

EURO-LATIN AMERICAN PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY



RESOLUTION:

Circular economy

based on the report by the Committee on Sustainable Development, the Environment, Energy Policy, Research, Innovation and Technology

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Thursday, 14 April 2022 – Buenos Aires, Argentina

EUROLAT – Resolution of 14 April 2022 – Buenos Aires, Argentina

based on the report by the Committee on Sustainable Development, the Environment, Energy Policy, Research, Innovation and Technology

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The Euro-Latin American Parliamentary Assembly,

- having regard to the European Parliament resolution of 28 January 2021 on the New Circular Economy Action Plan (2020/2077(INI)),
- having regard to the resolution of 15 January 2020 on the European Green Deal (2019/2956(RSP)),
- having regard to the waste package (amending Directives 2008/98/EC, 1994/62/EC, 1999/31/EC and Directives 2000/53/EC, 2006/66/EC and 2012/19/EU) adopted at first reading by the European Parliament on 18 April 2018, the Waste Framework Directive (2008/98/EC), the Packaging and Packaging Waste Directive (94/62/EC), the Landfill Directive (1999/31/EC), and the proposal to amend the following directives: the End-of-Life Vehicles Directive (2000/53/EC), the Batteries and Accumulators and Waste Batteries and Accumulators Directive (2006/66/EC), the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Directive (2012/19/EU),
- having regard to the European Parliament resolution of 4 July 2017 on a longer lifetime for products: benefits for consumers and companies (2016/2272(INI)),
- having regard to the European Parliament resolution of 9 July 2015 on resource efficiency: moving towards a circular economy (2014/2208(INI)),
- having regard to the Commission Communication of 27 May 2020 entitled ‘Europe’s moment: Repair and Prepare for the Next Generation’ (COM(2020)456 final),
- having regard to the Joint Communication of 8 April 2020 on the global EU response to COVID-19 (JOIN/2020/11 final),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 11 March 2020 entitled ‘A new Circular Economy Action Plan: For a cleaner and more competitive Europe’(COM(2020)0098), and the staff working document ‘Leading the way to a global circular economy: state of play and outlook’ (SWD(2020)100),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 11 December 2019 on the European Green Deal (COM(2019)0640),
- having regard to the Commission Communication of 16 January 2018 on a monitoring framework for the circular economy (COM(2018)29 final),

- having regard to the Commission Communication of 26 January 2017 on the role of waste-to-energy in the circular economy (COM(2017)34 final),
 - having regard to the Commission report of 26 January 2017 on the implementation of the Circular Economy Action Plan (COM(2017)33 final),
 - having regard to the Commission Communication of 2 December 2015 entitled ‘Closing the loop – An EU action plan for the Circular Economy’ (COM(2015)614 final),
 - having regard to the Commission communication of 2 July 2014 entitled ‘Towards a circular economy: a zero waste programme for Europe’ (COM(2014)398 final),
 - having regard to the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs),
 - having regard to the IDB (Inter-American Development Bank) report on recycling in Latin America and the Caribbean entitled ‘¿Cuántas vidas tiene tu basura?: Reciclaje en América Latina y el Caribe’, June 2016,
 - having regard to the Ellen MacArthur Foundation report entitled ‘Growth Within: a circular economy vision for a competitive Europe’, 25 June 2015,
 - having regard to the conclusions of the Circular Economy Forum of the Americas (CEFA) which took place in Medellín, Colombia, on 29 and 30 November 2017, and of the Circular Economy Forum (CEF) organised by the Development Bank of Latin America in Montevideo, Uruguay, on 7 and 8 September 2017,
 - having regard to the regulatory framework on sustainable energy development and the regulatory framework on climate change of the Andean Parliament,
 - having regard to the framework law on integrated solid waste management adopted by the Latin American Parliament in 2017,
 - having regard to the Mercosur Framework Agreement on the Environment (MERCOSUR/CMC/DEC No 02/01),
 - having regard to the Buenos Aires Declaration of the XXI Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean 2018,
 - having regard to the 26th UN Climate Change Conference (COP26) of 2021,
 - having regard to the Model Law on Climate Change and Food and Nutrition Security of the Latin-American and Caribbean Parliament (PARLATINO) of 2021,
- A. whereas the circular economy concept aims to promote a smart growing, inclusive and sustainable economy whose purpose is to maintain the utility of products and their value as long as possible; whereas the circular economy promotes the reduction of resources used at source, the reuse of materials in the production process, recycling and minimal waste generation;
- B. whereas the current linear, extractive and wasteful economic model is reaching the limit

of its physical capacity; whereas the circular economy involves avoiding excessive consumption, waste and fossil fuel use through leasing, reusing, repairing and recycling existing materials and products; whereas the extraction and processing of natural resources cause half of global emissions and more than 90% of biodiversity loss; whereas the shift to a circular economy is therefore crucial to achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement climate change target of limiting the global temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels;

- C. whereas the benefits of a circular economy are both environmental, including for human health, and economic; whereas the circular economy reduces greenhouse gas emissions and environmental pollution; whereas it also helps reduce landscape and habitat disruption as well as marine littering, enhances security of supply of raw materials, increases competitiveness, stimulates innovation, revalues and maximises the energy use of unrecyclable resources, strengthens growth and stimulates job creation;
- D. whereas the EU has established a priority order for waste management from prevention, preparation for reuse, recycling and energy recovery through to disposal, such as landfilling;
- E. whereas today, only around 40% of the waste produced by EU households is recycled with significant or notable variation between Member States and regions, with rates as high as 80% in some areas, and lower than 5% in others;
- F. whereas according to the World Bank, Latin America generates 160 million tonnes of solid waste per year – with an average per capita value of 1.1 kg/day – of which less than 3% of is reused or recycled;
- G. whereas in many Latin American cities between 80 and 90% of everything that is recycled is recovered by the informal recycling sector (those who retrieve reusable materials from landfills and resell them); whereas it is estimated that in Latin America and the Caribbean about four million people obtain their livelihood from the recovery and commercialisation of recyclable materials such as paper, cardboard, plastic and metal;
- H. whereas on 18 April 2018 the European Parliament adopted, by a large majority, the ‘waste package’ amending the following legal acts: the Waste Framework Directive, the Landfill Directive, the Packaging Directive, and the Directives on end-of-life vehicles, batteries and accumulators, and waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE);
- I. whereas, where the EU is concerned, the circular economy package sets a common European goal of recycling municipal waste of 60% and 55% for plastic waste, both by 2030, and also a maximum binding landfill target of 10% to reduce municipal waste by 2035, for which an early system alert was set up by the Commission to monitor the achievement of the objectives; whereas the package introduces, for the first time, a mandatory obligation to cut food waste and marine litter, in line with the 50% waste reduction target as established in the UN Sustainable Development Goals; and whereas the package introduces, also for the first time, a minimum mandatory requirement for extended producer responsibility schemes; whereas producers will have to take responsibility for collecting or taking back their used products, and also for the sorting and treatment of their recycling;

- J. whereas the appropriate implementation of circular economy practices can help in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, especially SDG 1 (no poverty), SDG 2 (zero hunger), SDG 6 (clean water and sanitation), SDG 7 (affordable and clean energy), SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth), SDG 12 (responsible consumption and production), SDG 14 (life below water) and SDG 15 (life on land);
1. Highlights the fact that the transition to a more circular economy, in which the value of products, materials and resources is maintained in the market for as long as possible and the waste generated is kept to a minimum, represents an essential contribution to bi-regional efforts to achieve a sustainable, efficient and competitive economy in the use of resources;
 2. Calls upon the EU, the EU Member States and the LAC countries to provide suitable legal frameworks and adequate financing in order to develop circular models tailored to fit the public and the private sector; stresses that the Member States must have a circular economy developed by and for each region that is tailored to its characteristics and challenges in order to foster a resilient recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic; affirms that the next development era must move away from the linear and extractive economic models that have caused massive environmental degradation; stresses the importance of focusing on being inclusive of the people and on harnessing the unique characteristics and cultures they possess;
 3. Stresses that moving towards a circular economy can become a key industrial policy strategy for economic recovery after the COVID-19 pandemic in both Europe and Latin America, with the threefold benefit of: creating quality jobs and new businesses, improving environmental protection, and mitigating the effects of climate change;
 4. Underlines that the circular economy can provide solutions to the new challenges caused and highlighted by the COVID-19 crisis by strengthening supply chains globally and reducing their vulnerability, and by making industrial ecosystems more resilient and sustainable as well as competitive and profitable; underlines that the COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the necessity for an enabling environment for the circular economy;
 5. Believes that policymakers play an essential role in supporting and facilitating the transition to a circular economy, examining the benefits from the perspective of the Europe-Latin America region or on a city- or country-specific level and paving the way for stakeholders to support this systemic change, including by providing tax incentives and financing, by fostering investment in science, technology and innovation, and by providing infrastructure and technical assistance;
 6. Welcomes the European Parliament's adoption of the 'circular economy package' as an important step towards the establishment of an ambitious and binding legal framework to establish the circular economy in the European Union;
 7. Urges EU Member States and the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean to exchange best practices in the field of the circular economy, to pool their efforts in innovation, technology development and technology transfer, and to define trade integration and facilitation strategies to establish, in a bi-regional context, supply chains and value chains based on circular economy models;

8. Emphasises that future recycling, reduction and reuse efforts in Latin America must not only upgrade waste management and industrial recycling systems, but should also formalise and integrate the ‘informal’ recycling sector; stresses that inclusive recycling means developing the economy around recycling, that there are associated environmental benefits which can also be expressed in terms of resources, and that there is clearly a social development component that enables job generation; points out the need to understand that the recycling value chain will be more effective with formalised and empowered recyclers; emphasises the need to recognise that recovering materials and setting them on the path to circularity begins with recyclers, and stresses that investment in infrastructure and awareness raising is therefore needed in order to improve working conditions;
9. Calls upon both regions to aim at reducing food waste and to develop rules on the utilisation of food waste in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals;
10. Encourages the development of criteria for Green Public Procurement, as public procurement accounts for a large proportion of consumption in the EU and in LAC countries and can therefore play a key role in the circular economy;
11. Points out that cities have the capacity to speed up the transition to a low-carbon economy and develop local economic models that create wealth with high-quality, environmentally friendly jobs, incorporating the circular economy model in urban planning, integrating waste management, transport, mobility, water use, energy and infrastructure with criteria relating to sustainability and mitigating the effects of climate change;
12. Highlights how important it is that both regions expand upon the measures intended to support research and innovation in all necessary areas, in order to promote the prevention and management of waste and the non-use of single-use plastics and non-recyclable packaging, particularly through the use and marketing of packaging made from renewable resources;
13. Advocates the development of strategies to promote and establish a genuine recycling culture among citizens;
14. Calls for the establishment of public-private partnerships, and for links to be forged between universities and businesses, in order to promote and facilitate the shift towards a circular-economy model based on knowledge, innovation, research and development, generating tax incentives and benefits, simplifying regulations and establishing financing parameters based on efficiency and effectiveness, seeking to ensure that the economic benefits have positive effects across all communities and to include the recycling and crafts sectors, especially cooperatives and SMEs;
15. With regard to primary and secondary education systems, and higher education in particular, calls for syllabuses and research plans to be drawn up that focus on issues relating to the circular economy and changing the linear model of production and consumption, and points out that in order to do this it is vital, within the bi-regional strategic partnership, to establish channels for cooperation and technical assistance that make it possible to transfer knowledge, exchange experience and best practices, and carry out joint research with a view to designing, implementing and assessing public policies and financing mechanisms to promote innovation, entrepreneurship and

investment in circular economy models; points out that according to the World Economic Forum, the transition to a circular economy could have an economic benefit of USD 4.5 trillion per year worldwide; it being estimated that the change would reduce global greenhouse gas emissions by one fifth; this being crucial to limiting the climate crisis and achieving the goal of global climate neutrality;

16. Recommends that the EU, its Member States, and the LAC countries prioritise the development of functional, comprehensive and consistent institutional and technical capabilities that make it possible to link circular economy practices and models with the policies, plans and programmes that relate to the implementation of the SDGs, identifying complementarities, synergies and trade-offs in the various social, economic and environmental aspects and identifying joint action for the development of projects using a circular approach, with indicators that are defined with the effective implementation of the SDGs in mind;
17. Instructs its Co-Presidents to forward this resolution to the Presidency of the EU-CELAC Summit, the Council of the European Union and the European Commission, and to the parliaments of the Member States of the European Union and all the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, the Latin American Parliament, the Central American Parliament, the Andean Parliament and the Mercosur Parliament, the Secretariat of the Andean Community, the Committee of Permanent Representatives of Mercosur, the Permanent Secretariat of the Latin American Economic System and the Secretaries-General of the Organization of American States and the Union of South American Nations.