The role of the Cohesion Policy in promoting the Circular Economy: a sustainable SME perspective

Arthur ten Wolde, Circular Economy Expert
Ecopreneur.eu & De Groene Zaak

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Ecopreneur.eu and the circular economy
Experience of circular economy pioneers – our member companies

We ....

• Are market leaders with CE products & services
• Generate profitable financials, product and market innovation, new business models + jobs

But ...

• Lack of demand pull for circular products and services, especially from public procurement
• Lack of transparency through the value chain
• For SMEs: access to funding to invest in circular innovation or turnaround
Main asks for strong Circular Economy policies in Europe

Market pull measures & design requirements needed to drive innovation towards circular products and services:

1. Circular **Procurement**: massive training program
2. Clear price **incentives** for producers and consumers to foster circularity by Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), tax shift and VAT
   - including incentives for e.g. the uptake of secondary raw materials and for Best Available Solutions per product group
3. Regulation: Minimum **requirements** for circular design of all (end) products in the Ecodesign directive
Policies for the circular economy: overall ambition

- Goal = **implementation** of ambitious policies for circular procurement, economic incentives (EPR, tax shift, VAT), ecodesign regulation and transparency
- Increase enthusiasm for the circular economy in all member states by using all existing EU **policy instruments** to create a network of ambassadors in all Member States
- Create awareness of the opportunities of the circular economy, investments and **connecting** suppliers, by discussing this with national stakeholders
- Increase **bottom-up initiatives**, create national CE hubs and Green Deals, as well as support for top-down policy measures
Policies for the circular economy – some regional aspects

- European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform (ECESP)
- Enterprise Europe Network (EEN)
- DG REGIO responsible for Procurement
- More support especially needed in Eastern & Southern Europe
Cohesion Policies basics
The importance of Cohesion Policies for the circular economy (1) : overview
The importance of Cohesion Policies for the circular economy (2) : input Ecopreneur.eu

- Focus on European Commission ambassadors with physical presence and meetings with stakeholders in the member states

- Use existing EU instruments to create separate annual calls for local, regional, national or EU consortia of NGOs, companies and authorities to create or boost:
  
  - circular economy hubs
  - green deals on circular procurement, extended producer responsibility or local taxation
  - Transparency instruments (e.g. materials passports)
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- Leverage funding instruments from the EU for CE, e.g. LIFE Programme
- Guarantee a grant if the quality criteria are met
- Focus on concrete results, minimize research
- Require best practices exchange and networking with other member states