Circular Economy in Greece

Ioannis Gkoutzamanis

Energy & Climate Change Policy Officer

Greek General Confederation of Labour (GSEE)
The long-term (2030) goals of the National Action Plan on Circular Economy

- Moving up the waste hierarchy by focusing on preventing waste and improving recycling
- Supporting circular entrepreneurship by promoting “industrial symbiosis” and business clusters
- Supporting circular consumption patterns of re-using, re-storing and repairing rather than buying new products, especially for electrical and electronic devices
- Enhancing multi-stakeholder partnerships across industry, academia, and civil society
- Monitoring progress towards a circular economic model through SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound) indicators.
Municipal waste landfill rates in Europe

Source: European Environment Agency
National Circular Economy Action Plan, Greece aims to achieve the following by 2020:

• achieve a radical reduction of the per capita produced waste

• increase reuse and recycling of wastes, with a separate collection of recyclable waste and of bio-waste, to reach **50% of total municipal solid waste** produced from a **25%** where it stands today

• reach a 74% recovery and **less than 30% disposal** of total municipal solid waste produced from the current **82% disposal**

• create around **15,900 new jobs** and the increase of the annual turnover of the waste management related businesses.
Objectives of the new National Waste Management Plan (ECHR) are the following:

- Landfill at 10% in 2030, five years before the Community obligation (2035)
- Cessation of uncontrollable food waste and rehabilitation of illegal landfills until 2022
- Increase recycling 55% in 2025 and 60% in 2030 (including biowaste)
- Separate collection of organic waste (brown bin) and development of relevant infrastructure throughout the country by 2022
- Full coverage of the country until 2030 with 43 Waste Treatment Plants (WACs) and 43 – 46 Bio Waste Treatment Plants (MEVA)
- Four power plants with energy recovery from waste of MEAs.
What are the barriers

- Prolonged economic crisis (2008-2018)
- GDP Shrink
- Over double unemployment rate on youth (vs EU)
- No universal education-training-reskilling scheme by the Government
- Training per company basis
- Public consultation Vs Policy making process
- collective bargaining agreement -??
Skill Training Needed

- Crucial input by European Trade Union Institute - Workshops & Seminars
- Collaboration-participation with Institute of SME in Greece
- Health & Safety at Work Institute - bipartite
- More is needed to raise awareness
Thoughts

- Production in a circular economy is more labour-intensive than it is in a linear economy.
- We are very far from a circular economy.
- No well functioning EU Secondary raw material.
- Automation: implemented to complement rather than completely replace human labour (only if skills are adequate to experienced workers).
What is wrong with the Circular Economy Action Plan

- More categories will be coming in the upcoming months- more legislation-more confusion
- Revision of the construction sector in circular economy
- Textiles, buildings and electronic equipment have so far been unaddressed at the EU level
- No clear- or absent mention on the skills required for a Circular Economy and initiatives
- Little research on health and safety risks facing informal and formal workers in different recycling activities
- waste management and recycling are often low-wage and raise worker safety issues

- construction sector is seeing an increasing trend of hiring contract workers, without the necessary levels of unionization or regulation that go along with decent work principles
Good Practices so far

- In wastewater treatment (Public owned Corporation) updated training -new technologies- informed workers on H&S and environmental impacts

- Per company basis: Cement Industry, Oil refinery, Fishery Plastic collection & recycling/reuse