miha is 35 and has a PhD in biochemistry. He currently works as a researcher in the pharmaceutical company Lek. He is an environmental activist and a member of a youth movement for climate justice.

I wish for a change in attitude towards our fellow people and nature. For that to happen, there needs to be a change in our economic system. I want to live in a society that enables wellbeing for all people (peace, equality, water, food, etc.) without overshooting the planetary boundaries (climate change, biosphere integrity).

With my fellow activists in the youth organisation for climate justice we work on decision-makers to make systemic changes and, hopefully, pave the way towards a just society capable of coexisting with nature.



Miha Majetič

Miha is 25 years old, currently studying computer science and working full-time as a project leader and mentor at a youth technology centre. He's trying to bring a zero-waste lifestyle closer to people and persuade big players (particularly retailers) to act now.



Even though we must act as a community, of course each of us can be a role model for the people around us – starting with our family and friends. A few years ago I started introducing the “zero-waste” lifestyle to them and talking and writing about how little effort it takes to make some changes.

Even though young people are well-informed about environmental issues, I would like to see more action – less scrolling and liking sad videos about our dying planet, and more active involvement in the fight for our future.



Klavdija Strmšek

26-year-old Klavdija has a Master's degree in natural resource management. Her thesis, entitled “Transfer of climate, environmental and nature conservation commitments in Slovenian agricultural policy”, earned her the prestigious Prešeren Award from the University of Ljubljana in 2020. She is also an active member of her local community.

The first change I want to see is at the national level. Legislation that concerns the environment must be able to manage different interests that are often in conflict. The next key thing is stronger and more active collaboration. By that I don't only mean top-down and bottom-up approaches, but horizontal cross-sector collaboration. Finally, there is change at the individual level. I wish people would realise how little material stuff we really need to be truly happy.

As an interesting fact related to the last point, environmental poetry is gaining popularity among the young, including myself. It's a modern type of poetry that addresses the beauty of nature, but at the same time criticises our attitudes towards it and calls for change.



Anika Krenker

24-year-old Anika graduated in international business and continued her education and volunteer work in the domain of sustainable policies, environmental dilemmas and natural resource management. She is an active member of the socio-economic and environmental organisations Global Shapers and 180 DC.

Unfortunately, the majority of the responsibility for an environmentally-friendly and sustainable society is currently on individuals, instead of being a part of the system we live in. Companies can easily manipulate with their consumers and trick them with unchecked and artificial labels that beneath the surface have no tangible meaning. It's on us to ask the hard questions and demand answers.

We need long-term systemic change that benefits people from all classes and addresses our reckless behaviour that causes unprecedented wealth gaps, environmental collapse and dysfunctional individualism.

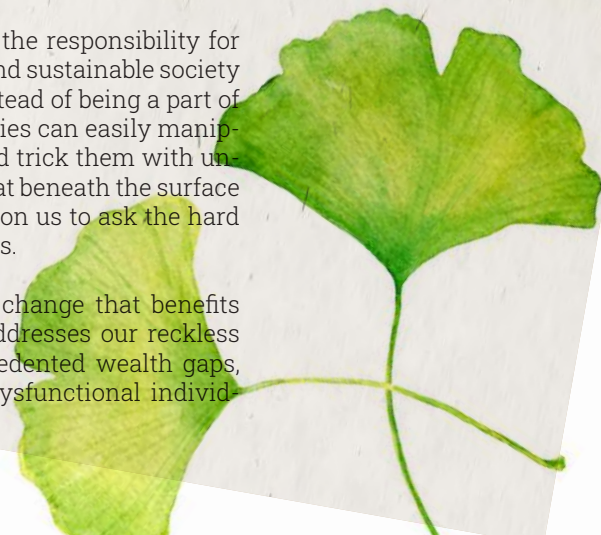


Jaka Dobnik

28-year-old Jaka is an expert in the circular economy and sustainable business models. He has rich consulting experience and is an active member of Global Shapers, a youth organization of the World Economic Forum.

Nowadays, we are often confronted by economic, environmental and social challenges that require immediate sustainable solutions. Such challenges for instance include the shift of the consumer mindset away from hyperconsumerism, limiting the carbon footprint of the food industry, and implementing circular principles at all levels of economic development.

Our generation of young adults, the millennials, represent an important voice of change towards sustainability. In my experience, there is a high level of consumer awareness and commitment to sustainability in our generation.



CIRCULAR change

The woman with circular energy

Slovenian Ladeja Godina Košir
has become one of the global
circular changemakers

Ladeja Godina Košir from Circular Change is a well-known expert on the circular economy and works mainly as an orchestrator supporting countries, regions and organisations on their journeys towards a systemic transition to a circular economy. Her key attributes are positive energy, a creative soul, intuitive networking and deep expertise.

Here is a compilation of interviews published in the Bled Strategic Times, the Eurochile Foundation and Circular Conversations in 2020, looking deeper into Ladeja's views, experience, thoughts and simple pieces of advice.





Ladeja Godina Košir MSc, the Founder and Director of Circular Change, and the elected Co-Chair of the Coordination Group of the European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform in Brussels, is an internationally renowned speaker, moderator, lecturer and leader of workshops. In 2018, she was a Finalist in the Leadership category at the international award programme The Circularity 2018, organised by WEF and Accenture in Davos. In 2020, she was selected as one of the #EUwomen4future.

The circular economy is said to be a real concept for implementing the principles of the sustainable development of society as a whole. It offers a solution for sustainable development which cannot be provided by the regular linear model of the economy. However, we have only been talking publicly about the circular economy for a few years; it is known as a trend and an alternative to the linear economy, which is far from being fully deployed or installed. Why bet on it now?

Indeed, we used to live in a very "circular" way only a few decades ago. I am sure that each of us still remembers how our parents or grandparents ate local seasonal food, maintained and repaired washing machines (that lasted more than 20 years), wore one dress for several seasons, reused plastic bags over and over again and so on. In the meantime, global production and consumption has exceeded planetary boundaries and it has become obvious that we need better management of natural resources to lower our environmental and climate impacts. In the pandemic crisis we have finally realised how vulnerable and fragile we, as the human race, are.

With globalisation we have become more interconnected and interdependent than ever. So, the time has come to focus on co-creating resilient economies and societies, based on shared values and joined vision to ensure quality of (a safe and healthy) life for everyone. In this context, the circular economy is even

more relevant than ever. It is focused on designing out waste and pollution. On keeping products and materials in use for as long as possible. On maintaining value. On regenerating our natural systems. On making business more efficient and effective. On creating new jobs. On encouraging creativity and innovation. On multi-stakeholders' collaboration and co-creation. On long-term thinking and short-term actions. Wouldn't you bet on going Circular?

How can we take advantage of the current crisis to give it a further boost? Is it the right time to do it?

It is now or never. Covid-19 has shown us that we do not have time to go "back to normal". Climate change was and remains a problem, so dealing with both crises – health and climate – is unavoidable. We must reconsider our basic values and agree on what is most important to us, as people. We need to organise our lives within the boundaries of our planet. The Covid-19 crisis has put additional pressure on many companies; it is even more important that they maintain their commitment to sustainability and make their recovery "green and circular".

We know that the transition to a circular economy-based society is complex and it demands a systemic and holistic approach with new forms of cooperation and co-creation and a broad inclusion of stakeholders. Do you believe Slovenia

is ready for such an approach? What are your past experiences in Slovenia or other countries, and what are your expectations for the future?

During the Slovenian road-mapping process, we were actively engaged in the governmental group 'Partnership for a Green Economy' (under the sponsorship of the Prime Minister). At that time Slovenia showed readiness for intersectoral cooperation between ministries, as well as for collaboration with other stakeholders. It was a great "exercise" but unfortunately, with the change of government in 2018, this initiative did not continue. We often say that with a population of 2,000,000, Slovenia is a country "of just the right size" for working on the ground, implementing the "bottom-up" approach. We had great experiences with stakeholder engagement during the road-mapping process and we have learned how important it is to orchestrate them and communicate with them openly and

transparently. In Slovenia we have a lot of hidden circular champions waiting to be recognised, empowered and awarded for their pioneering work in the process of the circular transition.

It has been said many times that it is companies that create a circular economy, because at the end of the day it is about the economy. What must companies do to accelerate their transition to a circular economy?

A lot of companies have already recognised the benefits of shifting from linear to circular business models. Innovating, using new technologies, reducing energy consumption, using sharing platforms, reducing waste, re-using materials, shortening value chains, expanding lifecycles, shifting from products to services, sourcing materials that are fit for a circular economy... all this leads to more sustainable and resilient business. What is needed is strong collaboration between business, government and civil society – the transition cannot be accelerated only by the business sector.

You are also closely engaged with creativity and innovation, since these are among the core driving forces for the circular transition. How can we foster creativity and innovation in Slovenia? What has already been done and what more can be challenged?

Creativity and innovation are the driving forces of change. While introducing the “circular triangle” as the core of the Slovenian road-mapping principle back in 2018, we highlighted circular culture as one of the three components of the triangle (next to the circular economy and circular change). When talking about circular culture, we try to bring creative industries into the strategic decision-making processes. By empowering creatives, we can design much-needed new, creative, out-of-the-box solutions. Another important aspect is the narrative – how we communicate, what kind of messages we create. Creative skills are more than welcome to co-create clear and understandable messages, supported by infographics and visuals. This helps people identify with the topic and demystifies the

whole concept of the circular economy. Creativity as such will always be valued in Slovenia and I hope that more investment will go into research and innovation in the near future.

Could you please share three associations you have when people ask you what is green, sustainable and circular in Slovenia?

Let me focus on three types of capital: firstly, our natural capital which includes our beautiful, green nature; secondly, our human capital, related to the “green DNA” of people and values attached to the sense of preservation of our natural capital; and thirdly, social capital, that can be seen in the very active local communities and in their willingness to collaborate when encouraged to do so.



change

More on <https://www.circularchange.com/media-and-publication>.



The power of circular economy **roadmaps**

The Circular Change platform provides space for engaging different stakeholders

In the last few years circular economy roadmaps have become a highly effective method for navigating the circular transition at both national and local levels. The Slovenia-based platform Circular Change is contributing to several roadmapping processes, starting in Slovenia and continuing with Serbia, Montenegro, and Chile.

Roadmapping is an important step towards a **circular transformation**; it presents a framework which enables a strategic upgrade and a systemic approach to implementing objectives at national levels.

There is no “universal recipe” for how to approach the circular transition at a national (or regional or city) level. Each country enters the process from a different starting place, and it has been driven by different entities and orchestrated through different central points. Each circular economy roadmapping process is unique and we cannot just simply “copy paste” it from one country to another environment. It is very important to **foster collaboration between different stakeholders and to show respect for the national cultural (and historical) context. A shared vision and a clear map of existing good practices**, together with **transformative leaders**, gives a firm framework for further exploration.

Circular Changes's key competences in the field of ROADMAPPING:

- A systemic approach towards a circular transition
- Mapping of relevant stakeholders
- Identification of the sectors with the most potential for a circular transition
- Management of the roadmapping process
- Establishment and nurturing of national circular networks
- Connecting local, national and international circular frontrunners for joint projects
- Cultivation of a positive circular narrative and culture

Western Balkans go circular

A green and circular transition of the Western Balkans is high on the agenda of the EU. This transition is also of crucial importance for their accession to the EU. Circular Change is actively engaged with several countries of the Western Balkans, co-creating events and engaging stakeholders in Slovenia, Serbia, Montenegro, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is providing a space for collaboration in the area of the circular economy and a basis for projects which can be financed from the funds for green transition.

An insight into the Slovenian roadmapping process

Between 2016 and 2017 Circular Change led the process of preparation of the Slovenian National Circular Economy Roadmap. With other partners in a consortium they began a process that was driven from below. More than **15 workshops** and the engagement of almost **3,000 stakeholders** provided the input needed for the **final document**, which was first introduced at the 3rd Circular Change Conference in May 2018 in Maribor, Slovenia. The roadmap and experiences in the process were presented internationally, and set Slovenia on the European circular map.



By **Violeta Bulc**, **Sonja Klopčič**, **Ladeja Godina Košir**

Ecocivilisation

Our possible new destination

*More than just hope, more than just a dream, more than just you and I.
It is just possibly a ticket for existence.*

While facing climate and health crises, we are hoping for an awakening into a new kind of reality. Visions and dreams offer inspiration for the co-creation of a new value system, for a new socio-economic paradigm. We are introducing Ecocivilisation as one of the possible pathways for the survival of our civilization, presenting it as a flexible framework for further joint exploration based on participative dialogue, intuitive transformative networks, and the AEIOU principles of leadership.

We are presenting our view on why and how the new civilisation might emerge and organise itself. We are fully aware of the limitations of this concept, so we humbly wish to inspire other “thinkers and doers” willing to contribute their knowledge, expertise and wisdom to foster global discussion and the much-needed mindset shift towards the co-creation of a thriving and prosperous future.

Why #Ecocivilisation:

Because in us, the people, lies a strong **desire to develop, prosper and thrive**. Because the current civilisation agents **lead to decadence and to a bigger stratification, and do not solve the serious societal problems of the Earth**. They even make the problems bigger, harder, and deeper (poverty, disease, political conflicts and local wars, modern slavery, devaluation of dignity and human values, transhumanism, surveillance capitalism, destroyed natural resources and planetary ecosystem, narcissism).



Violeta Bulc, Curator of Ecocivilisation, Former European Commissioner for Transport



Sonja Klopčič, Developer of AEIOU Leadership, Country Chair for Ecocivilisation



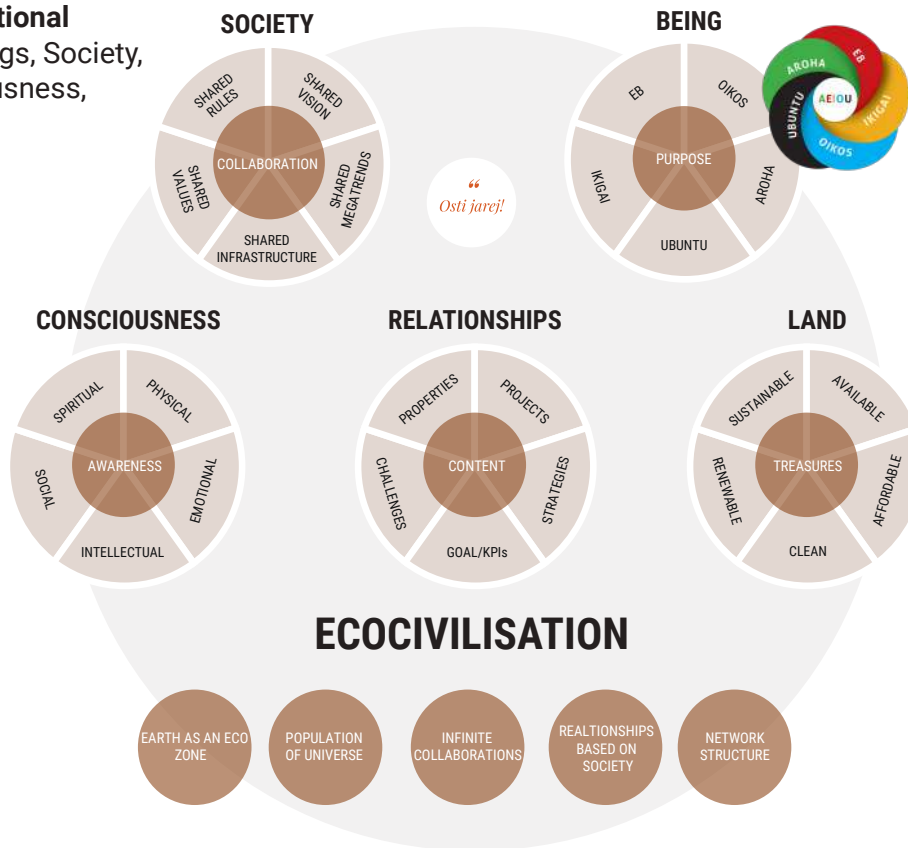
Ladeja Godina Košir, Transformative Networker, Founder of Circular Change, Co-Chair of the European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform

Because we have all the required strength and wisdom to imagine, develop and deliver the world we, the people, want to live in.

How to move forward:

- By opening key questions through participative dialogues, and by spreading awareness about the long-term consequences and the opportunities which lead to inclusive, sustainable results.
- By implementing transparent actions/performance and by creating visions for the future development of the world.
- By encouraging personal development and collaboration based on a shared inner compass of values.
- By raising awareness of new value-based priorities which are in harmony with natural laws.
- By the development of tools, models, and processes for active collaboration,

5 key organisational elements: Beings, Society, Land, Consciousness, Relationship



and respecting the behaviour of systems such as VUCA (Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, Ambiguous) and RUPT (Rapid, Unpredictable, Paradoxical, Tangled) which are awakening playfulness, curiosity, and responsibility towards the beauty in and around us.

The AIEOU model for the development of beings

The AIEOU leadership model connects the timeless wisdom of indigenous people from five continents with modern knowledge and approaches to co-create a more connected society and a new Ecocivilisation. It provides support for the holistic leadership of oneself, teams, organizations, and the community.

- **Ubuntu** directs us to build trustbased relationships.
- **Oikos** means taking responsibility for creating prosperity for all.
- **Ikigaj** invites us to carry out our mission and make our work meaningful.
- **Eb** supports ecosystem thinking about interconnectedness and interdependence.
- **Aroha** invites us to lead out of love.

Intuitive Transformative Networks – the invisible power of our civilization

Without **bridging the top-down and bottom-up approaches**, and identifying, engaging and enabling changemakers, radical transformations cannot happen. It is not about revolution, but rather about an **evolutionary process** addressing and including the existing institutional structures as well as newly established platforms and networks.

Based on shared values, intuition, empathy, playfulness, trust and transparency, purpose-driven individuals and organizations are contributing their key competences, resources, knowledge and wisdom for the emergence of a new type of global network. Through systemic collaboration and heartfelt action, they **transcend the boundaries of the existing structures and replace them with the emerging collaborative forms based on AIEOU principles that are nurturing Ecocivilisation.**

Without this **"invisible societal glue"** civilisation can hardly function as a coherent ecosystem. Even more, without it we, as humans, are incapable of co-existing and co-creating while honouring the planetary

boundaries. The **circular economy** is understood as an economic model encouraging less production and less consumption, focusing on the maintenance of the value of products for as long as possible, and preserving the wellbeing of all the beings on this planet. **Circular economy roadmaps** are serving as a tool to help us navigate towards a more sustainable future. The roadmaps are inviting stakeholders from different organizations, cities, and countries, to join this challenging journey, **following their intuition and fulfilling their purpose in the process of the systemic transformation of society and economy.**

Once we allow our wisdom to connect all of our potentials and all that our planet offers, enriched by collaboration and evolutionary transformation, **network governance will prevail and Ecocivilisation powered by the AIEOU leadership will thrive.** To get there, we need to nourish the existing networks and encourage the emerging ones. This is only possible if we open our hearts and humbly recognise what each of us is already contributing to the wellbeing of our communities, and if we value and respect this contribution with gratitude.

"You are not a drop in the ocean. You are the entire ocean in a drop." Rumi

By Ottavia Nuti Budini Gattai

Is your lifestyle sustainable?

How to do good for the planet and for yourself with the Shift 1.5 Method book

Over the next ten years we need to experience major changes in our lifestyles towards sustainability. One of the key solutions is to understand the multiplicity of roles we play as change agents: at home, at work, and in our leisure time. We as citizens, consumers and community members – we all need to act.

SITRA, the Finnish Innovation Fund, has been leading the way towards a fair, sustainable and inspiring future. It nourishes the explorer mindset: learning through doing, putting science into action, and promoting more sustainable lifestyle choices.

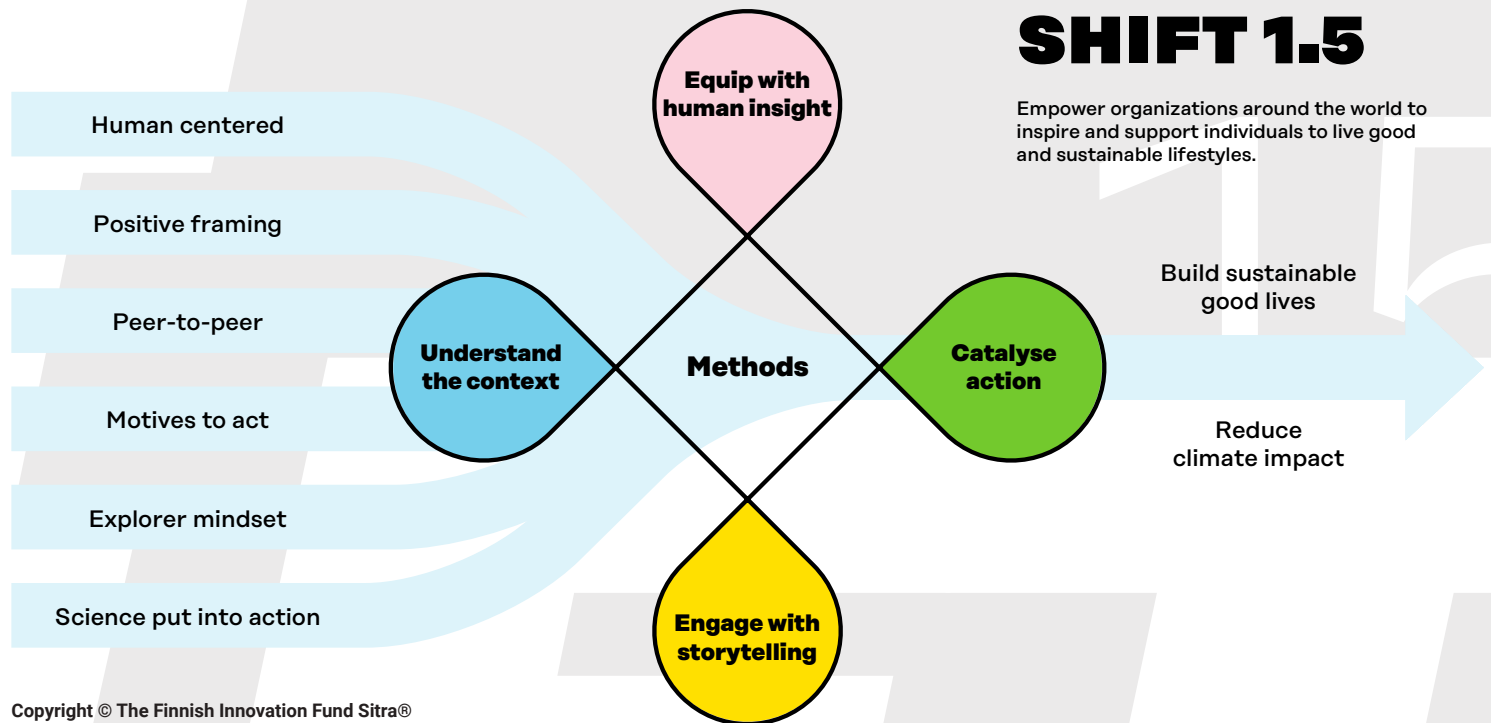
Sitra's Shift 1.5 approach is to help you answer a key question: **how can we inspire people to live more sustainable daily lives, while so many still assume that**

achieving sustainable lifestyles means giving things up and not enjoying life? Let's discover 4 ways to create positive change in all regions together.

The first topic, **UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT**, is vital to achieving global emissions reduction targets. Understanding the main theoretical framework makes it easier to adjust your impact objectives. The 1.5 degrees lifestyle covers the basic calculation method of consumption-based accounting for low-carbon lifestyles, breaking down the methodology of sustainable lifestyle quantification, while also setting targets for a personal carbon budget of 2030 and 2050. The **pathways to 1.5 lifestyles study** demonstrates the power of envisioning and visualising a desirable future, and introduces four alternative lifestyle pathways for the 2030 target. A **leading**

SHIFT^{1.5}





edge consumer study provides insight into the role sustainability plays for consumers by sharing the observations of a group of consumers referred to as the “leading edge.” The **behavioural SHIFT model** presents an extensive summary and analysis on sustainable consumption and behavioural change theories, including the lessons learned from nearly 400 publications.

The second theme, **EQUIP WITH HUMAN INSIGHT**, intends to create positive change. By knowing what makes people tick, regions can better analyse the current status of consumption. To do this there are some methods and tools for gathering human insight (relevant knowledge of current consumption and lifestyle habits), for foolproof intelligence work. Calculating the **individual carbon footprint** of the region reveals a lot about the current state of consumption and is vital information for future applications. The **sustainable lifestyle surveys** paint a picture of how consumption and sustainable lifestyle options are currently understood and accepted. **Motivation profiles** provide an even deeper understanding of what drives people towards more sustainable choices, and which factors prevent these choices.

The third topic is **CATALYSING ACTION**. After gaining a thorough understanding of the current status, diversity of lifestyles and regional motivation, it is time to encourage action. A practical application from a grass-roots level could be a **lifestyle test**, a tool that enables everyone to calculate their personal carbon footprint. This calculator answers the fundamental question: what is my personal climate impact? The calculator is best accompanied by the **100 Smart everyday choices** list (a list of ways to reduce environmental impact). This pair of personal climate action tools is even more effective when supplemented by the **sustainable lifestyle planning tool**, which includes a function enabling people to compile a personal list and save these to a lifestyle plan. It is important to involve local, private and third-sector actors in order to make greater change: **an acceleration model for businesses** presents a way to engage businesses in offering individuals new products and services, easing the transition to sustainable living on a bigger scale. The **engagement model for organisations** is designed to help civil society groups, NGOs, sports clubs, choirs and other communities equally inspire individuals.

Finally, the fourth theme reflects **THE POWER OF POSITIVE STORYTELLING**. Sustainable everyday life involves a few simple tasks: **it is about individual choices and rethinking the past and present patterns of behaviour**. Adopting a few clear rules of thumb is recommended, instead of concentrating individually on each of these steps or products. Whether these choices are the most ecological options or not, prioritising these actions will have the greatest ecological impact. **When you start to choose more sustainable options, you are also creating and enhancing new positive norms**. Think about how your actions might be scaled up and keep your sustainability spectacles on when at work as well. Your potential to encourage change goes well beyond you, and the Shift 1.5 Community wants to support you in fulfilling that potential.

Join the movement to build a circular and more sustainable World! SITRA is searching for new teams all around the world to replicate the methods in their region. Now is time to act!

www.sitra.fi/en/projects/shift-1o5-method-book/

By Majda Potokar & Bojana Omersel Weeks

Accelerating the circular 4.0 transition

The Circular4.0 project supports SMEs from Alpine Space to move faster into the circular economy through digitalisation

The overall objective of the Circular4.0 project is to improve the Alpine Space ecosystem of innovation and contribute to accelerating the transition of SMEs in the Alpine Space from linear to circular and to more sustainable business models using digitalisation.

The Alpine region ecosystem of innovation (national and regional policy makers, academic and research institutions, intermediary organisations, entrepreneurs, and citizens) is in the process of strengthening its cooperation according to the principles of sustainable development and a green and digital economy. The stakeholders are working closely together, targeting SMEs to contribute to making the Alpine Space a cleaner and greener environment, open to innovation and new businesses addressing the challenges of a digitised European economy.

Fifteen project partners and twenty-three observers from five Alpine Space countries (Austria, Germany, France, Italy, and Slovenia) are working together within the Circular4.0 project. Technology Park Ljubljana (TPLJ) is a lead partner of the project. Other collaborating project partners are TUAS Rosenheim, BWCON, AWS, ITG, Biz-UP, VENINN, Grand E-now, AURAE, JSI, TOWL, CONFBG, CCIAA Venezia Rovigo, UCB, and RISINGSUD. The project began in October 2019 and will be implemented by the end of June 2022. It is co-funded by the European Regional Development Fund programme through the Interreg Alpine Space programme.

As the circular economy starts at the very beginning of a product or service design and not at the end of the product cycle when the waste is already created, the Circular4.0 project is taking into consideration three relevant approaches i.e., **circular design**, **value recovery**, and an **optimal use approach**, which are supported by the digital technologies of Industry 4.0 such as artificial intelligence (AI), digital twinning, 3D printing and robotics.

Within the project three transnational working groups of partners, experts and observers were established according to the three approaches to add value with their expertise in the circular economy and digitalisation throughout the project.

Priority sectors and sectoral needs in various Alpine regions have already been identified, including plastics, textiles, wood, electronics, and construction. Key regional stakeholders involved in the circular/digital economy, which act as brokers/promoters and with SMEs as frontrunners, have been mapped. A set

of tools and training needs to assist SMEs with a faster transition to the circular economy, addressed towards intermediaries (business incubators, technology parks and industry clusters), has been developed.

By the end of June 2022, it is expected 280 SMEs will have been trained and assisted to identify their circular and digital maturity level and to develop their business and investment plans to become ready for the financial investment in their circular business transformation.

The Circular4.0 action plan and Circular4.0 community development activities will be intensified from July 2021 until the end of the project, while the Circular4.0 community will continue to be built and regularly updated on an existing **Smart Space platform** (<https://www.alpine-space.eu/projects/smart-space/en/smart-space-hub>), which will continue after the end of the Circular4.0 project. More information about the Circular4.0 project is available at https://www.alpine-space.eu/projects/circular4_0/en/home

Interreg 
Alpine Space
Circular4.0

Circular4.0 is inviting you to join a green and digitised journey in the Alpine region.



79%

Italy is a superpower in the circular economy and boasts the highest waste recycling rate in Europe: 79%, twice the European average

Italy & Slovenia

Italy and Slovenia cooperate in various transnational EU programmes aimed at sustainability and the environment

By Embassy of Italy/Italian Trade Agency

ITALIAN INSPIRATION FOR THE CIRCULAR TRANSITION

Italy is facing the future with a human-scale economy

Tackling the Covid-19 pandemic and the climate crisis is not only necessary, but represents a great opportunity to make our economy and our society more sustainable and therefore more future shock-proof. It is a huge challenge that requires the best possible technological, institutional, political, social and cultural resources.

93%

The Italian furniture wood industry is in **1st place in Europe** in terms of the circular economy: **93%** of chipboard panels produced in Italy are made of recycled wood

The largest renewable energy operator is Italian: ENEL is the most capitalised private electricity company on the European stock markets

432,000

Italian companies have invested in green products and technologies during 2015-2019 – the sector of the economy that innovates the most, exports the most, and generates the largest percentage of employment



According to **Ambassador of Italy to Slovenia, Carlo Campanile**, “circularity is an essential tool in our context, with the climate emergency we are experiencing and the awareness that we must achieve the important objectives of decarbonisation, strengthening of renewables, and the restoration of the natural values of our environment. For example, everyone knows how complex the plastic cycle is, so much so that we have microplastics of different densities floating in or at the bottom of the sea. This huge pollution problem affects the well-being of the oceans, which are an important part of our ecosystem. There is a lot of innovation and research to be done on this subject, and this can be also developed through international collaboration.”

Italy is making an important contribution in many sectors in which it already plays a leading role, related to a means of production that is attentive to quality, the environment and human relations. A stronger and, at the same time, more sustainable system, beginning with the circular economy. Italy's results are twice the European average; they aim to further decrease net CO₂ emissions by at least 7 million tons within the decade. The paper and cardboard supply chain – with a recycling rate that is close to 60% and a packaging recycling index of 80% – is also one of the main players in the country's ecological transition.

Italy, one of the world's largest economies, is known for its strong tradition in the manufacture of widely exported goods, but also for its lack of raw materials. **This is precisely where Italy's propensity towards circularity comes from: being scarce in natural resources and largely depending on imports (including fossil fuels and metals), the transition to a circular economy will make the national economy more sustainable, competitive and secure, reducing its exposure to the negative effects of its dependency on resources.**

Italy can be a source of inspiration for European countries, including its close neighbour, Slovenia. Italy already has some extremely good examples of circular economy bilateral cooperation: among them is **Aquafil** (see related article), and another is the project carried out by **Lucart**, a factory based in Lucca, Tuscany; begun in 2015 with a trial in Novo mesto and seven neighbouring municipalities, the project led to the recycling of about 105 tons of drinks cartons in three years. In 2019, with its Slovenian partner Valtex d.o.o., the project was also launched in Ljubljana, increasing its potential fivefold.

The Slovenian experience is also helping Lucart to activate subsidiaries in other countries.

Several cross-border strategic projects have been undertaken by Slovenia and Italy in the framework of the EU **INTERREG Programme**, including ADRION, to preserve the coastal and marine environment management; BLUEGRASS, to produce vegetables by recycling waste products from aquaculture; RETRACKING, for the recycling of Fibre Reinforced Polymer waste, and many others. The 2014-2020 INTERREG Italy-Slovenia Programme had a budget of over 90 million euros, while the new 2021-2027 programme is currently under discussion.

During the recent National Conference on the Circular Economy in Italy, the **Italian Minister of Ecological Transition, Roberto Cingolani**, declared that “Italy is a leader, but we must still innovate: the Recovery Fund will be the accelerator, one of the tools we have to increase our capacity”. In Italy, specific policies and sustainable initiatives had already been launched before the start of the EU programmes, including other cross-cutting collaborations. The **Italian National Strategy for Sustainable Development**, approved in October 2017, contributed to the definition of the objectives of the efficient use of resources and of more circular and sustainable production models, also thanks to careful and informed consumption habits. The application of specific environmental and ecological requirements was extended to the design of buildings, both for new construction and for renovations and maintenance, and the same rules apply to public lighting services.

In 2021, the Italian Ministry of Ecological Transition, in collaboration with the Ministry of Economic Development, is launching a public consultation to update the **National Strategy on the Circular Economy**, in line with the European Action Plan.

30

million t CO₂

Italian agriculture is the best in Europe for sustainability, quality manufacturing and level of emissions (30 million tonnes of CO₂)

By Eva Brunova & Holland Circular Hotspot

A circular partnership for a post-Covid green recovery of the EU

What we can learn from Holland Circular Hotspot



The government of the Netherlands has initiated a government-wide programme for developing a circular economy by 2050. Its ambition is to realise a milestone of a 50 percent reduction in the use of primary raw materials by 2030.

The Netherlands is becoming a living lab, generating and dissipating information on the transformation to a future-proof world.



Freek van Eijk from Holland Circular Hotspot

“The circular economy has not become more urgent because of Covid-19, it has always been urgent, and time is running out. But the pandemic has created awareness at both industry and consumer levels: about our dependency on global value chains and the difference clean air makes, to name but two. This increased awareness has proven to be a catalyst for the circular economy.”

The words of Freek van Eijk, Director of Holland Circular Hotspot, resonate with us as Slovenia takes over the presidency of the EU Council. There's been five fruitful years of collaboration between the Slovenia-based Circular Change and its Dutch partner.

Within a month of the world agreeing to combat climate change at COP21 in Paris, the Netherlands launched the world's first Circular Hotspot in 2015 – a campaign spearheading the transition to a circular economy with the desire to share that knowledge and learn from others across Europe and the world. The campaign was initiated by leading Dutch companies which were already committed to creating a circular economy. The campaign marked the Dutch EU presidency in 2016, and grew into the foundation of the Holland Circular Hotspot, aimed at stimulating the circular economy in an international context. In the same year the government of the Netherlands launched a nationwide plan on the circular economy with the goal of becoming completely cir-

cular by 2050 and reaching the milestone of a 50% reduction in the use of primary raw materials by 2030.

The momentum created that year can still be felt today. Numerous Dutch companies and other organisations have begun to work on the circular economy and programmes have been rolled out at the national and regional levels. The Netherlands considers the circular economy to be crucial for economic growth and, moreover, it will improve the well-being of the whole of society. This is what makes a circular economy so vital. The country is becoming a living lab, generating and dissipating information on the transformation to a future-proof world.

The importance of international cooperation and knowledge exchange in the circular economy has also grown. The Holland Circular Hotspot is proud to have contributed to the development of the European and global circularity network, with Circular Change as one of their earliest and most loyal partners.

*“We must reach out; we must make the whole world circular. **Our value chains are international, so reaching out to the countries you depend on really makes sense. The first movers also have the biggest market opportunities. The Dutch are pragmatic – learn fast, fail fast, look for opportunities, don't wait until you have the perfect market conditions, and everything is working fine, because then you probably will be too late. You must take action.** The economy of Slovenia is very much connected to the neighbouring countries, you must bring the world to Slovenia and reach out internationally – like Circular Change is already doing, but now you must do it as a whole country, together with the government, with companies, with knowledge institutes,”* stresses Freek van Eijk, who was also the speaker at the 5th Circular Change Conference in August 2020.

Today it is Slovenia's turn to take the lead, to take the wheel and navigate through the post-Covid green recovery of the EU. Circular Change is ready. Are you?

Circularity made in the Netherlands

MUD Jeans

For a world without waste

Jeans are one of the most polluting items in fashion. Using over 7,000 litres of water and some nasty chemicals to make a single pair of jeans, and with over 1.2 billion pairs of jeans being sold annually, the impact of recycling jeans and using organic cotton can be huge.

MUD Jeans uses fabrics that contain 40% recycled denim, a true innovation. By leasing its jeans, MUD Jeans keeps its product inside its manufacturing cycle, and every returned pair of jeans is recycled into a new pair. When first turned in, old jeans are upcycled into vintage jeans, and after that product cycle, the jeans will be reused in other clothing products. The goal is to be the first to introduce jeans made from 100% post-consumer recycled cotton.

"We can do better at every step in the production, and that's exactly what we intend to do." **Bert van Son**, CEO of MUD Jeans.



Swapfiets

Making cities more liveable

Swapfiets is the world's first 'bicycle as a service' company. Founded in the Netherlands in 2014, it now has 220,000 members in nine European countries and is still expanding. For a fixed price per month, you get a Swapfiets bicycle with its distinctive blue front tyre, and the guarantee that your bicycle will always work. Swapfiets has begun to design its own products which last, while being easy to repair, reuse and recycle.

The bike company membership proves that bicycles can become more circular and sustainable, contributing to more liveable cities. A recent life cycle analysis showed that the most popular Swapfiets bike is 88% circular. By 2025 all bicycles should be fully circular, while the company continues its growth in Europe.

"We have shown that we can deliver a great service with a more sustainable product, and we challenge others to do the same." **Richard Burger**, Founder of Swapfiets



Floating Farm

From cow to city to cow

Land scarcity, climate change, and rapid population growth concentrated in and around the big cities; these are all important factors behind the concept of the Floating Farm. The world's first floating self-sufficient farm has been operational in Rotterdam since May 2019. Dairy products are sold locally so transport and pollution are reduced. A large part of the cows' diet consists of organic residual flows from the city, such as grains from local breweries and potato peelings from processing. Rainwater is collected and used as drinking water for the cows, and their manure is made into compost.

"The whole concept was very carefully considered and tested before being developed. We created a model that can be replicated around the world wherever there is water." **Peter van Wingerden**, initiator of Floating Farm



Blue City

Accelerating the New Economy

In a deserted swimming pool in Rotterdam you will find BlueCity: a 12,000 m² breeding ground for innovative, sustainable and circular start-ups and scale-ups. Inside this ecosystem of entrepreneurs, waste streams are valuable building blocks; the output of one is the input for another. By sharing resources, knowledge and talent, BlueCity helps them to grow from intention to impact, thereby creating a much-needed and inspiring example of the circular economy. BlueCity also inspires and empowers citizens, for example by hosting public events – from clothing swaps to webinars – and offering (virtual) tours through the building, which is being transformed in as circular a way as possible with locally 'harvested' and reused materials.

"Since we began in 2015, we've grown from 'a bunch of crazy people in an abandoned swimming pool' to the hub of the circular economy for the city and the region." **Sabine Biesheuvel**, managing director and co-founder of BlueCity



CIRCULAR CHANGE

The best entry point for your circular economy journey

We are thinkers and doers. We **INSPIRE, ENGAGE, CONNECT** and **ACT**. Together, we can jointly make a **positive circular impact**. As experienced navigators, we are empowering you to define your own circular journey.

EUROPEAN CIRCULAR ECONOMY STAKEHOLDER PLATFORM
Chair of the Coordination Group - 1st mandate

MIKSER FESTIVAL 2018
Member of jury for Circular Design projects

CIRCULAR CHANGE CUP
Circular sailing event, Croatia

PROJECT EFFECTIVE
Consortium partner

BERTALANFY CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF SYSTEMS SCIENCE
Co-leader of the Research Group Circular Economy Systems, Vienna

2019

2016

1ST CIRCULAR CHANGE CONFERENCE
Embracing the circular economy, Ljubljana

CIRCULAR CHANGE PLATFORM
Official launch, Advisory Board chaired by Janez Potočnik, Ljubljana

3RD CIRCULAR CHANGE CONFERENCE
Unfolding circular economy roadmaps, Kostanjevica na Krki and Maribor

ICLEI 2018
Member of a jury Award for Circular Economy by MIT Climate CoLab ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability and the City of Montréal

INTRODUCING THE CIRCULAR TRIANGLE MODEL
by Circular Change and Giacomelli Media

ROADMAP TOWARDS THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY IN SLOVENIA

These are the countries where **Circular Change** has been present - through more than

50

events per year:

EUROPE: Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia, Serbia, Montenegro, Northern Macedonia, Austria, Italy, Germany, Belgium, Netherlands, Slovakia, Czechia, Poland, Hungary, France, Spain, Portugal, Norway, Finland, Sweden, England, Scotland, Ireland, Greece, Denmark, Estonia, Switzerland, Turkey, Iceland

OTHER: Japan, Israel, Saudi Arabia, Dubai, USA (+Hawaii), Canada, Chile, Brazil, Australia

2017

2ND CIRCULAR CHANGE CONFERENCE
Walking the talk: enabling circular transformation, Ljubljana and Maribor

2018

EUROPEAN CIRCULAR ECONOMY STAKEHOLDER PLATFORM
Membership of the coordination group

THE CIRCULARS 2018
FINALIST OF THE FORTUNE
Award for Circular Economy Leadership, Davos

CIRCULAR ECONOMY CLUB
Membership of the international non-profit network of circular economy professionals and organisations

THE KYOTO MANIFESTO FOR GLOBAL ECONOMICS
 Visiting professor at the Doshisha University
 Contribution to the 2nd edition of the book "The Kyoto Manifesto for Global Economics"

IMPACT PROJECT
 Consortium partner

PS LIFESTYLE PROJECT
 Consortium partner

CIRCULAR INSIDER
 A publication presenting the front-runners of circular economy, sustainable practices and leaders in green transformation, with a focus on Slovenia

EUROPEAN CIRCULAR ECONOMY STAKEHOLDER PLATFORM
 Chair of the coordination group
 3rd mandate

KNOWLEDGE PARTNER FOR CIRCULAR ECONOMY
 Deloitte Slovenia

HOLLAND CIRCULAR HOTSPOT NETWORK
 Member and representative of the Slovenian Circular Hotspot

5TH CIRCULAR CHANGE CONFERENCE
 Mainstreaming the Circular Economy Mindset, ONLINE,
 5 events & 5 topics & 5 partnerships



ROADMAP TOWARDS THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY IN CHILE

ROADMAP TOWARDS THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY IN SERBIA

ROADMAP TOWARDS THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY IN MONTENEGRO

4TH CIRCULAR CHANGE CONFERENCE
 Less talk, more action, Maribor

BIOEAST FORESIGHT EXERCISE
 Chair of the expert group

EFQM INNOVATION CHALLENGE 2019
 Member of jury for Innovation in Sharing / Circular Economy

THE CIRCULAR ACCELERATOR
 Partnership with the action-oriented accelerator supporting entrepreneurs and building circular solutions

EUROPEAN SOCIAL INNOVATION COMPETITION 2019 (EUSIC)
 Member of jury for Challenging Plastic Waste



THE EUROPEAN PLASTICS PACT
 Membership in the initiative which brings together governments and frontrunners from across the whole value chain

BLEED STRATEGIC FORUM 2019
 Panel discussions "Let's talk about sustainability" with Jeffrey Sachs, Andrea Illy and Janez Potočnik

EUROPEAN CIRCULAR ECONOMY STAKEHOLDER PLATFORM
 Chair of the Coordination Group, 2nd mandate

EUROPEAN SOCIAL INNOVATION COMPETITION 2020
 Member of a jury for Impact Prize



#EUWOMEN4FUTURE
 Ladeja Godina Košir listed among 10 exceptional women from the field of science, research and innovation

- EVENTS
- KEY PROJECTS
- MEMBERSHIP
- AWARD
- JURY
- OTHER

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**Circular
Insider,
a new
circular
hot spot.**

CIRCULAR INSIDER EU



A European view on the green and circular transition

Evropski pogled na zeleni in krožni prehod

In cooperation with the
European Commission
Representation in Slovenia

V sodelovanju s
Predstavništvom Evropske
komisije v Sloveniji



”

I am delighted that we have reached an agreement on core element of the European Green Deal. Our political commitment to becoming the first climate neutral continent by 2050 is now also a legal commitment. The Climate Law sets the EU on a green path for a generation. It is our binding pledge to our children and grandchildren.

Ursula von der Leyen

President of the European Commission



Foreword

At the Representation of the European Commission in Slovenia, we are very happy to support this edition of the Circular Insider, as the publication on the one hand addresses priorities of the European Commission and, on the other, it marks the Slovenian Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

In the fight against climate change, the European Union has set itself an ambitious target **to become the first climate-neutral continent by 2050, and to cut emissions by 55% by 2030**. At the start of President von der Leyen's mandate in autumn 2019, the European Commission immediately demonstrated a strong determination to follow up these commitments by proposing the European Green Deal, followed by the accompanying Investment Plan. The Commission also proposed the European Climate Law, which has already turned political commitment into a legal obligation. Furthermore, the Commission has presented a new Circular Economy Action Plan for an even cleaner and more competitive Europe with 35 ongoing actions and has updated the Action Plan on sustainable finance. In order to adapt existing legislation to the new climate

objectives, in mid-July the Commission will present a comprehensive climate energy legislative package, 'Fit for 55'. **The European Union's green and digital transformation, also in the light of the launched recovery from the Covid-19 crisis, is a new EU strategy for economic growth, social progress and the well-being of all Europeans.** In Slovenia, which is green and rich in natural resources, awareness of the environmentally-friendly and circular economy must be in the interest of all, notably the decision-makers and obviously the citizens.

All the citizens, you are kindly invited to participate in debates and an online platform on the Conference on the Future of Europe, prominently addressing also climate change and green transition.

Have a successful green journey, Circular Insider!

Dr. Jerneja Jug Jerše

Head of the European Commission
Representation in Slovenia

From plans to a concrete green transformation

Conversation about entering points for European circular collaboration

Dr Jerneja Jug Jerše was appointed Head of the European Commission Representation in Slovenia in April 2021. She leads a team of 16 employees who are responsible for the informing the media and public, and reporting to the EU Commission about important events in the state. **Jerneja Jug Jerše** has spent most of her career gaining experience in Brussels, having worked in various European bodies, which is why she is such a good connoisseur of the international economic and political environment. **Ladeja Godina Košir MSc** is the Founder and Director of the first platform for the circular economy in the region and is currently the Chair of the European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform (ECESP) in Brussels for the third time. She is the co-creator of roadmaps for the transition to the circular economy in several countries, and a guest speaker at key international events on sustainable development and the circular economy. During the lead-up to the Slovenian Presidency of the Council of the European Union, the two experts share with us the opportunities and potentials of Slovenia for an efficient green transition and green recovery after the Covid-19 pandemic.

We Europeans have a Green Deal, an Action Plan for the Circular Economy, a Green Recovery Plan, the New European Bauhaus – do you already see that Europe has turned its compass in a green, circular direction?

Mrs. Jug Jerše: Climate change and environmental degradation are an existential threat to Europe and to the world. To respond to this global challenge in a timely manner, Europe needs a new strategy for growth and economic transformation. We need economic growth that is decoupled from resource use, where there are no net greenhouse gas emissions, a Europe that is competitive, while no person and no place is left behind. This is why, with the start of the mandate of President Ursula von der Leyen in autumn 2019, the European Commission presented the [European Green Deal](#), which is our roadmap towards a sustainable EU economy. This objective will only be achieved, together with the Member States, by turning climate and environmental challenges into opportunities across all policy areas and enabling a green transition that is fair and inclusive for all. The EU will also provide financial support and technical assistance to help those who are most affected by the move towards the green economy – this is called the [Just Transition Mechanism](#) 2021-2027 – to achieve this goal. For each objective we also want to identify a concrete way and financial means to achieve it together. As we are committed to making the EU climate neutral by 2050, last December the European Commission proposed a [European Climate Law](#) that

already has turned political commitment into a legal obligation. The need for a green transition is also clearly and strongly reflected in the [Recovery Plan for Europe](#), especially in financial terms. The [Recovery and Resilience Facility](#) supports countries' reform and investment efforts towards a green transition. The European Commission is also promoting the transition to a circular economy as part of the European Green Deal. Last March, we presented a [new Circular Economy Action Plan](#) for an even cleaner and more competitive Europe, with 35 ongoing actions, aiming at changing consumption patterns and promoting different production and new business models. For example, we want to tackle the consumption of plastics and microplastics, prevent waste, and so on. In addition, the Commission has also presented a [renewed Sustainable Finance Strategy](#) and the implementation of the action plan on financing sustainable growth.

Mrs. Godina Košir: We are talking about two sides of the same coin – **the climate crisis and the health crisis**, both reminding us that we are part of the nature on which we depend and showing us how extremely vulnerable we humans are. Nature always finds a way to survive and regenerate, and if we are able to live and work in harmony with nature, there is hope that the human species can survive. In this regard, the listed agreements and guidelines are no longer a choice, but a necessity. **The green, circular direction in combination with the New European Bauhaus encourages collaboration, integration, creativity,**



innovation – with the aim of establishing a systemic transformation and directing all available resources – natural, financial, human – **to strengthening resilience and achieving climate neutrality**. In the global context, Europe is a lighthouse on this path, and right now we have a historic opportunity to prove that **we are serious about a green, sustainable transition** and that through radical collaboration at both cross-sectoral and international levels we are able to make it happen **in an inclusive way – leaving no one behind, even the most vulnerable**.

Mrs. Jug Jerše, as Head of the European Commission Representation in Slovenia you are working inclusively and connecting the European Commission and Slovenia. What would you point to as a priority task of your office during the Slovenian Presidency of the Council of the European Union?

Mrs. Jug Jerše: Indeed, at the Representation of the European Commission in Slovenia we operate as a link between the headquarters of the European Com-

mission in Brussels and Slovenia. We are therefore working with all the Slovenian institutions, various stakeholders, and the interested public. We try to make the voice of the European Commission heard across Slovenia, as well as making Brussels aware of the progress and orientations of Slovenia. During Slovenia's Presidency of the Council of the European Union, the Representation will assist the high representatives of the European Commission, who will attend many working meetings in Slovenia. At the same time, while referring to the Slovenian Presidency's priority areas, we will continue to inform people about the key legislative proposals of the European Commission and about many of the EU's programmes from which Slovenia can benefit, including funds from the Recovery and Resilience Mechanism as well as the EU's structural and cohesion funds, and so on.

Mrs. Godina Košir, as Chair of the ECESP coordination group you have an overview of various players in the field of the circular economy in the EU.

What are the opportunities that membership of the platform brings to Slovenia?

Mrs. Godina Košir: Our Circular Change platform has been a member of the coordination group **since the establishment of the ECESP in 2017**. In 2020 I was personally entrusted with chairing the group for the third time in a row. In all these years, we have been very proactive in promoting the possibilities and opportunities that cooperation with this "network of networks" in the field of the circular economy brings to various stakeholders – **from joining working groups to promoting events, exchanging knowledge, finding project partners, co-organising various activities and, last but not least, strengthening the country's visibility on the circular map of Europe**. Unfortunately, I have to admit that Slovenia does not use this opportunity well enough compared to other European countries. We are too self-absorbed, perhaps at times missing that healthy dose of ambition, confidence and pride in our achievements, and we are still just learning how to collaborate... Within the

five international **Circular Change conferences** we have organised since 2016, we have brought many circular leaders and changemakers from all over Europe to Slovenia, in fact pioneers in unravelling new topics related to the circular economy, but to be honest, our colleagues from other countries have benefited more from these international gatherings in our own backyard than we Slovenes. The opportunities are here, but if we don't take advantage of them, others will be there to reap the results.

The European Union is intensively oriented towards green recovery and offers strong financial support to overcome the Covid crisis in the sense of "build back better". What, in your opinion, are the opportunities that Slovenia should not overlook in directing the compass towards a green direction?

Mrs. Jug Jerše: The coronavirus pandemic has not changed the decisive direction of the European orientation towards the green transition; on the contrary, it has strengthened it. As mentioned above, the urgency of the green transition is also reflected in the **Recovery Plan for Europe**, which prioritises the fight against climate change with 30% of the EU's funding, the largest share ever in the European budget. The Recovery Plan for Europe aims to turn the challenges of the pandemic into opportunities to lay the foundations for a modern and sustainable Europe and a recovery driven by the green and digital transitions. This twin – green and digital – social and economic transformation was firmly committed to by the Member States themselves before the pandemic. However, the pandemic has only exacerbated investment needs and the need to implement structural reforms, so **the Recovery and Resilience Facility** also promotes and financially supports reforms and investment action for the green transition in particular. Slovenia has committed to this type of action in its National Recovery and Resilience Plan and has also fulfilled the condition that at least 37% of its expenditure should be allocated to green action. At the European Commission, we will be vigilant about the implementation of these commitments and investments.

Mrs. Godina Košir: Rather than "Build Back Better", I would say that we now have a truly **unique opportunity to rethink the system and set up solutions** – in the economy, healthcare, research, education, and culture – **on a fresh, green and sustain-**

able foundation. As Einstein once said, we cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them. This is why it is so important to include experience and knowledge on the one hand, and creativity and innovation on the other. Just as we cannot solve the Covid health crisis by vaccination alone, we cannot solve the climate crisis by simply "extinguishing the fires" that we have ignited by how we manage natural resources. To illustrate this with a concrete example – green mobility is not a solution by itself. The solution is to reduce vehicle production and increase their utilisation. If today the average European car is parked 93% of the time and is being used only 7% of the time, it is certainly not a reflection of good or efficient management. Sharing the car fleet, more people riding together in a car, fewer unnecessary rides, more public transport options – these are the steps to help us shift towards sustainability. **Within the framework of the Recovery and Resilience Mechanism, Slovenia has the opportunity to implement concrete shifts in this direction and to wisely link digitalisation and green transformation.** This requires inter-ministerial cooperation, private-public partnerships, easy and transparent access to financial resources, and monitoring and measuring the achieved results – a challenge worthy of marathon runners, not a short distance sprint.

When and why should we turn to the European Commission Representation in Slovenia or to the ECESP? What opportunities for inclusion and connection are available?

Mrs. Jug Jerše: At the European Commission Representation in Slovenia, we

are making every effort to address the interested public, to respond to various questions, to provide clarifications and to link them with the relevant services of the European Commission in Brussels. Through many of the events that we organise or attend, we provide the necessary information for the Slovenian public and vice versa, and we pass on key messages from the Slovenian stakeholders to the responsible colleagues in Brussels, who follow a specific area. Through our various communication channels, we daily aim to ensure that information is up to date, with the aim of further increasing the involvement of Slovenia and its citizens in the common European area.

Mrs. Godina Košir: The ECESP is a platform that is open to everyone, not just to the members of the coordination group. Of course, with the Circular Change team as a member of this group, we are available for information, support, and guidance – our slogan is "The best entry point for your circular economy journey". In our years of working in the field of the circular economy in the international environment, we have accumulated exceptional social capital – access to experts, decision-makers, good practice, European projects, sources of information – and this can help any individual or organisation, whether it is with the first or those already more targeted steps on their circular journey. We thus really encourage anyone who believes they can be a co-creator of this circular change to review the content at <https://circulareconomy.europa.eu/platform/> and take the courage to get actively involved. For more information, we are available at join@circularchange.com.



A European green deal

Striving to be the first climate-neutral continent

The European Green Deal is about improving the well-being of people. Making Europe climate-neutral and protecting our natural habitat will be good for people, planet and economy. No one will be left behind.

The EU will:



Become climate-neutral by 2050



Protect human life, animals and plants, by cutting pollution



Help companies become world leaders in clean products and technologies



Help ensure a just and inclusive transition

The European Green Deal is our plan to make the EU's economy sustainable. We can do this by turning climate and environmental challenges into opportunities, and making the transition just and inclusive for all. The European Green Deal provides an action plan to:

1.

boost the efficient use of resources by moving to a clean, circular economy

2.

restore biodiversity and cut pollution

The plan outlines investments needed and financing tools available. It explains how to ensure a just and inclusive transition. The EU will also provide financial support and technical assistance to help those that are most affected by the move towards the green economy. This is called the Just Transition Mechanism. It will help mobilise at least €100 billion over the period 2021-2027 in the most affected regions.

What will we do?

> Climate

The EU will be **climate neutral in 2050**.
The Commission will propose a European Climate Law turning the political commitment into a legal obligation and a trigger for investment.

Reaching this target will require action by all sectors of our economy:

> Energy

Decarbonise the energy sector



The production and use of energy account for more than
75 %
of the EU's greenhouse gas emissions



> Buildings

Renovate buildings, to help people cut their energy bills and energy use



40 %
of our energy consumption is by buildings



> Industry

Support industry to innovate and to become global leaders in the green economy



European industry only uses
12 %
recycled materials



> Mobility

Roll out cleaner, cheaper and healthier forms of private and public transport

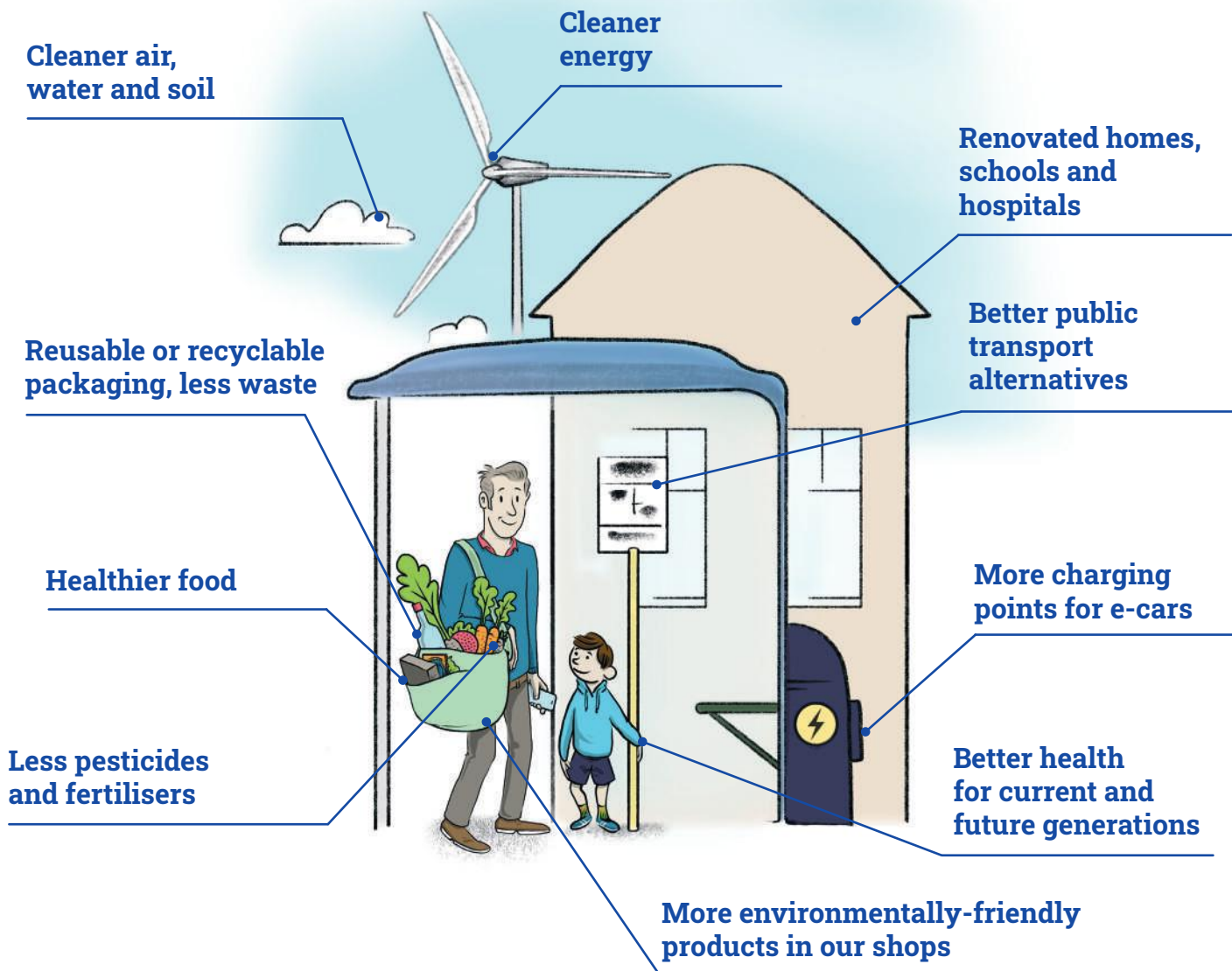


Transport represents
25 %
of our emissions



What's in it for me?

The European Green Deal will improve the well-being and health of citizens and future generations.



New European Circular Economy Action Plan

The new European Circular Economy Action Plan presents new initiatives along the entire life cycle of products in order to modernise and transform our economy while protecting the environment. It is driven by the ambition to make sustainable products that last and to enable our citizens to take full part in the circular economy and benefit from the positive change that it brings about.

Some examples of suggested measures and how they are applied in different sectors:

ELECTRONICS and ICT



Electrical and electronic equipment is one of the fastest growing waste streams in the EU.

Two in three Europeans would use their digital devices for longer provided performance is not significantly affected.



Products placed on EU market will be designed to **last longer, to be easier to repair, recycle and reuse**.

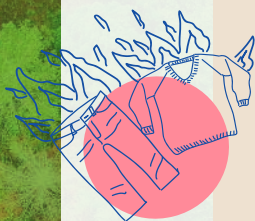
Providing incentives for **product-as-a-service**: companies will keep the ownership and responsibility for the product throughout its lifecycle.

TEXTILES



Worldwide, a full truck of **textiles** is sent to incineration or landfilled every second.

It is estimated that less than 1% of all textiles worldwide are recycled into new textiles.



Driving new business models will boost sorting, reuse and recycling of textiles, ensure circularity in the sector and allow consumers to choose sustainable textiles.



PLASTICS



Consumption of plastics is expected to double in the coming 20 years.

By 2050, plastics could account for 20% of oil consumption, 15% of greenhouse gas emissions, and there could be more plastics than fish in the sea.



Single-use products will be **phased out** wherever possible and replaced by durable products for multiple use.

Acting on microplastics - restricting intentionally added microplastics, increasing the capture of microplastics at all relevant stages of the product lifecycle.



FOOD and PACKAGING



In 2017 packaging waste reached in Europe a record of **173 kg per inhabitant**.



New legislative initiative on reuse to **substitute single-use packaging**, tableware and cutlery by reusable products in food services, as well as targets for reducing packaging waste will be proposed.

WASTE



Each citizen produces nearly **half a tonne of municipal waste per year**.



Measures will be introduced for **waste prevention and reduction**, increasing recycled content, minimising waste exports outside EU.



The EU Green Deal in action

Perspectives of the Executive Vice-President for the European Green Deal
Frans Timmermans



17 September 2020

“In this crucial moment for our health, our economy and for global climate action, it is essential that Europe leads the way to a green recovery. We owe it to our children and grandchildren to take action now. Today, Europe is showing the world how we will enhance the wellbeing and prosperity of our citizens in the next decade as we work towards our goal of climate neutrality by 2050.”

9 December 2020

“The European Climate Pact will bring together everyone who wants to take action for our planet. With the Pact, we want to help everyone in Europe take action in their everyday lives, and give everyone the opportunity to get involved in the green transition and inspire each other. When it comes to tackling climate change, anyone can take action, and everyone can contribute.”

24 February 2021

“The COVID-19 pandemic has been a stark reminder that insufficient preparation can have dire consequences. There is no vaccine against the climate crisis, but we can still fight it and prepare for its unavoidable effects. The impacts of climate change are already felt both inside and outside the European Union. The new climate adaptation strategy equips us to speed up and deepen preparations. If we get ready today, we can still build a climate-resilient tomorrow.”

Frans Timmermans

Executive Vice-President
for the European Green Deal

European Commission
Commission européenne

21 April 2021

“This is a landmark moment for the EU. We have reached an ambitious agreement to write our climate neutrality target into binding legislation, as a guide to our policies for the next 30 years. The Climate Law will shape the EU’s green recovery and ensure a socially just green transition. Today’s agreement also reinforces our global position as a leader in tackling the climate crisis. When world leaders gather on Earth Day, the EU will come to the table with this positive news, which we hope will inspire our international partners. This is a good day for our people and our planet.”

12 May 2021

“The Green Deal aims to build a healthy planet for all. To provide a toxic-free environment for people and planet, we have to act now. This plan will guide our work to get there. New green technologies already here can help reduce pollution and offer new business opportunities. Europe’s efforts to build back a cleaner, fairer, and more sustainable economy must likewise contribute to achieving the zero pollution ambition.”

31 May 2021

“Reducing the use of single-use plastics helps protect the health of people and the planet. The European Union’s rules are a landmark achievement in addressing marine litter. They also stimulate sustainable business models, and bring us closer to a circular economy where reuse precedes single-use. This is what the European Green Deal is all about – protecting and restoring our natural environment while stimulating businesses to innovate.”

Originally published in Slovenian daily newspaper DELO in April 2021.

Financing to secure our green future

Opinion of Executive Vice-president Dombrovskis and Commissioner McGuinness on April's Sustainable finance package

The pandemic has presented the world with unprecedented challenges to our health, our economy and the way we live and work. But the crisis also presents us with an extraordinary opportunity as we start to move towards the recovery.

We can build back better – which means we need to build back greener. We must seize the opportunity to craft a sustainable future for our economy.

That's what the European Green Deal wants to achieve. We want to reach climate neutrality, reverse biodiversity loss, build a clean economy – supported by investment in green jobs, green innovation and green growth. We estimate that we need 350 billion Euro additional investments per year to meet our 2030 climate targets, on the road to our 2050 goal of becoming the first climate neutral continent.

Public money will go a long way, but private investment will also play a key role in meeting our target. **Private investment will drive the development of new technologies, products and services that reduce environmental harm and mitigate the effect of climate change.**

It validates the European Commission's sustainable finance agenda. We have taken major steps to build an ecosystem that enables the financial sector to provide finance as we build back greener. We are putting in place tools to increase transparency and to help investors identify sustainable investment opportunities. Last year, we adopted the EU Taxonomy Regulation to create a common language for investors who want to use their funds to make a substantial positive impact on the climate and the environment.

In mid-April this year, **the Commission published criteria to specify which economic activities make a substantial contribution to our goals of mitigating and adapting to climate change**, as foreseen in the Taxonomy Regulation. These criteria will help companies and investors identify green activities based on a common understanding of what needs to be done to meet our climate goals. They will help companies finance their green transitions, if they put plans in place to meet these criteria. The criteria will develop over time as our economy becomes more climate-friendly.

We are also increasing transparency in the area of sustainable finance, by improving sustainability reporting by companies and financial institutions. The Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive, which the Commission adopted alongside the Taxonomy criteria, will update how large and listed companies report what they do on sustainability – from their impact on the environment, to how they treat their employees and their respect for human rights. These steps are important not only for investors but also for citizens and society at large.

We want the EU to be a world-leading green economy with green jobs and green investment. And we want to help the rest of the world become greener too.

Over time, global sustainable finance standards should converge – so investors and companies know what is green, no matter what market they are active in. They need comparable information to make the best choices.

The EU has led the push for sustainability. We co-chair the International Platform on Sustainable Finance, where policy-makers discuss the best ways to mobilise private finance towards green goals. The Members of the Platform represent more than half of global emissions, population and GDP. Alongside this, we are committed to international cooperation in the G20 and the G7.

Our task is more urgent than ever. Climate change is already a reality – and its impact will only get worse unless we act now.

The solutions will not come from companies, financial institutions, NGOs or policy-makers alone. They will come from all of us – in the EU and across the world, working towards and investing in a greener future.



European Commission
Commission européenne



Commission européenne
European Commission

By Darja Brečko Poženeš

Creativity empowering a green recovery

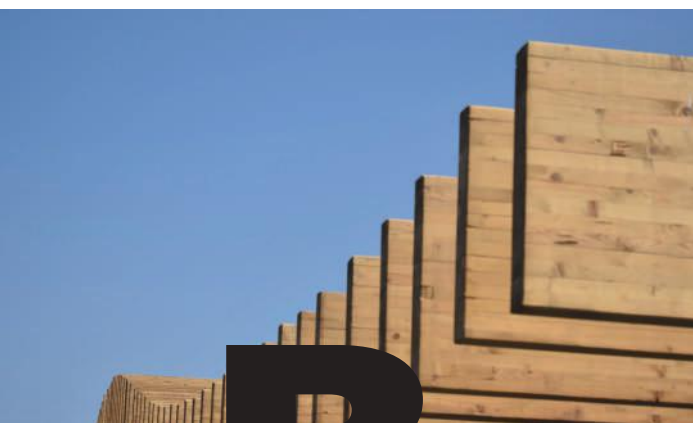
The creative initiative New European Bauhaus

The need for new ideas has long been considered an essential element of economic competitiveness. In order for ideas to develop, we need a fresh and sparkling creative mind. What we once called the artistic soul is today a much-needed skill to help relaunch social and economic development. This thesis was proved centuries ago by Leonardo da Vinci, who was not only a great painter, but one of the greatest geniuses who ever lived, with rich clients lining up with a desire to develop various technological inventions that were far ahead of their time.

The importance of creativity in innovative breakthroughs is at the heart of the creative and interdisciplinary initiative New European Bauhaus, which aims to bring together creative industries to help accelerate the European Green Deal.

The movement brings together creatives from all over Europe in the field of design and architecture, including scientists, engineers, students and citizens to realise a **new vision of sustainable living spaces** in which we can significantly reduce harmful effects on the environment, while not forgetting the aesthetics, affordability and quality that will introduce new products and services in an attractive way. By encouraging the use of renewable energy sources, and taking into account biodiversity, biodegradable materials and the principles of switching to reuse of waste and by-products, we will realistically approach the plan for a transition from a linear to a circular economy.

The New European Bauhaus thus emphasises sustainability, inclusivity and aesthetics. In short, it speaks to our hearts and souls.



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The task of the creatives in the New European Bauhaus is similar to the vision of the historic avant-garde Bauhaus School of Architecture in Weimar, which combined architecture and design with the aim of creating useful, advanced and beautiful objects to improve life. Today their philosophy is still the foundation for the development of the great achievements of architecture and design that have become part of our everyday lives.

A century ago, creatives had the challenge of how to improve products to achieve the ideal of aesthetics and usability in simple forms and human-friendly materials. With their activities, they launched the economic revolution of the 20th century. Today, once again, we face revolutionary challenges.

How to think creatively through the prism of sustainable principles is today the task of all creatives who want to be part of progress at this new turning point. We must ask ourselves **how to find inspiration in nature, in the cycles of our lives, in the feelings that arise in the process.**

The New European Bauhaus addresses the knowledge and skills of modern creatives who understand the discerning user and can have a significant impact on the development of sustainable living.

It is not just about buildings; it is also about urban planning and renovation. It is about inclusion and creating living spaces that are accessible and affordable for all. The whole process of the creation of the New European Bauhaus has been participatory, with stakeholders contributing to its concept and design. The reflections, proposals, identified challenges and inspiring examples will help the European Commission shape the initiative. Ultimately, it has the ambition to grow into a movement, just like the original Bauhaus did a century ago.

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So where can we find challenges in terms of sustainability, inclusion and aesthetics?

- In innovation and prototyping;
- In practicality and accessibility to ordinary people;
- In aesthetics and narrative encouraging change;
- In a strong connection with nature and thoughtful aesthetics;
- In search of a symbiosis between urbanisation and biodiversity;
- In connection with local tradition in working methods and materials;
- In advanced thinking, so that our waste can become an important resource;
- In optimisation with digitalisation, to bring more affordable solutions and reduce the burden and negative impacts on the environment.

If the time of individualism was dedicated to exploring our own abilities and desires, now is the time to utilise our attained knowledge in an inclusive movement and join forces to achieve important development milestones that will set our standard of living within sustainable freedom, to preserve the long life of our planet which must accommodate the needs and desires of the next generations, too.



Inspiration from the field

1.

The Finnish city of Pudasjarvi has made the decision that all buildings will be built exclusively from local wood and at a high level of aesthetic and authentic architecture. Wood is an excellent material that ensures stability, insulation and natural respiration of the material, while at the same time providing enjoyable living comfort. In addition, living in a wooden house also brings a feeling of connection with nature, scent and warmth, and the impression of a welcoming embrace.

2.

In the **Swedish city of Vaxjopa**, they have set an ambitious goal of becoming the first modern wooden city (Trastad) and, since 2020, as many as 50% of buildings must be built of wood.

3.

InnoRenew CoE's new building, currently under construction in **Izola, Slovenia**, will be the largest wooden building in Slovenia once completed. Built according to sustainable construction principles, it is shaped in such a way that it improves the user experience and is an example of the use of alternative building resources which respect the environment and promote organic materials (such as wood) within the structure.

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European circular economy stakeholder platform (ECESP)

The network of networks – delivering on the transition to a circular economy

The European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform (ECESP), established in 2017 by the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) in partnership with the European Commission, contributes to the implementation of the Circular Economy Action Plan (CEAP). It supports civil society organisations and public authorities accelerating the transition to a circular economy across Europe by fostering dialogue, sharing knowledge, and exchanging good practices.

The ECESP provides a virtual space that brings stakeholders together both online and in person through an annual conference. The Platform is supported by a Coordination Group (CG) – a group of 24 people representing civil society organisations from across Europe, who act as ambassadors for the Platform.

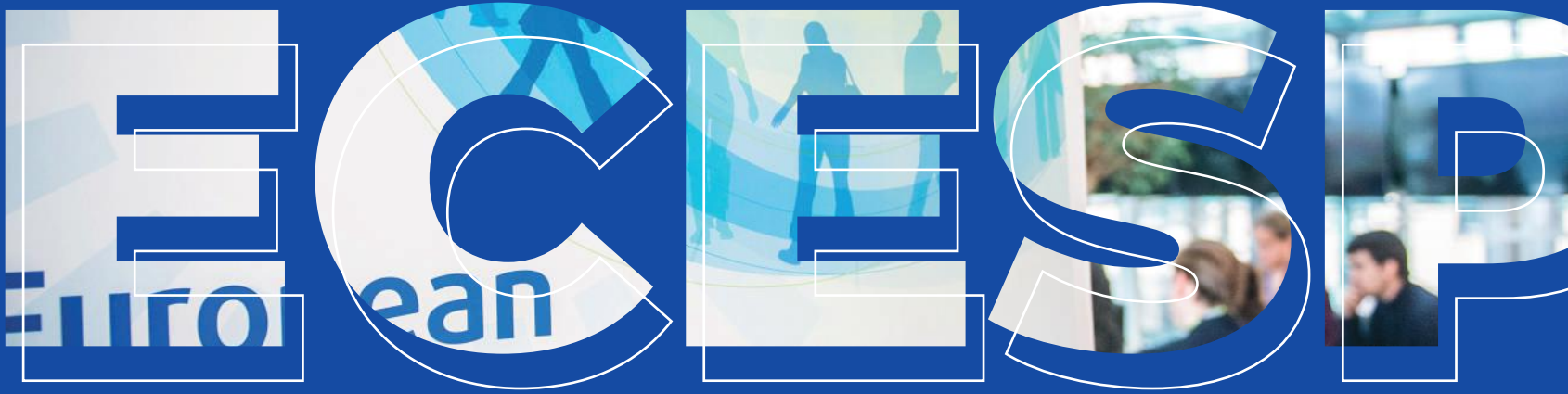
Circular Change has been an active member of the Coordination Group since 2017, and in 2020 the Founder and Executive Director, Ladeja Godina Košir, was elected as the Chair of the CG of the ECESP for the third time in a row, sharing the mandate with Freek van Eijk, the CEO of the Holland Circular Hotspot.

With the adoption of the 2020 new European Circular Economy Action Plan the platform has identified new priorities and opportunities to work together with the ambition of helping to achieve a green and digital transition that leaves no one behind. In 2021, ECESP CG members have the ambition to advance the circular economy in the key areas identified as essential for the transition, based on their collective experience and exchanges with other stakeholders. They have summarized them under eight thematic headings, named the Leadership Groups:

- Retailers, Consumer, Skills
- Cities & Regions
- Circular Procurement
- Food Waste, Food Systems & Bioeconomy
- Construction & Infrastructure
- Textiles
- Network Governance & Circular Economy Hubs
- Economic Incentives

These groups are using the EU Circular Talks process (#EUCircularTalks), the Platform's exchange concept, to bring together circular economy stakeholders through events and dynamic, result-focused dialogues. Through these and other Coordination Group initiatives, the platform will put into practice its designated role: **acting as ECESP ambassadors, fostering debate, exchanging good practices and knowledge, and promoting interaction among the stakeholders.**





ECESP in a nutshell

1. VIRTUAL PLATFORM

- >500 circular good practices
- >500 reports, studies, research papers
- >50 strategies
- Directory of circular economy networks and contacts

2. ONLINE COMMUNITY

- >6000 website monthly visitors
- >5000 followers on Twitter
- >5000 newsletter subscribers
- >2000 followers on LinkedIn

3. COORDINATION GROUP (CG)

24 representatives from civil society, organizations, businesses, trade-unions, think-tanks, research centers etc. to implement the Platform's objectives.

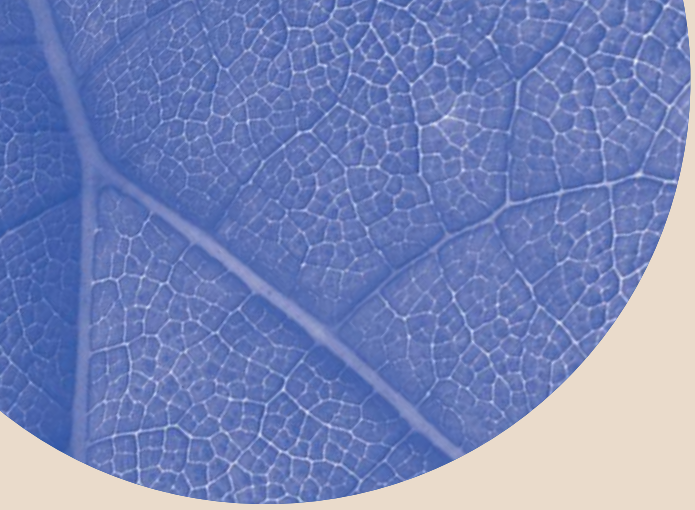
4. LEADERSHIP GROUPS

Thematic working groups of the Coordination group. The Leadership groups break down the CG identified main subjects into specific topics and deepen the dialogue using the #EUCircularTalks process.

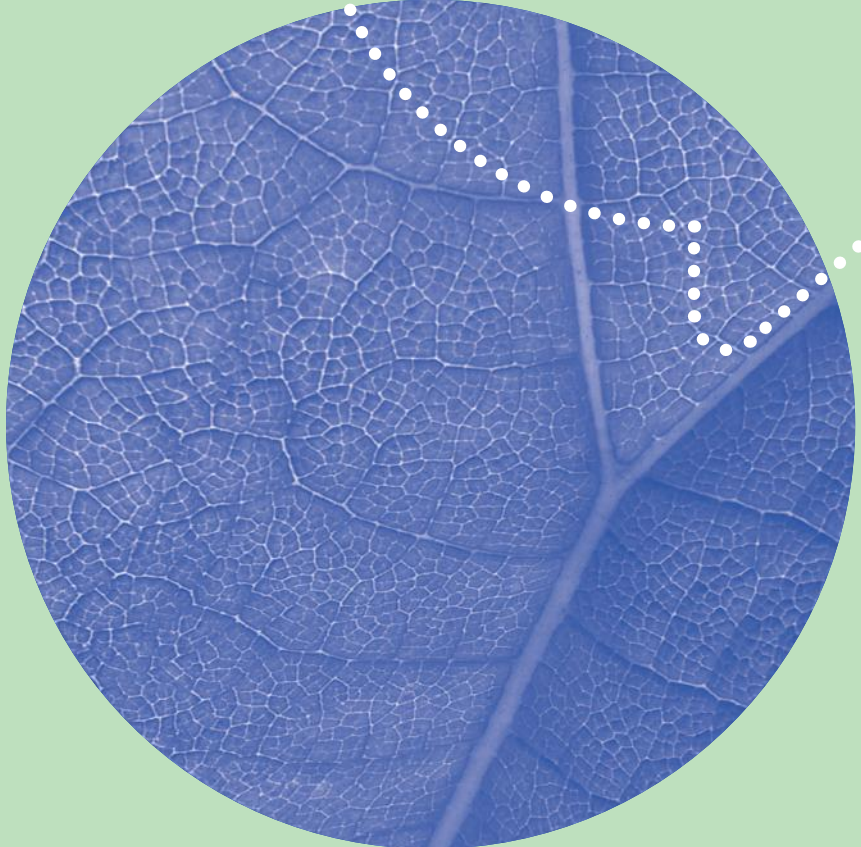
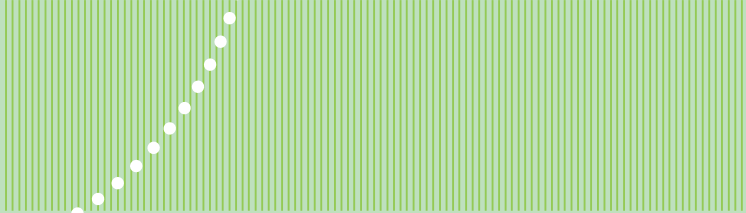
5. ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Platform's flagship event, a 2-day conference that brings stakeholders and policymakers together.

- Day 1: Policy oriented
- Day 2: Stakeholder exchange oriented



Slovensko / Slovene





”

Veseli me, da smo dosegli dogovor o osrednjem elementu evropskega zelenega dogovora. Naša politična zaveza, da do leta 2050 postanemo prva podnebno nevtralna celina, je zdaj tudi pravna zaveza. Podnebna pravila postavljajo EU na zeleno pot, ki bo trajala celo generacijo. To dolgujemo svojim otrokom in vnukom.

Ursula von der Leyen,
predsednica Evropske komisije



Uvodni pozdrav

Na Predstavništvu Evropske komisije v Sloveniji z velikim veseljem podpiramo tokratno izdajo Circular Insiderja, saj publikacija obravnava vsebine, ki so v središču prioritet Evropske komisije, in ker je časovno umeščena v čas slovenskega predsedovanja Svetu EU.

Evropska unija si je v boju proti podnebnim spremembam zadala ambiciozen cilj, da bi **do leta 2050 postala prva podnebno nevtralna celina ter do leta 2030 zmanjšala izpuste za 55 odstotkov.** Evropska komisija je takoj ob začetku mandata predsednice Ursule von der Leyen jeseni 2019 začela odločno slediti tem zavezam in jih začrtala z evropskim zelenim dogovorom in tudi spremljajočim naložbenim načrtom. Prav tako je Komisija predlagala evropski podnebni zakon, ki je politično zavezo že spremenil v pravno obveznost. Obenem je predstavila nov akcijski načrt za krožno gospodarstvo za še bolj čisto in konkurenčno Evropo s 35 ukrepi ter posodobila akcijski načrt za trajnostne oz. zelene finance. Da bi obstoječo zakonodajo ustrezno prilagodila novim podnebnim ciljem,

bo Komisija sredi julija predstavila podnebno-energetski zakonodajni sveženj »Pripravljeni na 55«. **Zelena in obenem digitalna preobrazba Evropske unije, tudi v luči okrevanja po krizi zaradi covida-19, je nova strategija EU za gospodarsko rast, družbeni napredek in blaginjo vseh Evropejcev.** V Sloveniji, ki je zelena in bogata z naravnimi viri, mora biti prizadevanje za okolju prijazno in krožno gospodarstvo v interesu vseh, zlasti odločevalcev in seveda tudi državljanov.

Vsi državljani vabljeni tudi k sodelovanju na dogodkih in spletni platformi o Konferenci o prihodnosti Evrope, ki je namenjena tudi razpravam o klimatskih spremembah in zelenem prehodu.

Srečno pot, Circular Insider, na zeleni krožnici.

Dr. Jerneja Jug Jerše,

vodja Predstavništva
Evropske komisije v Sloveniji

Od načrtov do konkretne zelene preobrazbe

Pogovor o vstopnih točkah za evropsko krožno sodelovanje

Dr. Jerneja Jug Jerše je aprila 2021 prevzela funkcijo vodje Predstavnštva Evropske komisije v Sloveniji z 16 zaposlenimi, ki skrbijo za obveščanje medijev in javnosti o politikah EU ter Komisiji poročajo o pomembnih dogodkih v državi. Dr. Jug Jerše je glavnino izkušenj v svoji karieri pridobila v Bruslju, delovala je v številnih evropskih telesih, zato je dobra poznavalka mednarodnega gospodarsko-političnega okolja. Mag. Ladeja Godina Košir je ustanoviteljica in izvršna direktorica prve platforme za krožno gospodarstvo v regiji ter že tretji mandat zapored predsedujoča evropski platformi za krožno gospodarstvo ECESP v Bruslju. Je tudi soustvarjalka kažipotov za prehod v krožno gospodarstvo v različnih državah in vabljen govornica na ključnih mednarodnih dogodkih na temo trajnostnega razvoja in krožnega gospodarstva. Sogovornici med predsedovanjem Slovenije Svetu EU delita poglede na priložnosti in potencialne, ki jih ima Slovenija za učinkovit zeleni prehod in zeleno okrevanje po pandemiji covid-19.

Evropejci imamo na mizi zeleni dogovor, akcijski načrt za krožno gospodarstvo, zeleni načrt okrevanja, novi evropski Bauhaus – ali že prepoznate, da je Evropa kompas obrnila v zeleno, krožno smer?

Jerneja Jug Jerše: Podnebne spremembe in degradacija okolja življenjsko ogrožajo Evropo in svet. Da bi se Evropa še pravočasno odzvala na ta globalni izziv, potrebuje novo strategijo za rast in preoblikovanje gospodarstva. Potrebujemo gospodarstvo, katerega rast ne bo vezana na rabo virov, v katerem ne bo več neto emisij toplogrednih plinov, ki bo konkurenčno, a hkrati nihče ne bo prezrt. Zato je Evropska komisija že jeseni 2019 oz. takoj ob začetku mandata predsednice Ursule von der Leyen predstavila **evropski zeleni dogovor** (EU Green Deal), ki je naš časovni načrt za vzpostavitev trajnostnega gospodarstva EU. Ta cilj bomo dosegli le skupaj z državami članicami, in sicer tako, da bomo podnebne in okoljske izzive spremenili v priložnosti na vseh področjih politike in omogočili prehod, ki bo pravičen in vključujoč za vse. Za ta cilj smo denimo vzpostavili prav poseben finančni mehanizem – t. i. **mehanizem za pravični prehod 2021–2027**. Tudi sicer želimo za vsak cilj opredeliti konkreten način in finančna sredstva, kako ta cilj doseči skupaj. Ker smo se zavezali, da bo EU postala podnebno nevtralna do leta 2050, je Evropska komisija decembra lani predlagala **evropski podnebni zakon**, ki je politično zavezo spremenil v pravno obveznost. Nujnost zelenega prehoda se jasno in močno odraža tudi

v evropskem načrtu za okrevanje, zlasti finančno. **Mehanizem za okrevanje in odpornost** podpira tako reformno kot tudi naložbeno ukrepanje držav v smeri zelenega prehoda. Prav tako Evropska komisija v okviru evropskega zelenega dogovora spodbuja prehod na krožno gospodarstvo. Marca lani smo predstavili **nov akcijski načrt za krožno gospodarstvo** za še bolj čisto in konkurenčno Evropo s 35 ukrepi, ki so v teku in si prizadevajo za spremembo načinov porabe in spodbujanje drugačne proizvodnje in novih poslovnih modelov. Ukrepati želimo denimo proti porabi plastike in mikroplastike, preprečevati nastajanje odpadkov in podobno. Obenem je Komisija predstavila tudi **prenovljeno strategijo za trajnostno oz. zeleno financiranje**.

Ladeja Godina Košir: Govorimo o dveh plateh istega kovanca – **podnebna in zdravstvena kriza** nas opozarjata, da smo del narave, da smo od nje neposredno odvisni in da je ranljivost nas, ljudi, izjemno močna. Narava najde načine za preživetje in obnovo, in če bomo sposobni živeti in delovati skladneje z njo, imamo upanje, da kot človeška vrsta preživimo. V tej luči so naštetih dogovorih in smernice nujna, ne več izbira. **Zelena, krožna smer v kombinaciji z novim evropskim Bauhausom spodbuja sodelovanje, povezovanje, ustvarjalnost, inovativnost** – s ciljem, da vzpostavimo sistemsko preobrazbo in vse vire, ki so nam na voljo – naravne, finančne, človeške –, usmerimo v **krepitev odpornosti in podnebne nevtralnosti**. Evropa je v globalnem kontekstu svetilnik na tej poti in prav zdaj imamo **zgodovinsko**



priložnost, da dokažemo, da z zelenim, trajnostnim prehodom mislimo resno in da smo ga z radikalnim sodelovanjem na medsektorski in mednarodni ravni sposobni udejanjiti, in to na način, ki vključuje vse – tudi najranljivejše.

Gospa Jug Jerše, kot vodja Predstavništva Evropske komisije v Sloveniji delujete povezovalno, vključujoče med Evropsko komisijo in Slovenijo – kaj je tisto, kar bi izpostavili kot prioriteto nalogo Predstavništva v času predsedovanja Slovenije Svetu EU?

J. J. J.: Na Predstavništvu Evropske komisije v Sloveniji res **delujemo povezovalno med sedežem Evropske komisije v Bruslju in Slovenijo.** Sodelujemo torej z vsemi slovenskimi pristojnimi institucijami, različnimi deležniki in zainteresirano javnostjo. Trudimo se, da je glas Evropske komisije slišan po vsej Sloveniji, in tudi, da v Bruslju vedo o napredku in usmeritvah Slovenije, vpete v evropski prostor. Med predsedovanjem Slovenije Svetu EU bomo na Predstavništvu v **potem visokim predstavnikom Evropske**

komisije, ki se bodo udeležili mnogih delovnih srečanj v Sloveniji. Obenem se bomo trudili, da ob navezavi na slovenska prednostna področja predsedovanja še naprej obveščamo o ključnih zakonodajnih predlogih Evropske komisije ter mnogih programih EU, od katerih ima koristi seveda tudi Slovenija, vključno s sredstvi iz mehanizma za okrevanje in odpornost ter tudi s strukturnimi in kohezijskimi sredstvi EU itd.

Gospa Godina Košir, kot predsedujoča koordinacijski skupini ECESP imate pregled nad aktivnostmi najrazličnejših akterjev na področju krožnega gospodarstva v EU – katere so priložnosti, ki jih članstvo v platformi prinaša Sloveniji?

L. G. K.: Naša platforma Circular Change je že od **ustanovitve ECESP leta 2017** članica koordinacijske skupine, osebno pa mi je bil v letu 2020 že tretjič zapored zaupan mandat predsednice. V vseh teh letih zelo proaktivno promoviramo možnosti in priložnosti, ki jih sodelovanje s to »mrežo vseh mrež« na področju krožnega gospodarstva prinaša različnim deležnikom – **od vključevanja v delovne skupine do promocije dogodkov, izmenjave znanj, iskanja partnerjev za projekte, soorganizacije različnih aktivnosti in ne nazadnje krepitve vidnosti države na evropskem parketu.** Žal moram priznati, da Slovenija te priložnosti v primerjavi z drugimi evropskimi državami ne izkorišča dovolj. Preveč smo usmerjeni sami vase, morda kdaj premalo zdravo ambiciozni in ponosni na svoje dosežke, resničnega sodelovanja pa se šele učimo ... V okviru petih mednarodnih konferenc **Circular Change**, ki smo jih organizirali od leta 2016 naprej, smo v Slovenijo pripeljali številne krožne prebojnice iz evropskih držav, bili dejansko pionirji pri razpiranju novih, s krožnim gospodarstvom povezanih tematik, a so s teh mednarodnih druženj na našem »domačem dvorišču« več odnesli kolegi iz drugih držav kot pa mi, Slovenci. Priložnosti so tu, a če jih ne izkoristimo mi, rezultate žanjejo drugi.

Evropska unija se intenzivno usmerja v zeleno okrevanje in ponuja močno finančno podporo za obvladovanje covidne krize v smislu »Build Back Better«. Kje so po vašem mnenju priložnosti za naravnavanje kompasa v smeri zelenega, ki jih Slovenija ne bi smela spregledati?

J. J. J.: Pandemija nove koronavirusne bolezni odločne evropske usmeritve v zeleni prehod ni spremenila, nasprotno – okrepila jo je. Kot omenjeno se nujnost zelenega prehoda odraža tudi v evropskem načrtu za okrevanje, ki prednostno obravnava **boj proti podnebnim spremembam s 30 % sredstev EU**, kar je največji delež doslej v evropskem proračunu. Namen evropskega načrta za okrevanje je, da izzive pandemije spremenimo v priložnosti za postavitev temeljev za sodobno in trajnostno Evropo oz. za okrevanje, ki ga usmerjata **zeleni in digitalni prehod**. K tej dvojini – zeleni in digitalni – družbeni in gospodarski preobrazbi so se odločno že pred pandemijo zavezale tudi države članice. Zaradi pandemije pa so se dejansko naložbene potrebe in potrebe po izvedbi strukturnih reform le še okrepile. Zato tudi mehanizem za okrevanje in odpornost spodbuja in finančno podpira zlasti reformno in naložbeno ukrepanje za zeleni prehod. Slovenija se je zavezala k tovrstnemu ukrepanju v svojem nacionalnem načrtu za okrevanje in odpornost ter tudi izpolnila pogoj, da se vsaj 37 % odhodkov tega načrta nameni za zeleno ukrepanje. Pri Evropski komisiji bomo budno bedeli nad implementacijo teh zavez in naložb.

L. G. K.: Raje kot »Build Back Better« bi rekla, da imamo zdaj res edinstveno **priložnost za sistemsko prevetritev in postavitev rešitev** – v gospodarstvu, zdravstvu, raziskovanju, izobraževanju, kulturi ... – **na svežih, zelenih in trajnostnih temeljih**. Kot je rekel že Einstein, težav ne moremo rešiti tako, da razmišljamo enako kot takrat, ko jih ustvarjamo. Zato je tako pomembno, da vključimo izkušnje in znanja na eni strani ter ustvarjalnost in inovativnost na drugi. Tako kot ne moremo rešiti covidne krize zgolj s cepljenjem, tudi podnebne krize ne moremo odpraviti zgolj z »gašenjem požarov«, ki smo jih z obstoječim načinom gospodarjenja z naravnimi viri zanetili. Če to ponazorim s konkretnim primerom – zelena mobilnost sama po sebi ni rešitev. Rešitev je, da zmanjšamo proizvodnjo vozil in povečamo njihovo izkoriščenost. Če je danes povprečen evropski avto parkiran 93 % časa in le 7 % časa v uporabi, to zagotovo

ni odraz dobrega gospodarjenja. Souporaba voznega parka, več ljudi v avtu, manj nepotrebnih voženj, več javnih prevoznih možnosti – to so koraki k trajnostnim premikom. **Slovenija ima v okviru mehanizma za okrevanje in odpornost priložnost, da udejanji konkretne premike v tej smeri ter pametno poveže digitalizacijo in zeleno transformacijo.** Zato pa je potrebno medresorsko sodelovanje, povezovanje zasebnih in javnih institucij, enostavno in transparentno dostopanje do finančnih virov, spremljanje doseženih rezultatov – izziv za maratonce, ne sprint na kratke proge.

Zakaj in kdaj se obrniti na Predstavništvo Evropske komisije v Sloveniji oz. na ECESP? Kakšne konkretne priložnosti za vključevanje in povezovanje so na voljo?

J. J. J.: Na Predstavništvu Evropske komisije se zelo trudimo, da **naslavljamo vso zainteresirano javnost**, se odzovemo na različna vprašanja, pojasnjujemo in smo vezni člen s pristojnimi službami Evropske komisije v Bruslju. Na mnogih dogodkih, ki jih organiziramo ali se jih udeležimo, posredujemo potrebne informacije za slovensko javnost in obratno, prenesemo ključna sporočila slovenskih deležnikov pristojnim kolegom v Bruslju, ki spremljajo določeno področje.

Po naših različnih komunikacijskih kanalih dnevno stremimo k dobri obveščenosti in ažurnosti informacij, vse **za še boljšo vpetost Slovenije in njenih državljanov v skupni evropski prostor.**

L. G. K.: ECESP je platforma, ki je odprta za vse, ne le za člane že omenjene koordinacijske skupine. Seveda pa smo z ekipo Circular Change, ki je članica te skupine, na voljo za informacije, podporo, usmerjanje – naš slogan je **»Najboljša vstopna točka za vaš krožni prehod«**. V vseh letih delovanja na področju krožnega gospodarstva v mednarodnem prostoru smo si nabrali izjemen družbeni kapital – dostop do ekspertov, odločevalcev, dobrih praks, evropskih projektov, virov informacij –, in to je tisto vezivo, ki lahko vsakemu posamezniku ali organizaciji pomaga pri prvih ali pa že bolj ciljnih korakih na krožni poti. Zato resnično spodbujamo vsakogar, ki zaupa, da je lahko **ustvarjalec krožnih sprememb**, da pregleda vsebine na <https://circulareconomy.europa.eu/platform/> in se opogumi za aktivno vključitev. Za več informacij pa smo na voljo na join@circularchange.com.



Evropski zeleni dogovor

Postati prva podnebno nevtralna celina

Cilj evropskega zelenega dogovora je izboljšati dobrobit ljudi. Zagotovitev podnebno nevtralne Evrope in varovanje našega naravnega življenjskega prostora bosta koristila ljudem, planetu in gospodarstvu. Nihče ne bo prezrt.

EU bo:



Do leta 2050 postala podnebno nevtralna



Varovala človeška življenja, živali in rastline z zmanjšanjem onesnaževanja



Pomagala podjetjem, da postanejo vodilna v svetu na področju čistih izdelkov in tehnologij



Pomagala zagotoviti pravičen in vključujoč prehod

Evropski zeleni dogovor je naš časovni načrt za vzpostavitev trajnostnega gospodarstva EU. Ta cilj bomo dosegli, tako da bomo podnebne in okoljske izzive spremenili v priložnosti na vseh področjih politike in omogočili prehod, ki bo pravičen in vključujoč za vse. Evropski zeleni dogovor vsebuje akcijski načrt za

1.

učinkovitejšo rabo virov s preходом na čisto, krožno gospodarstvo

2.

obnovo biotske raznovrstnosti ter zmanjšanje onesnaževanja

Načrt opiše potrebne naložbe in razpoložljive finančne instrumente ter pojasni, kako zagotoviti pravičen in vključujoč prehod. EU bo zagotovila finančno podporo in tehnično pomoč tistim, ki jih bo prehod na zeleno gospodarstvo najbolj prizadel. To bo zagotovila z mehanizmom za pravični prehod, ki bo v obdobju 2021–2027 v najbolj prizadetih regijah pomagal mobilizirati najmanj 100 milijard evrov.

Kaj bomo storili?

> Podnebje

EU bo leta 2050 podnebno nevtralna. Komisija bo predlagala evropski podnebni zakon, ki bo to politično zavezo spremenil v pravno obveznost in sprožilec za naložbe.

Za doseg tega cilja bo potrebno ukrepanje vseh sektorjev našega gospodarstva:

> Energija

Dekarbonizacija energetskega sektorja



Proizvodnja in uporaba energije predstavlja več kot

75 %
emisij toplogrednih plinov v EU



> Stavbe

Prenova stavb, ki bo pripomogla k nižjim računom gospodinjstev za energijo in manjši porabi energije



Stavbe predstavljajo
40 %
naše uporabe energije



> Industrija

Podpora industrij za inovacije in pridobitev vodilnega položaja v svetu v zelenem gospodarstvu



Evropska industrija uporablja samo

12 %
recikliranih materialov



> Mobilnost

Uvajanje čistejših, cenejših in bolj zdravih oblik zasebnega in javnega prevoza

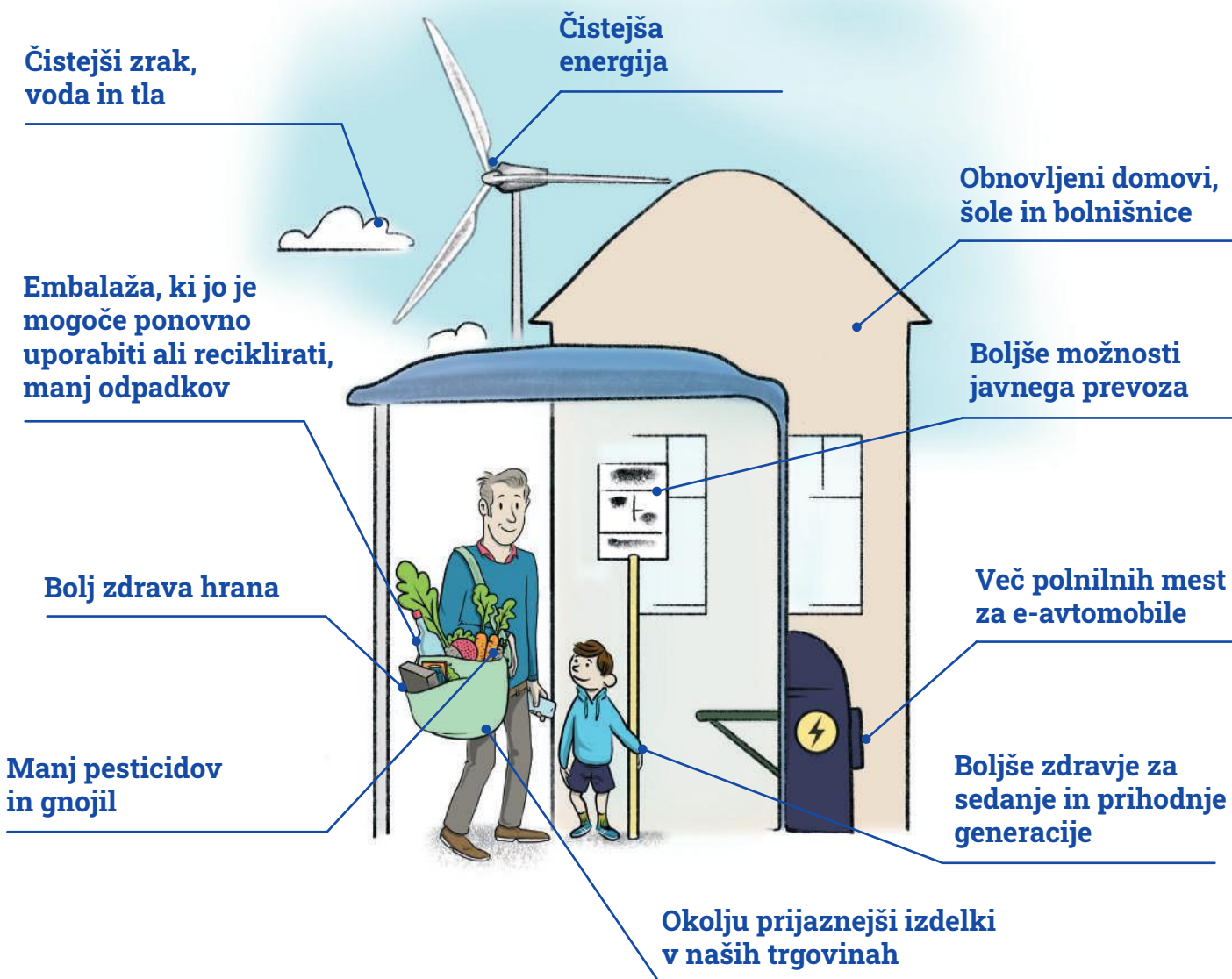


Promet ustvarja
25 %
naših emisij



Kakšne koristi ima zame?

Evropski zeleni dogovor bo izboljšal blaginjo in zdravje državljanek in državljanov ter prihodnjih generacij.



Novi evropski akcijski načrt za krožno gospodarstvo

Novi evropski akcijski načrt za krožno gospodarstvo predstavlja nove pobude za posodobitev in preobrazbo našega gospodarstva ob hkratnem varstvu okolja, ki zajemajo celotno življenjsko dobo proizvodov. Temelji na želji, da bi proizvajali trajnostne proizvode, ki jih je mogoče dolgo uporabljati, ter državljanom in državljanom omogočili polno sodelovanje v krožnem gospodarstvu in izkoriščanje pozitivnih sprememb, ki jih to prinaša.

Nekaj primerov predlaganih ukrepov in njihove uporabe v različnih sektorjih:

ELEKTRONIKA in IKT



Električna in elektronska oprema je eden od najhitreje rastočih tokov odpadkov v EU.

Dve tretjini Evropejcev in Evropejk bi svoje digitalne naprave uporabljali dlje, če to ne bi bistveno vplivalo na njihovo delovanje.



Proizvodi, ki se dajo na trg EU, bodo zasnovani tako, da **bodo trajali dlje ter jih bo lažje popraviti, nadgraditi, reciklirati in ponovno uporabiti**.

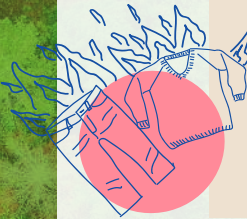
Zagotavljanje spodbud za **proizvode kot storitve**: podjetja bodo obdržala lastništvo proizvoda in odgovornost zanj v celotnem življenjskem ciklu.

TEKSTILNI IZDELKI



Po svetu se vsako sekundo v sežigalnice ali na odlagališča pošlje cel tovarnjak **tekstilnih izdelkov**.

Ocenjuje se, da se na svetovni ravni manj kot en odstotek vseh tekstilnih izdelkov reciklira v nove tekstilne izdelke.



Spodbujanje novih poslovnih modelov bo povečalo razvrščanje, ponovno uporabo in recikliranje tekstilnih izdelkov, potrošnicam in potrošnikom pa bo omogočilo izbiro trajnostnih tekstilnih izdelkov. Uporaba okoljsko primerne zasnove se bo razširila na dodatne proizvode. Tudi oblačila bodo zasnovana tako, da bodo trajala dlje.



PLASTIKA



V naslednjih 20 letih **naj bi se poraba plastike podvojila**.

Do leta 2050 bi bilo lahko s plastiko povezanih 20 % porabe nafte in 15 % emisij toplogrednih plinov, v oceanih pa bi bilo lahko več plastike kot rib.



Proizvodi za enkratno uporabo se bodo, kadar bo to mogoče, **postopoma opustili** in nadomestili s trajnejšimi proizvodi za večkratno uporabo.

Ukrepanje proti mikroplastiki – omejitev namerno dodane mikroplastike, povečanje zаетja mikroplastike v vseh pomembnih fazah življenjskega cikla proizvodov.



HRANA IN EMBALAŽA



Leta 2017 je količina odpadne embalaže v Evropi dosegla rekordnih **173 kg na prebivalca oziroma prebivalko**.



Predlagane bodo nove zakonodajne pobude o ponovni uporabi, s katerimi bi v živilskih storitvah **embalažo, posodo in pribor za enkratno uporabo nadomestili** izdelki za večkratno uporabo, ter cilji za zmanjšanje količine odpadne embalaže.

ODPADKI



Vsak državljan oziroma državljanica proizvede skoraj **pol tone komunalnih odpadkov na leto**.



Uvedeni bodo ukrepi za **preprečevanje nastajanja odpadkov in zmanjševanje njihovega obsega**, povečanje vsebnosti recikliranih materialov v proizvodih in čim večje zmanjšanje izvoza odpadkov iz EU. Predstavljen bo model EU za ločeno zbiranje in označevanje proizvodov.



Evropski zeleni dogovor v akciji

Pogledi izvršnega podpredsednika Evropske komisije za evropski zeleni dogovor,
Fransa Timmermansa



17. september 2020

“V tem ključnem trenutku za naše zdravje, gospodarstvo in globalno podnebno ukrepanje je bistveno, da Evropa prevzame vodilno vlogo pri zelenem okrevanju. Zaradi naših otrok in vnukov smo dolžni ukrepati takoj. Danes Evropa svetu prikazuje, kako bomo v naslednjem desetletju ob prizadevanju za uresničitev cilja podnebne nevtralnosti do leta 2050 izboljšali dobro počutje in blaginjo naših državljanek in državljanov.”

9. december 2020

“Evropski podnebni pakt bo povezal vse, ki želijo ukrepati za dobro našega planeta. S tem paktom želimo vse v Evropi spodbuditi, da prilagodijo svoj vsakdan, ter jim dati priložnost, da sodelujejo pri zelenem prehodu in s svojim zgledom navdahnejo tudi druge. Prav vsi lahko ukrepamo in prispevamo k boju proti podnebnim spremembam.”

24. februar 2021

“Pandemija COVID-19 je jasno pokazala, da ima nezadostna pripravljenost lahko hude posledice. Proti podnebni krizi ni cepiva, vseeno pa se lahko borimo proti njej in se pripravimo na njene neizbežne posledice. Vplivi podnebnih sprememb so že občutni tako v Evropski uniji kot po svetu. Nova strategija za prilagajanje podnebnim spremembam nam bo pomagala pospešiti in izboljšati našo pripravljenost. Če se pripravimo že danes, še vedno lahko zgradimo prihodnost, ki bo odporna na podnebne spremembe.”

Frans Timmermans,

izvršni podpredsednik Evropske komisije
za evropski zeleni dogovor

European Commission
Commission européenne

21. april 2021

“To je prelomni trenutek za EU. Dosegli smo ambiciozen dogovor, da bomo naš cilj podnebne nevtralnosti zapisali v zavezujočo zakonodajo, ki bo usmerjala naše politike naslednjih 30 let. Podnebna pravila bodo usmerjala zeleno okrevanje EU in zagotovila socialno pravičen prehod na zeleno gospodarstvo. Današnji dogovor krepi tudi naš vodilni položaj v svetu v boju proti podnebni krizi. Ko se bodo svetovni voditelji zbrali ob dnevu Zemlje, jih bo EU seznanila s to dobro novico, za katero upamo, da bo navdihnila naše mednarodne partnerje. To je dober dan za naše državljane in naš planet.”

12. maj 2021

“Cilj zelenega dogovora je zdrav planet za vse. Toda da bi ljudem in planetu zagotovili okolje brez strupov, moramo ukrepati takoj. Ta načrt bo usmerjal naša prizadevanja. Obstoječe zelene tehnologije lahko pomagajo zmanjšati onesnaževanje in ponudijo nove poslovne priložnosti. Evropska prizadevanja za okolju prijaznejšo, pravičnejšo in bolj trajnostno obnovo gospodarstva morajo prispevati tudi k uresničevanju cilja ničelnega onesnaževanja.”

31. maj 2021

“Zmanjšanje uporabe plastičnih proizvodov za enkratno uporabo bo pripomoglo k varovanju zdravja ljudi in planeta. Pravila Evropske unije so pomemben dosežek pri zmanjševanju količine morskih odpadkov. Spodbujajo tudi trajnostne poslovne modele in pomenijo korak naprej h krožnemu gospodarstvu, v katerem ima ponovna uporaba prednost pred enkratno uporabo. To je bistvo evropskega zelenega dogovora – varovanje in obnavljanje našega naravnega okolja ob hkratnem spodbujanju podjetij k inovacijam.”

Prvotno objavljeno v slovenskem dnevnem časopisu Delo, april 2021.

Financiranje za zeleno prihodnost

Mnenje izvršnega podpredsednika Dombrovskisa in komisarke McGuinness o aprilskem svežnju ukrepov za trajnostno financiranje

Pandemija je svet soočila z izzivi brez primere za zdravje, gospodarstvo ter naš način življenja in dela. Po drugi strani pa nam je ponudila tudi izjemno priložnost na poti k okrevanju.

Prenova lahko poteka še bolje – kar pomeni, da moramo graditi bolj zeleno. Izkoristiti moramo priložnost in oblikovati trajnostno prihodnost našega gospodarstva.

Prav to je cilj evropskega zelenega dogovora. Doseči želimo podnebno nevtralnost, obrniti trend izgubljanja biotske raznovrstnosti in zgraditi čisto gospodarstvo, vse to pa naj podpirajo naložbe v zelena delovna mesta, zelene inovacije in zeleno rast. Ocenjujemo, da bomo za doseg naših podnebnih ciljev do leta 2030 potrebovali 350 milijard evrov dodatnih naložb na leto, pri čemer je naš končni cilj, da do leta 2050 Evropa postane prva podnebno nevtralna celina.

Javna sredstva bodo močno prispevala k dosegu tega cilja, vendar bodo imele pri tem ključno vlogo tudi zasebne naložbe. Slednje bodo spodbudile razvoj novih tehnologij, izdelkov in storitev, ki zmanjšujejo okoljsko škodo in blažijo učinke podnebnih sprememb.

K sreči imajo evropski vlagatelji izrazit interes za zelene naložbe. Izbirajo bolj zelene delnice in obveznice, zahtevajo preglednost pri zelenem poročanju in želijo prispevati k našim zelenim ciljem. To je odlična novica.

Njihov odnos potrjuje usmeritev agende Evropske komisije za trajnostno financiranje. Sprejeli smo pomembne ukrepe za vzpostavitev ekosistema, ki finančnemu sektorju omogoča zagotavljanje financiranja, potrebnega za bolj zeleno preno. Uvajamo orodja za povečanje preglednosti, ki bodo vlagateljem pomagala opredeliti priložnosti za trajnostne naložbe.

Lani smo sprejeli uredbo o taksonomiji EU, da bi oblikovali skupen jezik za vlagatelje, ki želijo uporabiti svoja sredstva za znaten pozitiven vpliv na podnebje in okolje.

Komisija je že sprejela merila za določitev, katere gospodarske dejavnosti znatno prispevajo k ciljem blažitve podnebnih sprememb in prilagajanja nanje, kot je predvideno v uredbi o taksonomiji. Ta merila bodo podjetjem in vlagateljem pomagala opredeliti zelene dejavnosti na podlagi skupnega razumevanja, kaj je treba storiti za izpolnitev naših podnebnih ciljev. Poleg tega bodo podjetjem pomagala financirati zeleni prehod, če bodo pripravila z merili skladne načrte. Merila se bodo razvijala skozi čas, ko bo naše gospodarstvo postajalo okolju prijaznejše.

Povečujemo tudi preglednost na področju trajnostnega financiranja z izboljšanjem poročanja podjetij in finančnih institucij o trajnostni naravnosti. Z direktivo o poročanju podjetij glede trajnostnega razvoja, ki jo je Komisija sprejela skupaj z merili za taksonomijo, se bo posodobil način poročanja velikih podjetij in podjetij, ki kotirajo na borzi, o njihovih dejavnostih na področju trajnostnosti – od njihovega vpliva na okolje do tega, kako ravna s svojimi zaposlenimi in spoštujejo človekove pravice. Ti ukrepi so pomembni ne le za vlagatelje, temveč tudi za državljane in družbo na splošno.

Želimo, da EU postane vodilno zeleno gospodarstvo v svetu, ki ga bodo poganjala zelena delovna mesta in zelene naložbe. Prav tako pa želimo pomagati bolj zeleno prihodnost doseči tudi ostalim delom sveta.



Sčasoma bi se morali svetovni standardi trajnostnega financiranja zblížati, tako da bodo vlagatelji ne glede na trg, na katerem so dejavni, vedeli, kaj šteje za zeleno. Za sprejemanje najboljših odločitev potrebujejo primerljive informacije.

EU ima vodilno vlogo pri prizadevanjih za trajnostnost. Sopedredujemo mednarodni platformi za trajnostno financiranje, kjer oblikovalci politik razpravljajo o najboljših načinih za mobilizacijo zasebnega financiranja za doseganje zelenih ciljev. Člani platforme predstavljajo več kot polovico svetovnih emisij, prebivalstva in BDP. Poleg tega smo zavezani mednarodnemu sodelovanju v skupinah G20 in G7.

Prenova po pandemiji bo zahtevala ogromno dela in naložb. Čaka nas izjemno zahtevno delo. Vendar lahko storimo vse potrebno, če izkoristimo ponujeno priložnost in prenavljamo bolj zeleno. Evropska komisija je pred kratkim tako sprejela nekaj ključnih ukrepov, da bomo to lahko uresničili.

Naša naloga je nujnejša kot kdaj koli prej. Podnebne spremembe so že realnost, njihove posledice pa se bodo še poslabšale, če ne bomo ukrepali takoj.

Rešitev ne bodo ponudila le podjetja, finančne institucije, nevladne organizacije ali oblikovalci politik. Rešitve bomo oblikovali mi vsi – v EU in po vsem svetu, ki si bomo prizadevali za okolju prijaznejšo prihodnost in vanjo tudi vlagali.



Avtorica Darja Brečko Poženeš

Kreativni odgovor za zeleni dogovor

Ustvarjalna pobuda novi evropski Bauhaus

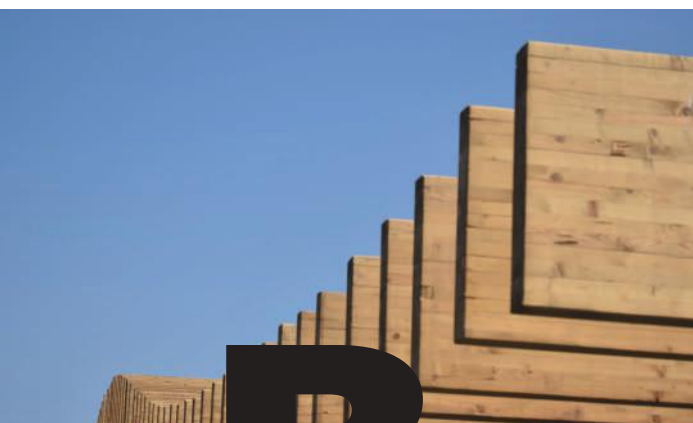
Potreba po novih idejah je že dolgo bistven element konkurenčnosti gospodarstva. Da se ideje lahko razvijejo, pa potrebujemo svež in iskrih ustvarjalni um. Tisto, kar smo nekoč imenovali umetniška duša, je danes še prepotrebna veščina za oživitev družbenega in gospodarskega razvoja. To tezo je že pred več stoletji dokazal Leonardo da Vinci, ki je bil ne samo odličen slikar, ampak eden največjih genialnih umov, pri katerem so se vrstili bogati naročniki z željo po razvoju različnih tehnoloških izumov, ki so bili daleč pred svojim časom.

Pomena ustvarjalnosti za inovativne preboje se zavedajo v novi ustvarjalni in interdisciplinarni pobudi novi evropski Bauhaus, ki so jo ustanovili, da bi združili kreativne industrije za pomoč in zagon evropskega zelenega dogovora.

Gibanje združuje ustvarjalce iz vse Evrope s področja oblikovanja, arhitekture, znanstvenike, inženirje, študente in državljane, da uresničijo **ново vizijo trajnostnega življenjskega prostora**, v katerem bomo lahko bistveno zmanjšali škodljive vplive na okolje, pri tem pa ne bomo pozabili na estetiko in kakovost, ki nam bosta nove izdelke in storitve približali na privlačen način.

S spodbudami k uporabi obnovljivih virov energije, z upoštevanjem biotske raznovrstnosti, biorazgradljivih materialov ali principov prehajanja odpadnih in stranskih produktov v ponovno uporabo bi se tako realno približali načrtu prehoda iz linearnega v krožno gospodarstvo.

Novi evropski Bauhaus tako poudarja trajnost, vključenost in estetiko. Skratka, nagovarja naša srca in duše.



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Naloga kreativcev novega evropskega Bauhauza je podobna viziji zgodovinske avantgardne arhitekturne šole Bauhaus iz Weimerja, ki je združevala arhitekturo in oblikovanje z namenom ustvariti uporabne in napredne oblike za izboljšanje življenja. Njihova filozofija je še danes temelj za razvoj največjih dosežkov arhitekture in oblikovanja, ki so postali del našega vsakdana.

Tudi pred stoletjem so imeli ustvarjalci izziv, kako izboljšati izdelke, da bi dosegli ideal estetike in uporabnosti v enostavnih oblikah in za človeka prijaznih materialih. S svojim delovanjem so pognali gospodarsko revolucijo 20. stoletja in tudi danes stojimo pred revolucionarnimi izzivi.

Kako razmišljati kreativno skozi trajnostne principe, je danes naloga vseh ustvarjalcev, ki želijo biti del napredka in novega prelomnega obdobja. Vprašati se moramo, **kako najti navdih v naravi, v ciklih našega življenja, v občutkih, ki se nam ob tem porajajo**.

Novi evropski Bauhaus se osredotoča na znanja in veščine sodobnih kreativcev, ki razumejo zahtevnega uporabnika, hkrati pa lahko bistveno vplivajo na razvoj trajnostnega življenja.

V njem ne govorimo le o stavbah, temveč tudi o pomembnosti urbanističnega načrtovanja in renovacijah. O vključevanju in ustvarjanju bivalnih prostorov, ki so fizično in finančno dostopni za vse. Celoten postopek ustvarjanja novega evropskega Bauhauza je participativen, pri čemer so zainteresirane strani prispevale k njegovemu konceptu in zasnovi. Razmisleki, predlogi, ugotovljeni izzivi in navdihujoči primeri bodo Evropski komisiji pomagali oblikovati pobudo. Nazadnje ima ambicijo prerasti v gibanje, tako kot prvotni Bauhaus pred sto leti.

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Kje torej lahko najdemo izzive po merilih trajnostnega, vključujočega in estetike?

- V inovacijah in prototipiranju,
- v praktičnosti in dostopnosti vsakdanjemu človeku,
- v estetiki in pripovednosti, ki spodbuja k spremembam,
- v močni povezanosti z naravo in premišljeno estetiko,
- v iskanju simbioze med urbanizacijo in biotsko raznovrstnostjo,
- v povezovanju z lokalno tradicijo v metodah dela in materialih,
- v naprednem razmišljanju, za koga lahko naš odpadni del postane pomembna izhodiščna surovina,
- v poenostavitvah z digitalizacijo, ki prinašajo cenejše in manj obremenjujoče vplive na okolje.

Če je bil čas individualizma namenjen raziskovanju naših lastnih zmožnosti in želja, je zdaj čas, da pridobljena znanja uporabimo v vključujočem gibanju in združimo moči za doseganje pomembnih razvojnih mejnikov, ki bodo postavili naš življenjski standard v trajnostni svobodi, da bomo ohranili dolgo življenje našega planeta, ki bo služil tudi našim potomcem.



Navdih s terena

1.

Finsko mesto Pudasjarvi je sprejelo odločitev, da bodo vse zgradbe gradili izključno iz lokalnega lesa in na visoki stopnji estetske in avtentične arhitekture. Les je namreč odličan material, ki omogoča stabilnost, izolacijo, naravno dihanje materiala in hkrati omogoča prijetno bivanje človeka. Bivanje v leseni hiši prinaša poleg omenjenih koristi tudi občutek večje povezanosti z naravo, toplino, vonj in vtis dobrodošlega prijateljskega objema.

2.

V švedskem mestu Vaxjopa so si celo postavili cilj, da želijo postati prvo sodobno leseno mesto (Trastad), in bo moralo biti od leta 2020 kar 50 % stavb zgrajenih iz lesa.

3.

Nova stavba InnoRenew CoE, ki se trenutno gradi v Izoli v Sloveniji, bo po dokončanju največja lesena stavba v Sloveniji. Zgrajena je v skladu z načeli trajnostne gradnje in oblikovana tako, da izboljšuje uporabniško izkušnjo. Je primer uporabe alternativnih gradbenih virov, ki spoštujejo okolje in spodbujajo organske materiale (kot je les) v grajenem okolju.

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Evropska platforma deležnikov krožnega gospodarstva (ECESP)

“Mreža vseh mrež” spodbuja prehod v krožno gospodarstvo

Evropska platforma deležnikov krožnega gospodarstva (ECESP), ki jo je leta 2017 ustanovil Evropski ekonomsko-socialni odbor (EESO) v partnerstvu z Evropsko komisijo, prispeva k izvajanju Akcijskega načrta za krožno gospodarstvo (CEAP). Podpira civilno družbo in javne organe v državah EU pri pospeševanju prehoda v krožno gospodarstvo s spodbujanjem dialoga, izmenjavo znanja in dobrih praks.

ECESP omogoča sodelovanje zainteresiranih akterjev v spletnem prostoru in omogoča osebna srečanja deležnikov na rednih letnih konferencah. Platformo zastopa koordinacijska skupina (CG) – 24 izbranih posameznikov, ki zastopajo organizacije civilne družbe iz vse Evrope in delujejo kot ambasadorji platforme.

Circular Change je aktivna članica koordinacijske skupine od leta 2017, leta 2020 pa je bila ustanoviteljica in izvršna direktorica Ladeja Godina Košir že tretjič zapored izvoljena za predsednico CG ECESP in tokrat mandat deli s Freekom van Eijkom, izvršnim direktorjem Holland Circular Hotspot.

S sprejetjem Akcijskega načrta za krožno gospodarstvo (CEAP) leta 2020 je platforma opredelila nove prednostne naloge in priložnosti za sodelovanje ter jih povezala z ambicijo pospeševanja uresničevanja zelenega in digitalnega prehoda, ki je pravičen za vse. V letu 2021 se člani koordinacijske skupine ECESP osredotočajo na aktivnosti za napredovanje krožnega gospodarstva na ključnih področjih, ki so na podlagi skupnih izkušenj in izmenjav z drugimi deležniki bistvenega pomena za krožni prehod. Povzema jih **osem tematskih sklopov**, tako imenovanih »vodstvenih skupin«:

- Trgovci, potrošniki, večšine
- Mesta in regije
- Krožna (javna) naročila
- Ostanke hrane, prehranski sistemi in biogospodarstvo
- Gradbeništvo in infrastruktura
- Tekstil
- Upravljanje mrež in vloga vozlišč za krožno gospodarstvo
- Ekonomske spodbude

Skupine uporabljajo tako imenovane EU krožne pogovore (#EUCircularTalks); koncept izmenjave informacij in znanj, ki ga omogoča platforma v obliki na dialogu temelječih dogodkov, usmerjenih v konkretne rezultate, povezuje deležnike krožnega gospodarstva. S temi in drugimi pobudami koordinacijske skupine platforma uresničuje svoje poslanstvo: deluje kot **ambasador krožnega gospodarstva, spodbuja razpravo, izmenjavo dobrih praks in znanja ter sodelovanje med deležniki.**





Na kratko o ECESP

1.

VIRTUALNA PLATFORMA

- > 500 primerov dobrih krožnih praks
 - > 500 poročil, študij, raziskovalnih nalog
 - > 50 strategij
- Baza mrež za krožno gospodarstvo in njihovih kontaktov

2.

SPLETNA SKUPNOST

- > 6000 obiskov spletne strani vsak mesec
- > 5000 sledilcev na Twitterju
- > 5000 naročnikov novice
- > 2000 sledilcev na LinkedInu

3.

KOORDINACIJSKA SKUPINA

24 predstavnikov civilne družbe, organizacij, podjetij, sindikatov, pospeševalnikov in možganskih trustov, raziskovalnih središč itd., združenih za uresničevanje ciljev platforme.

4.

VODSTVENE SKUPINE

Tematske delovne skupine koordinacijske skupine. Vodstvene skupine opredeljujejo glavne teme vsake koordinacijske skupine na ključnih področjih in krepijo dialog v okviru »EU krožnih pogovorov«.

5.

LETNA KONFERENCA

Osrednji dogodek platforme, 2-dnevna konferenca, ki združuje deležnike in oblikovalce politik.

- Dan 1: Oblikovanje politik
- Dan 2: Izmenjava praks in izkušenj deležnikov



CIRCULAR INSIDER EU

EU supplement

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