

SAWYER Skills and safety needs in a circular furniture sector

WWW.CIRCULARFURNITURE-SAWYER.EU

Collection of relevant initiatives supporting circular economy in the EU

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List of Acronyms

COM Communication from the Commission
EEA European Environment Agency
Eionet European Environment Information and Observation Network
EU - European Union
GPP- Green Public Procurement
ICT- Information and Communications Technologies
SDG Sustainable Development Goals
VPA- Voluntary Partnership Agreements
WEEE- Waste of Electrical and Electronic Equipment





1. INTRODUCTION

During the last years, the European Commission has developed different policies and instruments to promote the transition to a Circular Economy at European level.

The European Commission launched a **first Circular Economy Action Plan**¹ in 2015. This Action Plan establishes a concrete and ambitious programme of action, with measures covering the whole cycle: from production and consumption to waste management, the market for secondary raw materials and a revised legislative proposal on waste. The annex to the action plan sets out the timeline when the actions will be completed. All 54 actions under the plan have been delivered right now or are being implemented.

In 2019, the European Commission adopted the **European Green Deal**², which is a new growth strategy that aims to transform the EU into a fair and prosperous society, with a modern, resource-efficient and competitive economy where there are no net emissions of greenhouse gases in 2050 and where economic growth is decoupled from resource use.

It also aims to protect, conserve and enhance the EU's natural capital, and protect the health and well-being of citizens from environment-related risks and impacts. At the same time, this transition must be just and inclusive. It is an integral part of this Commission's strategy to implement the United Nation's 2030 Agenda and the sustainable development goals.

In its point 2.1.3.*Mobilising industry for a clean and circular economy*, it announces that the Commission will adopt an **EU industrial strategy** and publish a **new Circular Economy Action Plan** as pillars of this EU Green Deal (done in March 2020).

The Annex of the Communication on the European Green Deal defines the Roadmap and Key action, from 2019 until 2021, including the key policies and measures needed to achieve the European Green Deal objectives.

There is not a specific mention to furniture sector in the European Green Deal. However, the EU Industrial Strategy (which will address the double challenge of the green and the digital transformation, as key enablers for reaching the Green Deal objectives) and the New Circular Economy Action Plan are transversal transformative instruments that will affect all sectors.

In March 2020, the European Commission adopted a **new Circular Economy Action Plan**³, which presents measures to:

- Make sustainable products the norm in the EU;
- Empower consumers and public buyers;
- Focus on the sectors that use most resources and where the potential for circularity is high such as: electronics and ICT; batteries and vehicles; packaging; plastics; textiles; construction and buildings; food; water and nutrients;
- Ensure less waste;
- Make circularity work for people, regions and cities,

¹COM/2015/0614 final ²COM(2019) 640 final ³COM(2020) 98 final





• Lead global efforts on circular economy.

Its annex includes the timeline for the proposed actions, classified in the following topics:

- A sustainable product policy framework
- Key product value chains
- Less waste, more value
- Making circularity work for people, regions and cities
- Crosscutting actions
- Leading efforts at global level
- Monitoring progress

In the new Circular Economy Action Plan, priority will be given to addressing product groups identified in the context of the value chains featuring in the Action Plan, such as electronics, ICT and packaging, but also furniture is mentioned as priority. However, this action plan does not fixes specifics initiatives for this product group. Materials that can be used in furniture, such as plastics and textiles, are taken into consideration with more details, and different initiatives are included in this new action plan.

The European Commission also launched the European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform⁴, which is a virtual open space with the aim of promoting Europe's transition to a circular economy by facilitating policy dialogue among stakeholders and by disseminating activities, information, and good practices on the circular economy. In the section "strategies" you will find existing strategies for the transition to a circular economy adopted at national, regional or local level by public authorities.

This progressive, yet irreversible transition to a sustainable economic system is an indispensable part of the **new EU industrial strategy⁵**. This strategy is based on three pillars:

- the Green transition, with the European Green Deal being Europe's new growth strategy
- the **Digital transition**, which allows industry and SMEs to be more proactive, provides workers with new skills, and supports decarbonisation of our economy
- **competitiveness** on the global stage, where Europe must leverage the impact of its single market to set global standards

The objective of this document is to collect the information currently available on initiatives implemented in different EU countries to support these instruments and policies, with a special eye to Circular Economy. Several initiatives are taking place across Europe, carried by different public and private organisations, but it is clear that circular economy is an ongoing process that requires continuous updating and innovation of the implementing actions.

In spite of being aware that this document shows just a limited picture at this precise moment, it strives to target all the relevant furniture sector actors and provide them with information about which initiatives and activities are taking place across Europe and which can provide them relevant and enriching information.

⁴<u>https://circulareconomy.europa.eu/platform/</u>

⁵COM(2020) 102 final





2. CIRCULAR ECONOMY INITIATIVES IN DIFFERENT EU COUNTRIES

2.1. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Different sources of information have been used to prepare this document, but we mainly used the following reports and documents coming from the European Commission and other EU institutions.

EEA Report No 26/2019

The main source of information used to identify the different initiatives carried out in EU countries is the EEA Report No 26/2019 titled:

Resource efficiency and the circular economy in Europe 2019 – even more from less An overview of the policies, approaches and targets of 32 European countries

This report presents an updated and extended assessment of approaches and identifies trends, similarities and new directions taken by countries in the connected policy areas of resource efficiency and the circular economy. It is based on information provided in 2018 by 32 participating countries of the EEA/Eionet (European Environment Information and Observation Network).

In the Annex 2 of this report it is presented a selection of examples of policies, instrument or targets reported by Eionet countries.

Use the links to specific overview of policies, approaches and targets in 2018 for each country presented in the following table⁶:

	Country over the name)
<u>Albania</u>	Liechtenstein
Austria	Lithuania
Belgium	Montenegro
Bosnia and Herzegovina	the Netherlands
<u>Bulgaria</u>	North Macedonia
<u>Croatia</u>	<u>Norway</u>
the Czech Republic	<u>Poland</u>
<u>Denmark</u>	<u>Portugal</u>
<u>Estonia</u>	<u>Serbia</u>

⁶ Source; <u>https://www.eionet.europa.eu/etcs/etc-wmge/products/country-factsheets-on-resource-efficiency-and-circular-economy-in-europe</u>





	Country (Ctrl+click over the name)
<u>Finland</u>	<u>Slovakia</u>
France	<u>Slovenia</u>
<u>Germany</u>	<u>Spain</u>
<u>Hungary</u>	Sweden
Ireland	Switzerland
<u>Italy</u>	Turkey
<u>Latvia</u>	the United Kingdom

European Economic and Social Committee Report

Another reference used for the analysis was the Report from the European Economic and Social Committee titled:

Circular economy strategies and roadmaps in Europe

Identifying synergies and the potential for cooperation and alliance building

This report reviews circular economy strategies in support to the European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform (ECESP). Circular economy strategies have been under development in European cities, regions, and countries in the last few years. 33 strategies have been adopted since 2014, and at least 29 more are under development. Existing strategies were reviewed to identify similarities and differences, assess the involvement of civil society organisations, and potential for collaboration.

European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform

This website is a joint initiative by the European Commission and the European Economic and Social Committee, which is a virtual platform to contribute (with good practices, publications, events, networks...), to engage with other stakeholders in its discussion forum and to stay up-todate with all ongoing activities of the Platform by subscribing to its newsletter.

It contains a searchable database of activities, classified by category, sector or country.

https://circulareconomy.europa.eu/platform/

2.2. LIST OF RELEVANT INITIATIVES

The Table 1 summarised a list of examples of policies, instrument, strategies or good practices in different EU countries. More detail could be found in the previously mentioned reference (i.e. EEA Report No 26/2019).

Country	Example
Albania	- National Agency of Natural Resources
	- Forest cutting ban moratorium
Austria	- 2017 waste prevention programme
	- Online platform Circular Future

Table 1.- List of relevant initiatives in EU countries





Country	Example
	- Circular economy roadmap at the federal level
Belgium	- Circular Flanders
	- Walloon waste-resources plan
Bosnia and	- Competitiveness of enterprises and small and medium-sized
Herzegovina	enterprises
	- SDG Dashboard
Bulgaria	- Governmental programme 2017-2021
	- Strategy for development of the mining industry
Croatia	- Waste prevention plan
	- Action plan for green public procurement
Czechia	- Raw materials policy in the field of mineral materials
	- Secondary raw materials policy, with follow on action plan
Denmark	- Advisory board on circular economy
	- Strategy on the sharing economy
Estonia	- General principles of Earth's crust policy until 2050
	- Support programme for resource efficiency in enterprises
Finland	- Circular economy roadmap
	- Experimental Finland platform
	- From recycling to a circular economy - national waste plan to 2030
France	- Circular economy - the fight against climate change
	- Monitoring the circular economy: 10 key indicators
	- Plan for natural resources
Germany	- ProgRess II
	- Total raw material productivity target
	- Stakeholder engagement mechanisms
Hungary	- National forest strategy (2016-2030)
	- National industrial symbiosis programme/circular economy
Ireland	- National planning framework (Ireland 2040)
	- Tool for resource efficiency (TREE)
Italy	- Reports on natural capital (2017, 2018)
	- Circular Economy and Resource Efficiency. Indicators for circular
	economy (2018)
Latvia	- Bioeconomy strategy
	- Resource productivity targets
Liechtenstein	- Waste management plan
	- Phosphorus recovery from wastewater
Lithuania	- Eco-Innovation LT+
	- Unified accounting information system for products, packaging and
	waste
Montenegro	- National strategy for sustainable development until 2030
J	- National and sectoral targets for resource productivity
Netherlands	- Programme for a circular economy by 2050
	- Transition agendas - Reduction target for the use of primary raw
	materials
North Macedonia	- Green tax reform
	- Ecolabels for tourist facilities
Norway	- White paper on waste and the circular economy
	- Strategy for green competitiveness
Poland	- Roadmap towards the circular economy transition
	- Strategy for responsible development
L	





Country	Example
Portugal	- Circular economy action plan
	- National environmental education strategy 2020
Serbia	- New waste management strategy 2019-2025
	- Circular Economy Department of the Chamber of Commerce and
	Industry of Serbia (CCIS)
Slovakia	- Circular economy chapter in 2030 environmental strategy
	- Waste prevention programme 2019-2025
Slovenia	- Roadmap towards the circular economy
	- Material productivity target
Spain	- Big deal for a circular economy
	- Green jobs programme
Sweden	- Partnership programme circular and bio-based economy 2016-2018
	- RE: Source - a Swedish national strategic innovation programme
Switzerland	- Ordinance on the avoidance and the disposal of waste (VVEA)
	- Resource efficiency network: Reffnet
Turkey	- Resource efficiency guidelines for sectors
	- Programme for reducing import dependency
United Kingdom	- London's circular economy route map
	- Making Things Last, Scotland's circular economy strategy; Welsh
	natural resources policy

Some representative initiatives are described in more detail in Table 2 for those countries analysed in the SAWYER state-of-art report, which are Bulgaria, France, Italy, Rumania, Spain, Sweden and the Netherlands.

3. CONCLUSIONS

The initiatives presented previously are examples of a growing number of initiatives promoted by public authorities, but also some private entities, related to Circular Economy.

It does not pretend to be an exhaustive list, but just examples of different approaches to promote circular economy in different EU countries.

Most of them are focused on resource efficiency and waste reduction, but other topics such as Sustainable Development Goals or Climate Change are also covered by some initiatives.





Table 2.- Selected initiatives in SAWYER analysed countries

Country	Short Description
Bulgaria	In Bulgaria, a national circular economy strategy , including a roadmap, is to be developed as part of the governmental programme. The development of a concept for the circular economy is embedded in the context of waste management and related areas. An economic and social analysis of phased implementation and the costs associated with this transition are included in the preparation of the roadmap and the initial assessment of the circular economy concept. The strategy and action plan for the circular economy in this country will cover the period 2021-2030.
France	In France, the commitments for green growth (ECVs) are reciprocal commitments between the state and companies. The agreement has the objective to facilitate the state to help and support the companies that identified specific needs for the Circular Economy transition. Specific projects involving companies with pioneering initiatives and ministerial departments try to overcome the obstacles encountered by companies. The companies' project leaders commit to leading their innovation with the aim of creating examples to be followed by others and by disseminating the achieved results. For its part, the state commits to facilitating the action, which may become more widespread. The first four ECVs were signed in 2016. Eight ECVs based on the circular economy have so far been signed and others are being developed. They concern, for example, plaster waste, acrylic glass, construction and demolition waste and heavy-duty tyres.
	Since 2015, the Zéro Déchet Zéro Gaspillage (Zero Waste Zero Wastage) programme signs contracts on waste and circular economy (CODEC) with the winners of calls for proposals. The aim of this programme is to support voluntary communities in an exemplary and participative approach to promote the circular economy, through the mobilisation of all local stakeholders – associations, companies, the public, administrations and businesses. In total, 153 territories have signed this type of contract.
	The Comité pour les Métaux Stratégiques (COMES) has the objective to direct research, particularly on the circular economy; bring stakeholders together; and share information on strategic metals – markets, innovations, etc.– and help industry anticipate risks related to their procurement. It serves as a forum for exchanges between manufacturers, administrations and research laboratories.
Italy	In Italy, the mandatory use of minimum environmental criteria (MEC) for all public procurement of products, services and works was introduced with the adoption of Law 221/2015. The MEC gives general guidelines to institutions for the rationalisation of purchases and provide them with principles of environmental quality linked to the different phases of procurement of supplies along the whole life cycle of services and products. The MEC also may include prescriptions for eco- and modular design, durability of materials, recycled content and criteria for reuse and repair, in relation to specific commodities or services. The application of the MEC was extended to the design of buildings, related to both new construction and refurbishment and maintenance of existing buildings by the Decree of 11 January 2017 and for public lighting services by Decree of 27 September 2017.
	The Laboratorio Materie Prime is a network of major mining organisations involving Assomineraria, Aitec, Marmomacchine, Anim and Anepla; the scientific world through the University of Milan; and public administration bodies including the Ministry of Economic Development (MISE), the Italian National Agency for New Technologies, Energy and Sustainable Economic Development (ENEA), the National Institute of Statistics (Istat) and the Institute for Environmental Protection and Research (ISPRA). This initiative tries to overcome the current fragmentation in many non-coherent regional raw material-related norms, bringing more consistency to the national raw materials strategy. It also supports the development of a circular economy, through both governmental and regional action towards increased recovery of raw materials. The development of local supply chains supported by forestry-related activities as well as the need to offer economic opportunities that help to avoid the depopulation of remote areas of the country was explicitly referred in the newly adopted legislative decree on forests and forestry supply chains.





Romania	In Romania, the Food Waste Combat Cluj is one of the first multi-stakeholder initiatives combating food loss and food waste. In this initiative, local environmental associations and municipal authorities are working in partnership and they have been able to set up an infrastructure that collects excess food from the food and drinks industry and transports this to social NGOs helping out people in need.
	The Green Group Holding initiative integrates waste management solutions for six main waste streams associated with households and SMEs (WEEE, plastics, PET, glass, lighting bulbs, cardboard). It is a pioneer development for South Eastern Europe via a private investment starting back in 2012. Thanks to a public-private partnership it has already been implemented a nationwide network of over 200 mobile and fixed collection points in 36 Romanian counties.
	In Spain, the Spanish Circular Economy Strategy, Spain Circular 2030 lays the foundations to promote a new model of production and consumption in which the value of products, materials and resources remain in the economy for as long as possible to minimize the generation of waste and take advantage as much as possible of those that cannot be avoided. The Strategy thus contributes to Spain's efforts to achieve a sustainable, decarbonised economy, efficient in the use of resources and competitive. It is aligned with the objectives of the two circular economy action plans of the European Union, "Closing the loop: an EU action plan for the circular economy" of 2015 and "A new 2020 Circular Economy Action Plan for a cleaner and more competitive Europe", in addition to the European Green Deal and the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development.
	In 2013, Spain adopted its national strategy More Food, Less Waste, which aims to improve efficiency and reduce losses along the food chain. The initiative aims to reduce food loss and wastage and to obtain the maximum value from discarded food. The underlying philosophy of the strategy is that prevention and reduction of food waste should not be done through a strongly interventionist and restrictive policy. Therefore, much of the More Food, Less Waste strategy will be implemented through recommendations, voluntary agreements and self-regulation. However, in some areas, these measures may be accompanied by regulatory initiatives to improve supply chain efficiency.
	There are also circular economy policies in several of the country's autonomous communities, including Andalusia, Castile La Mancha, Castile Leon, Catalonia, Extremadura, Galicia, Madrid, Murcia and the Basque Country. Other activities that could be mentioned are:
Spain	The Circular Economy Business Action Group (FORETICA) was created with the aim of transposing the latest international trends, generating further knowledge and collaborating with the public administration regarding potential circular economy national strategies. The Group consists of 11 big international and national companies aiming to play a leading role in the transition towards a circular economy.
	The Basque Ecodesign HUB is the centre of training activities on Ecodesign and Circular Economy in the Basque Country, resulting from the collaboration of the Basque Government, through Ihobe, with Novia Salcedo Foundation and a number of other Basque socio-economic actors.
	The Basque EcodesignCenter (BEdC) is an organisation based in the Basque Country and structured as a partnership framework between Basque private firms, the main industrial clusters, and the Basque Government through the public agencies Ihobe and Spri. The objective of the BEdC is to help ensure that the Basque Country is an advanced region in the field of eco-design and a benchmark throughout the European Union, supporting SMEs and developing technical projects, new business ideas and training activities. Hence, the BEdC has developed several projects and publications in the field of the circular economy, from the angle of the eco-design approach.
	The Catalan Government considers that public procurement should be used as an instrument to support strategic policies in the transition towards Circular Economy. For a number of years a strategy of Green Public Procurement (GPP) has been in place, based on the following lines: direct support in the introduction of environmental criteria in tenders, elaboration of GPP guidelines, training and promotion of green products.
	In 2017, Ecoembes has launched its pioneering circular economy project in Europe; The CircularLab, which involves all phases of packaging: from creation, via ecodesign, up to the reintroduction of our products into the consumption cycle. Based in the La Rioja region, The CircularLab aims to turn the region into a great centre for experimentation by enabling innovations to be tested on a real scale.





Sweden	In Sweden, the Environmental Protection Agency and the Swedish Chemicals Agency involve relevant stakeholders in the textile value chain , through dialogue and co-creation. The purpose of the dialogue is to contribute to reducing environmental and health impacts throughout the textile value chain to create resource-efficient and non-toxic cycles. This dialogue takes place in cooperation with authorities, researchers, the textile industry and voluntary organisations, as well as other textile stakeholders, and at each dialogue meeting, a specific theme will be highlighted.
	The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency and the cities of Gothenburg and Umeå arrange national meetings, LABs, on the topic of sustainable lifestyles , which are open to everyone. The idea is to inspire action by sharing experiences, creating networks and cooperation and increasing the number of platforms for sharing goods and services to decrease resource use and stimulate innovation. Sixty examples of best practices have been collected to be shared internationally. The purpose is to achieve the SDGs by taking action at both national and international levels.
	Another initiative to find ways to reduce food waste was carried out by the Swedish Board of Agriculture, the Environmental Protection Agency and the National Food Agency in a three year assignment. It included information campaigns for consumers, increased collaboration along the food value chain and promoted using unavoidable food waste to produce biogas.
	The report of a special inquiry, with a primary focus on products for consumers, was presented in March 2017 with the aim of stimulating the circular economy, including additional suggestions for instruments to increase the second-hand market and the repair of various products . The main task of the inquiry was to analyse and propose policy instruments to promote increased use and reuse of products to prevent waste. It describes what a circular economy involves and how Sweden can steer more forcefully in that direction.
	In the Netherlands, the government programme for a circular economy is seeking for synergies and co-benefits between raw materials, resource efficiency, the circular economy, economic competitiveness and growth, and foreign trade. The programme includes all government policy efforts and it was developed with the involvement of the ministries responsible for infrastructure and the environment, economic affairs, interior and kingdom relations, and foreign affairs. The initiative is boosting economic competitiveness; innovation investment and employment; preventing climate change and reducing greenhouse gas emissions; and protecting the environment and natural resources as examples of intended synergies between resource efficiency, the circular economy and other policy areas.
	The key objectives of this government programme for a circular economy are a transition to a fully circular economy in the Netherlands by 2050 and a 50 % reduction in the use of virgin raw materials by 2030. It contains some measurable targets for consumer goods, for example by 2020, the annual volume of household residual waste will be a maximum of 100 kg/person; the target by 2025 will be 30 kg/person/year maximum.
	The Netherlands Organisation for Applied Scientific Research (TNO) analysed the extent to which the 2030 ambition of a 50 % reduction in the use of primary raw materials was supported by sub-goals on reduction targets for fossil, metallic and other mineral materials formulated within the programme. This evaluation resulted in an overview of the effects on use of raw materials, CO ₂ emissions, and water and land use.
	In the Netherlands, the green deal approach is an accessible way for companies, other stakeholder organisations, local and regional governments and interest groups to work together with the central government on green growth and social issues. Since 2011, more than 200 green deals have been agreed, covering nine themes: (1) energy; (2) the bio-based economy; (3) mobility; (4) water; (5) food; (6) biodiversity; (7) resources; (8) construction; and (9) the climate. This instrument is promoted rather than as legislation, as a steering instrument for the removal of barriers to the sustainable use of resources and achieving a circular economy. A green deal is a mutual agreement or covenant under private law between a coalition of companies, civil society organisations and local and regional government.
	The known as City Deal could be a concrete illustration of this instrument, signed by eight cities, ministries, knowledge institutions and companies with the aim to take the lead in accelerating the transition to a circular economy at local and regional levels. Other several Dutch municipal governments have also set up circular initiatives, directed at their local businesses (i.e. Almere, Apeldoorn, Dordrecht, Haarlemmermeer and Venlo).



