

CONCLUSIONS OF DAY 2

The European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform conference, co-organised by the European Commission and the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) on 9-10 March, was a landmark opportunity for dialogue on Europe's transition to the circular economy¹. The second day of the conference was dedicated to gathering stakeholders' and civil society organisations' views on the potential added value of a European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform. It took place on the premises of the EESC and involved participatory leadership methodologies in several languages to ensure full participation of attendees.

32 discussion groups answered the following questions²:

- Question 1: What should a European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform focus on? (32 contributions)
- Question 2: How to ensure the Platform is effective?
 - "Do's" (32 contributions)
 - "Don'ts" (30 contributions)

Discussion groups also had the opportunity to write down a key message for the Platform's development (32 contributions).

Participants proposed an extensive variety of recommendations and requests. This document synthesises them while outlining possible next steps for the Platform. It will serve as a major source of inspiration the process leading to a fully-fledged, operational Platform.

OUTCOME OF THE PARTICIPATORY DISCUSSIONS

Each discussion group gave 5 top priorities ranked from the most important to the least important one.

Question 1: What should a European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform focus on?

The groups proposed the following priorities:

- Exchanging good and bad practices (29 contributions);
- Communicating and raising awareness on the importance of the circular economy (25 contributions);
- Providing opportunities for connecting value chain actors and multi-stakeholder networking (18 contributions);
- Channelling inputs to policy-making and helping to ensure legislative coherence (16 contributions);

¹ A report on both days of the conference is available [here](#).

² All contribution templates are available [here](#).

- Drawing up guidelines for stakeholders *(16 contributions)*;
- Defining and providing a long-term vision for the circular economy *(15 contributions)*;
- Analysing barriers and obstacles to the transition towards a circular economy *(14 contributions)*;
- Supporting research and facilitating the access to information about funding and financial opportunities for projects *(12 contributions)*;
- Measuring and monitoring progress towards the circular economy *(10 contributions)*;
- Identifying and Addressing skills gaps *(6 contributions)*;
- Promoting and supporting frontrunners *(4 contributions)*.

Question 2: How do we ensure the Platform is effective? The "Do's"

The groups recommended:

- Be result-oriented with concrete and realistic goals *(27 contributions)*;
- Be inclusive with a consensus-based approach *(25 contributions)*;
- Communicate and make sure the Platform is well known and fully identified *(19 contributions)*;
- Have a robust governance framework in order to make sure the Platform is a long-term project *(17 contributions)*;
- Be transparent and accountable *(13 contributions)*;
- Build a bridge with existing national circular economy networks *(12 contributions)*;
- Be simple, accessible and user-friendly *(12 contributions)*;
- Inspire a sense of leadership and ownership *(12 contributions)*;
- Have specialised working groups *(12 contributions)*;
- Connect people and provide space for collaborative exchange *(11 contributions)*;
- Foster a bottom-up approach, accessible in particular for non-Brussels-based organisations *(9 contributions)*;
- Have a dedicated budget *(8 contributions)*;
- Ensure recommendations are taken up by policy-makers and implemented *(6 contributions)*;
- Provide technical, targeted information *(5 contributions)*;
- Be independent, in particular from political interference and specific economic interests *(5 contributions)*;
- Have a strong political backing *(4 contributions)*;
- Be fact-based, having validated content *(3 contributions)*;
- Be multilingual *(3 contributions)*.

Question 2: How do we ensure the platform is effective? The "Don'ts"

The groups highlighted:

- Do not design and run the Platform in isolation from real stakeholders' needs *(17 contributions)*;
- Do not restrict participation, ensure balanced representation, do not ignore minorities *(12 contributions)*;
- Do not forget the global approach to the circular economy (including outside Europe), nor the holistic approach *(10 contributions)*;

- Do not set unrealistic objectives and do not deviate from achieving them *(9 contributions)*;
- Do not replicate what already exists *(7 contributions)*;
- Do not create a talking shop *(7 contributions)*;
- Do not make the tool complicated *(7 contributions)*;
- Do not allow political or economically biased interference *(6 contributions)*;
- Do not focus on one specific sector or on excessively detailed aspects *(6 contributions)*;
- Do not create an exclusively digital Platform *(4 contributions)*;
- Do not focus on academic, technical content *(4 contributions)*;
- Do not progress without review mechanisms and clear rules *(4 contributions)*;
- Do not expect too much from stakeholders *(3 contributions)*;
- Do not focus excessively on policy-making *(3 contributions)*.

A final word

- Clarity on objectives and deliverables *(11 contributions)*;
- Inclusiveness and partnership-based approach *(9 contributions)*;
- Added value for stakeholders *(7 contributions)*;
- Simplicity *(6 contributions)*;
- Leadership *(5 contributions)*;
- Influence policy-making and contribute to legislative coherence *(4 contributions)*;
- Strong governance *(4 contributions)*;
- Multi-stakeholder networking and connecting value chain actors *(3 contributions)*;
- Communication and awareness-raising *(3 contributions)*.

OPERATIONAL CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

The overall conclusion from the inputs suggests that the Platform should have a limited number of objectives. Those should include:

- Exchanging of good practices and learning experiences, based on voluntary contributions of members;
- Fostering an overall circular economy network in Europe, raising awareness and supporting stakeholders;
- Acting as a European information and dialogue space for stakeholders;
- Helping identifying barriers and obstacles through multi-stakeholder exchange and networking from a socio-economic and cultural perspective;
- Strengthening policy dialogue between policy-makers and stakeholders, including on social and labour-related aspects of the transition.

Stakeholders voice for the Platform to work as a multi-stakeholder, transparent and open bridge-building entity where participation is free to all. It should build on existing initiatives, in particular existing networks and databases. It should provide an online, user-friendly tool for stakeholders in order to communicate on its activities, liaise with contributors and raise its profile. The Platform should also provide face-to-face

networking opportunities for stakeholders; this could involve specific workshops in addition to a main annual event.

Participants also strongly advocated for the Platform to have a strong governance framework and appropriate financial resources to carry out its activities. At this stage, the European Commission and the EESC consider the possibility of setting up a multi-stakeholder coordination group responsible for managing the Platform and setting its work programme. Members of this coordination group should be selected in a transparent and open way under the supervision of both the European Commission and the EESC. The EESC is prepared to act as the Platform's secretariat.

Taking stakeholders' contributions as the starting point, the European Commission and the EESC are currently working to build a European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform aligned with the needs expressed during the conference. Envisaged next steps:

- Drafting Terms of Reference for the Platform: **Q2 2017**;
- Launch of a call for expression of interest for selecting the members of the coordination group: **Q3 2017**;
- Inaugural meeting of the coordination group: **Q4 2017**;
- Next yearly conference: **Q1 2018**.

CONTRIBUTING FURTHER

The European Commission and the EESC are open to further contributions throughout the journey leading to a fully operational Platform.

Questions and comments can be emailed to EC-EESC-CIRCULARECONOMYCONFERENCE2017@ec.europa.eu and will be duly taken into consideration.