



GreenEcoNet Final Conference

“Moving towards a circular economy: Challenges and opportunities for SMEs”

Brussels, 26 May 2016

Venue: CEPS, Place du Congrès 1, 1000 Brussels

The circular economy is currently not only a major buzzword in environmental policy circles, but also one of the EU's key strategies to stimulate sustainable economic growth and jobs, as illustrated by the European Commission's Work Programme for 2016. During 2015, the circular economy was one of the most debated topics in the EU in the context of the withdrawal of the 2014 Circular Economy Proposal and the preparation of the new Circular Economy Package by the Juncker Commission. The GreenEcoNet Final Conference will focus on the circular economy and its implications for EU businesses. The event will include two sessions with expert panels. The first session will bring together SMEs and SME networks to discuss the barriers and enablers to the implementation of circular economy business models. The second session will deal with the 2015 Circular Economy Package, focusing on its measures in support of the green SME transition. In this context, a debate will be held on whether the Package can help EU businesses improve their competitiveness while reducing their environmental impacts.

GreenEcoNet (www.greeneconet.eu) is a project financed by the European Commission, which brings businesses and academia together on an EU-wide platform to support small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in the transition to a green economy. This platform allows SMEs in Europe to connect to each other and to share their experiences, innovations and best practices. It thus aims to assist SMEs in optimally reaping the business opportunities of a green economy.



AGENDA¹

10:00 - 10:30 Arrival & registration of participants

10:30 - 11:20 Key results of GreenEcoNet and its implications for policy making in the EU

10:30 - 10:35 Welcome by **Arno Behrens**, Head of Energy and Research Fellow, Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS)

10:35 - 10:50 **Panagiotis Balabanis**, Deputy Head of Unit, DG Research & Innovation, European Commission

10:50 - 11:05 Achievements of GreenEcoNet and the business plan for the period after EU funding by **Corrado Topi**, Senior Research Fellow, University of York - SEI

11:05 - 11:20 Q & A

11:20 - 13:00 Barriers and enablers to the implementation of circular economy business models

This session will bring together successful SMEs featured in GreenEcoNet to describe the challenges which they encountered in implementing circular economy approaches. SME networks will also participate in the debate and will have the opportunity to present experiences of their members. The discussion will highlight best practices and lessons learned and will focus on how successful green economy business models could be replicated in other countries and regions. Based on the experience of 4 SMEs and SME networks, this session will provide for a broader debate about the barriers and enablers faced by SMEs in implementing circular business models.

11:20 - 11:25 Introduction by the chair **Wytze van der Gaast**, Senior Expert, Joint Implementation Network (JIN)

11:25 - 11:35 **Andrée Buchmann**, Director, Entrepreneure Vert

11:35 - 11:45 **Tim Horsten**, Corporate Responsibility Advisor, Duurzom

11:45 - 11:55 **Gregorio Magno Toral**, CEO and Founder, Ciclogreen

11:55 - 12:05 **Magdalena Chávez**, Founder and Owner, El Piano plant-based restaurant

12:05 - 12:55 Discussion

12:55 - 13:00 Concluding remarks by the chair

13:00 - 14:00 Networking lunch

This project has received funding from the European Union's Seventh Programme for Research, Technological Development and Demonstration under Grant Agreement No 60393

¹ As of 26 May 2016



14:00 - 15:45 What does the Circular Economy Package mean for SMEs in the EU?

Following an extensive debate in European policy cycles, the Circular Economy Package was published in December 2015 and consisted of an Action Plan for a Circular Economy as well as four legislative proposals. This session will host a panel of experts from policy and business to discuss about the Package and whether it can boost the competitiveness of EU businesses. The session will also offer the opportunity to debate on how the Package will help removing the barriers faced by SMEs wishing to adopt circular economy practices, such as lack of financing and skills.

- 14:00 - 14:05 Introduction by the chair **Vasileios Rizos**, Research Fellow, Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS)
- 14:05 - 14:15 **Eva Revilla**, Policy Officer, DG Grow, European Commission
- 14:15 - 14:25 **Guido Lena**, Director for Sustainable Development, UEAPME (The European Association of Craft, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises)
- 14:25 - 14:35 **Michael Steurer**, Senior Policy Advisor, Eurochambres
- 14:35 - 14:45 **Henning H. Sittel**, Project Manager, Efficiency Agency North Rhine-Westphalia
- 14:45 - 14:55 **Cillian Lohan**, Rapporteur for the Circular Economy Package, European Economic and Social Committee
- 14:55 - 15:40 Discussion
- 15:40 - 15:45 Concluding remarks by the chair

This project has received funding from the European Union's Seventh Programme for Research, Technological Development and Demonstration under Grant Agreement No 603939

