

European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform

Aim and Structure of the Platform

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1. Background

The transition towards a circular economy requires the commitment and involvement of public authorities, businesses and civil society. In the Communication "*Closing the loop - An EU Action Plan for the Circular Economy*"¹ published on 2 December 2015, the European Commission identified at least two initiatives to facilitate stakeholder cooperation: (1) engagement with stakeholders in the implementation of the CEAP through existing fora in key sectors and (2) support to a range of stakeholders through actions on public-private partnerships, cooperation platforms, support to voluntary business approaches, and exchanges of best practices.

Two opinions of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) on *Enabling SMEs to turn environmental challenges into business opportunities*² (December 2014) and on the *Circular Economy Package*³ (April 2016) advocate for the creation of a European circular economy platform for speeding up the transition to a resource-efficient economy, improving the exchange of good practices and feeding into the European policy debate. The Council of the European Union, in its Conclusions adopted in June 2016⁴, as well as the European Parliament⁵ echoed the need for such a

¹ COM(2015) 614 final, *Closing the loop - An EU action plan for the Circular Economy*, Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the European Committee of the Regions.

² NAT/652, opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee, *The circular economy: job creation and the Green Action Plan for SMEs*, [OJ C 230 du 14.7.2015, p. 99–106](#).

³ NAT/676, opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee, *Circular Economy Package*, [OJ C 264, 20.7.2016, p. 98–109](#).

⁴ 10518/16 Council Conclusions (20 June 2016) *Closing the loop – An EU action plan for the Circular Economy*.

⁵ European Parliament resolution on *Resource efficiency: moving towards a circular economy* (2014/2208(INI)), rapporteur: Sirpa Pietikäinen (EPP, FI), 9 July 2015.

platform, while the European Committee of the Regions⁶ has also underlined the importance of involving actors from a broad variety of sectors.

As a result of the exchange of letters between First Vice-President Mr. Timmermans, Vice-President Mr. Katainen and the President of the EESC, Mr. Dassis⁷, the Commission and the EESC⁸ jointly launched at equal level the European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform during the Circular Economy Stakeholder Conference that took place in Brussels on 9-10 March 2017. The second day of this conference focused in particular on collecting participants' views on what such a Platform should do and how it should operate. These terms of reference reflect the expectations expressed by the participants.

2.Objectives of the Platform

Taking these contributions as a starting point⁹, the European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform will be a "network of networks" going beyond sectorial activities and highlighting cross-sector opportunities and challenges. It will be a hub gathering knowledge, a place for dialogue and a bridge between existing initiatives. It will contribute to disseminating the concept of the circular economy at national, regional and local level by making the information more easily accessible and by providing a frame for exchange and discussion.

The Platform will aim to:

- Advancing the circular economy concept in Member States, regional and local governments, civil society and businesses;
- Strengthening the cooperation among stakeholders' networks to facilitate the exchange of expertise and good practices on the circular economy;
- Contribute to identify social, economic and cultural barriers to the transition towards a circular economy intended for policy makers at all level of governance.

3.Structure of the Platform

The Platform will be an open platform structured as follows:

3.1 Policy dialogue (Pillar I)

The purpose of policy dialogue is to gather stakeholders' input and views. The platform will hold an annual two-day conference organised jointly by the EESC and the Commission. This conference will constitute the major EU inter-institutional event for stakeholder engagement on the circular economy.

⁶ CDR 1415/2016, Opinion of the European Committee of the Regions on *Closing the loop – An EU action plan for the Circular Economy*

⁷ Ref. Ares(2016)6890321 - 09/12/2016; DC NAT (2017) D 857

⁸ This joint initiative follows the provisions (par. 13, 16, 21 and 23) of the Protocol on Cooperation between the European Commission and the European Economic and Social Committee.

⁹ Participants' contributions are available on the following webpages:

<http://www.eesc.europa.eu/?i=portal.en.events-and-activities-circular-eco-future-summary>;

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/circular-economy/index_en.htm;

http://ec.europa.eu/growth/tools-databases/newsroom/cf/itemdetail.cfm?item_id=9074

In addition, meetings gathering stakeholders such as businesses, trade unions, civil society organisations and public authorities may also be organised on an ad hoc basis to collect additional information on good practices and stakeholder views on specific topics.

3.2 Coordination (Pillar II)

The coordination activities of the Platform will be ensured by a Coordination Group assisted by a Secretariat.

a) Coordination Group

A Coordination Group (CG) will be set up in order to provide guidance on the Platform's activities.

The CG will bring together circular economy-related:

- Multistakeholders networks/platforms;
- Groupings/organisations of businesses, of trade unions and from the civil society;
- Networks of national, regional and local public authorities/bodies;
- Organisations from the knowledge and research communities, think-tanks, universities.

Wherever possible, the CG will build on the experience of existing platform and networks.

The mandate, composition and selection procedure of the CG are enclosed as an annex to this document.

The CG will meet at least once a year.

b) Secretariat

The EESC secretariat will act as the Platform's secretariat. The Secretariat will oversee the preparation of meetings (including the annual conference), coordinate the Platform's activities and ensure business continuity.

The Secretariat will support the work of the CG and, together with the European Commission, will develop its 'rules of procedures' based on the orientations expressed by the members of the CG.

The Secretariat will regularly report to the CG and in particular to its chair.

Standard working languages of the Platform will be English and French. Additional languages may be used on a case-by-case basis, especially for communication purposes.

3.3 Knowledge, national strategies and good practices (Pillar III)

a) Website

Circular economy-related content such as national strategies and good practices will be made available on the Platform's website. The website will also feature a dynamic database with contacts, published studies and events relevant to circular economy.

The website will be:

- A one-stop shop for **knowledge** on the circular economy. Stakeholders will find available up-to-date information on the circular economy (studies, policy initiatives, good practices, events). The website will showcase relevant information provided by different sources into a single, user-friendly forum. Stakeholders will be invited to present their good practices that will be made available to others in the database.
- An online meeting place for stakeholders to exchange **dialogue**. It will be participatory and user-friendly. It will be designed to foster the exchange of advice, experiences and good practices. Stakeholders will be invited to interact among them, discover events and share good practices.

b) Branding

The Platform will have a logo as well as a visual identity and a communication policy.

The participants in the Platform will be encouraged to advertise their participation in the Platform both on their websites and in their own events related to the circular economy.

4. Stock-taking and duration of the cooperation

The present terms of reference are concluded for an initial duration of three years. The activities of the Platform will be reported in the annual report on the implementation of the Circular Economy Action Plan (CEAP) as well as in the report five years after the adoption of the CEAP. Therefore, these terms of reference may be updated to reflect the outcome of these two exercises.

Annex: Terms of Reference for the Coordination Group

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EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Directorate B – Circular Economy and Green Growth

Terms of reference for the Coordination Group

European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform

These terms of reference describe the organisation of the Coordination Group (CG), Pillar II of the European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform and its foreseen activities.

The European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform was launched jointly in March 2017 by the European Commission and the European Economic and Social Committee¹ (EESC), at equal level. Its activities will be reported in the annual report on the implementation of the Circular Economy Action Plan (CEAP) as well as in the report after five years from the adoption of the CEAP. Therefore, these terms of reference may be updated to reflect the outcome of these two exercises.

I) Background

The transition towards a circular economy requires the commitment and involvement of public authorities, businesses and civil society. In the Communication "*Closing the loop-An EU Action Plan for the Circular Economy*" (COM(2015) 614 final)² published on 2 December 2015, the European Commission identified at least two initiatives to facilitate stakeholder cooperation: (1) engagement with stakeholders in the implementation of the CEAP through existing fora in key sectors and (2) support to a range of stakeholders through actions on public-private partnerships, cooperation platforms, support to voluntary business approaches, and exchanges of best practices.

The Council, in its Conclusions adopted in June 2016³, as well as the Committee of the Regions⁴ and the European Economic and Social Committee⁵ (EESC), have also underlined the importance of

¹ This joint initiative follows the provisions (par. 13, 16, 21 and 23) of the *Protocol on Cooperation between the European Commission and the European Economic and Social Committee*.

² COM(2015) 614 final, *Closing the loop - An EU action plan for the Circular Economy*, Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions.

³ 10518/16 Council Conclusions (20 June 2016) *Closing the loop - An EU action plan for the Circular Economy*.

⁴ CDR 1415/2016, Opinion of the Committee of the Regions on *Closing the loop – An EU action plan for the Circular Economy*.

⁵ EESC NAT/676 *Circular Economy Package*, Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee on the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: *Closing the loop - An EU action plan for the circular economy* – COM(2015) 614 final.

involving actors from a broad variety of sectors.

The proposed European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform will be a "network of networks" going beyond sectorial activities and highlighting cross-sector opportunities and challenges. The Platform will be a hub gathering knowledge on circular economy and a place for dialogue between stakeholders.

Based on the exchange of letters between First Vice-President Mr. Timmermans, Vice-President Mr. Katainen and President of the EESC, Mr. Dassis⁶, and on the joint report on stakeholder input gathered at the Circular Economy Stakeholder Conference⁷ that took place 9-10 March 2017, the European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform will be an open platform structured as follows:

- **Policy dialogue (Pillar I):** The purpose of policy dialogue is to gather stakeholders' input and views.

The Platform will hold an annual two-day conference organised in cooperation between the EESC and the Commission as the major inter-institutional event for stakeholder engagement on the circular economy.

In addition, meetings gathering stakeholders such as businesses, trade unions, civil society organisations and public authorities may also be organised on an ad hoc basis to collect additional information on good practices and stakeholder views on specific topics.

- **Coordination (Pillar II):** The coordination of the activities of the Platform will be ensured by a CG supported by a Secretariat.

The CG will bring together circular economy-related:

- Multistakeholders networks/platforms;
- Groupings/organisations of businesses, of trade unions and from the civil society;
- Networks of national, regional and local public authorities/bodies;
- Organisations from the knowledge and research communities, think-tanks, universities.

- **Knowledge, national strategies and good practices (Pillar III):** Circular economy-related contents such as national strategies and good practices will be made available on the Platform's website. The website will also feature a dynamic database with contacts, published studies and events relevant to the circular economy.

II) Role and mandate of the CG

The mandate of the CG is to:

- **Provide guidance to the Platform's activities;**
- **Reinforce interaction between stakeholders** active in the field of the circular economy by identifying specific needs for cross-sectorial dialogue and third party events contributing to this dialogue;

⁶ Ref. Ares(2016)6890321 - 09/12/2016; DC NAT (2017) D 857

⁷ More information on the Circular Economy Stakeholder Conference is available on the event webpage: <http://www.eesc.europa.eu/?i=portal.en.events-and-activities-circular-eco-future-summary>

- **Supervise and facilitate the exchange and mapping of good practices** for national, regional and local circular economy strategies as well as examples from businesses, trade unions and civil society organisations;
- **Foster European debate** on issues related to the circular economy **and identify approaches that could help removing obstacles that are inhibiting** the transition towards a circular economy, by liaising with existing European policy initiatives⁸, advisory groups or committees⁹ and existing EU Platforms relating to the circular economy¹⁰.

The CG should help strengthen the cooperation among sectorial platforms and stakeholders and prevent overlapping activities that often rely on individual, non-structured initiatives.

The work of the CG will be supported by the Secretariat of the Platform, provided by the EESC. The Secretariat, together with the European Commission, will develop the 'rules of procedures' of the GG. The 'rules of procedures' will be based on the orientations expressed by the members of the CG. These 'rules of procedures' will apply to elements such as the organisation and follow-up of meetings and the preparation of the agenda, background documents, memos, reports and minutes. The Secretariat and the European Commission shall make available all relevant documents, including the agendas, the minutes and the participants' submissions on a dedicated website.

III) Composition and selection procedure of the CG

Composition:

The CG will be composed of up to 24 members and will provide useful input for:

- Public bodies;
- Businesses and trade unions;
- Knowledge community and civil society organisations.

The CG will be composed of:

- Up to 6 representatives from existing national, regional and local multi stakeholder networks specialising in the field of the circular economy;
- Up to 6 representatives from circular economy-relevant business and trade unions groupings, and civil society organisations;
- Up to 6 representatives from existing networks of public authorities at national, regional or local level that are circular economy-relevant.
- Up to 6 representatives from circular economy-relevant organisations from the knowledge community, including universities, research organisations, think-tanks specialising in the circular economy;

EU institutions and existing EU Platforms relating to the circular economy will be invited to participate in the activities of the CG. The EESC will appoint three of its Members, one from each of its constitutive Groups (Employers, Workers and Various Interests), to participate in the work of the CG.

⁸ For instance the European Innovation Partnerships Water and Raw Materials, etc.

⁹ For instance the REACH Expert Group "CARACAL", the Expert Group on Waste, etc.

¹⁰ For instance the Circular Economy Finance Support Platform, the EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste, etc.

Members will be appointed for a mandate of 3 years. Members will be nominated by the Commission and the EESC on an individual basis on behalf of their organisation. They will be expected to represent the interests of different stakeholder groups.

The CG will be chaired by one of its members on a rotational basis. The EESC will ensure the chair of the group in its first meeting.

Members will receive no remuneration for their duties. Travel and subsistence expenses incurred by participants in the annual meeting of the CG shall be reimbursed by the Commission in accordance with the provisions in force at the Commission within the limits of the available budgetary appropriations.

Selection procedure:

The selection of the CG members will be conducted following an open and transparent procedure:

- It will be based on a list of candidates which will be compiled through an open call for applications;
- The Commission and the EESC will select the members against the criteria identified in the following section;
- The Commission and the EESC will appoint the members, according to the results of this selection.

The call for applications will not apply to members representing EU institutions and bodies.

Information on the results of the call for applications will be published on the Internet site of the relevant Directorate-General as well as on the Internet site of the European Economic and Social Committee

Selection criteria:

The members of the CG will be selected according to the following criteria:

Individual criteria constituting a requirement for the organisation/network (the member):

- The member should have a cross-sectorial expertise and proven track record giving a broad vision for the circular economy;
- The member should have documented experience in identifying and exchanging good practices and be willing to share case studies and good practices which will be made publicly available free-of-charge through the Platform;
- The member should be willing and committed to participating proactively in the CG's activities and have sufficient time and resources to dedicate to the activities of the CG.

Individual criteria constituting an asset for the representative:

- The representative should have documented experience in representing his/her organisation or his/her sector in other relevant bodies/initiatives at EU level or at national level.

Global criteria for the CG:

- The CG should as much as possible be geographically and gender balanced;

- The CG should ensure an adequate representation of the main circular economy sectors and value chains (e.g. production, consumption, waste management, secondary raw materials, environment, economy, research and innovation);

IV) Indicative timeline for the establishment of the Coordination Group of the European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform

Launch the call for application: June 2017

Close call for application and select members: September 2017

Member nominations and first CG meetings: October 2017

V) Submission of applications

Applications should be submitted by **31.08.2017** through the online application form at the following address:

<https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/cesp-coordination-group-cei>

Applications must be completed in one of the official languages of the European Union.

An application will be deemed admissible only if it is sent by the deadline and includes the information requested. Registration of the organisation in the [Transparency Register](#) is required in order for the application to be considered.

The Commission and the EESC reserve the right to ask for any supporting documents at a later stage, and to replace any member who has provided inaccurate or false declarations.

As concerns the group composition, the Commission and the EESC will publish the names of the selected networks that will be part of the Coordination Group on the Internet site of the relevant Directorate-Generals as well as on the Internet site of the European Economic and Social Committee. The participation in the Coordination Group of the person representing a circular economy related network (as described in section II) is subject to his/her permanence in the organisation he/she declares to represent in the application.

Personal data will be collected, processed and published in accordance with the provisions of Regulation (EC) No 45/2001¹¹.

For any further information please send your question to:

ec-eesc-circulareconomyconf2017@ec.europa.eu

¹¹ Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2000 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data by the Community institutions and bodies and on the free movement of such data (OJ L 8 of 12.1.2001, p. 1).