Circular Economy

A transition to the circular economy
⇒ the efforts to develop a sustainable, low carbon, resource efficient and competitive economy
⇒ products, materials and resources to be maintained for as long as possible in the economy reducing the generation of waste

In Europe, cities
⇒ are home to over 70% of the population
⇒ the bigger part of its economic activity and growth.
⇒ heavily dependent on external resources to meet the demands of their citizens
⇒ most goods are consumed generating large volumes of waste
Urban authorities therefore provide the ideal context for the development of the circular economy.

Water reuse

- Water scarcity and droughts have worsened.
- Climate change projections point to a worsening situation

In addition to water-efficiency measures, the reuse of treated wastewater in safe and cost-effective conditions is valuable.

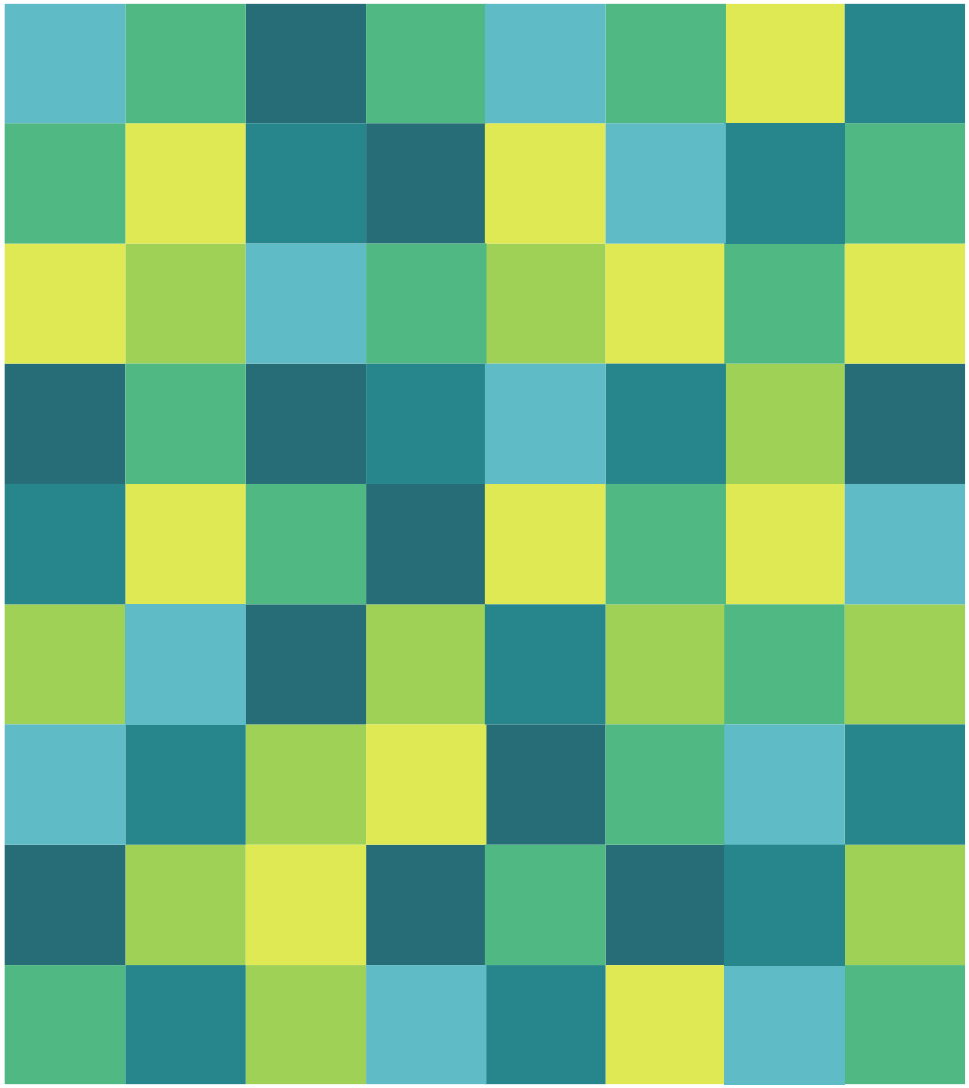
Urban authorities ⇒ solid experience in providing sustainable waste management

Cities can also drive the change towards more sustainable modes of production and consumption.

Adapting to the circular economy will …

- require a qualified workforce with specific and sometimes new skills
- create new employment opportunities and social dialogue
- create new businesses - business models
- encourage cooperation between manufacturers and retailers to produce more durable, reparable and recyclable products.

Cities are invited to consider in particular the following themes and issues:



Cooperation with local manufacturers and retailers or citizen-led initiatives and third sector/social enterprises as a good way to promote more durable, reparable and recyclable products.

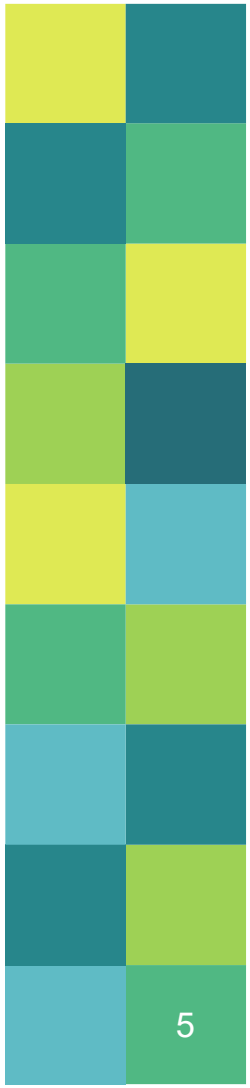
Supporting industrial symbiosis would allow cooperation between businesses and the utilization of surplus resources generated by industry.

Cities can influence consumption patterns through the encouragement of re-use and repair.

Improving the management of municipal waste representing 10% of the total waste stream in Europe.

Promotion of a collaborative economy which shares products or infrastructure would see citizens and businesses consuming services rather than products.

Tools such as Green Public Procurement and Public Procurement of Innovation with criteria developed by public authorities can ensure that the sustainability, durability and reparability when setting out or revising criteria



Prevention of food waste along the value chain by taking different steps including changing behaviors through awareness raising campaigns. Further development of urban composting systems, linked to urban farming and hydroponics projects.

The recycle or re-use of materials from construction and demolition projects, one of the biggest sources of waste in Europe and many of which take place in cities.

Waste from electrical and electronic equipment such as mobiles, TVs and washing machines of which high numbers are concentrated in cities is expected to reach 12 million tones by 2020. Cities struggle to manage this type of waste but could play a key role in recycling and re-using the rare earth materials and precious metals they include, reducing the dependence on importing them.

Promote water reuse (e.g. rainwater harvesting), as a measure to address water scarcity and droughts.

Contribute to measurable and replicable resource-efficiency solutions by documenting baseline use and progress observed, through standard indicators and appropriate data collection, formats and sharing and publishing rules.

Ensure that any solution adopted to handle data is interoperable and based on open standards.

In order to make a transition to the circular economy a reality, the European Commission expects urban authorities to involve all stakeholders from the design of products to its re-use benefiting both the economy and the environment including the participation of citizens and communities.

Thank you for listening.