

## Circular Economy for Eco-development

The world is changing faster and faster. Over the last century the economic activities have been constantly and rapidly invading the nature, living behind a more and more degraded environment. At last, man conquered the nature. But is this a proper way of acting?

Nature and man need each-other. No human can survive without nature. This truth is obvious when discussing about eco-development.

Taking into account that “eco-development refers to development at regional and local levels, consistent with the potentials of the area involved, with attention given to the adequate and rational use of natural resources, technological styles and organizational forms that respect the natural ecosystems and local social and cultural patterns” (OECD, Glossary of Statistical Terms) the new concept of circular economy, adopted as a must in the development strategies all over the world, is in a direct relation with the idea of eco-development.

Adopting the Circular Economy Action Plan in 2015 the European Commission emphasizes the importance of modernizing and transforming the EU economy, “shifting it towards a more sustainable direction”. This new economic trend is considered to bring better opportunities to Europe, delivering important energy savings and environmental benefits.

Starting from this main idea of interdependency between the sustainable development at all levels, especially at the regional one, and the circular economic system as a new concept, the panel proposes discussions on:

- a. **Agriculture and forestry.** The first two main economic activities developed along the human history have been deeply interfering with nature since the beginning. Man needs the natural resources for his survival and especially food and wood. Both are purely natural elements, but, as the demographic rate of growth skyrocketed in the last century, the needs of humankind followed the trend. The main goal being securing food and energy, the classical linear economy consumes great amounts of resources and produces large quantities of waste. In these conditions, the environment is declining in resources and is overloaded with waste. In both ways the relation man-nature is losing. The only response to this gigantic problem is the circular economy.
- b. **Eco-industrial development.** This concept, a blend of resource conservation, pollution prevention, and industry efficiency, involves the creation of synergistic relationships between various industries for resource sharing, conservation, waste recycling, and cost savings. These goals are better accomplished in the context of a circular economy where the value of products, materials and resources is maintained in the economy for as long as possible, and the generation of waste minimised.
- c. **Waste management** plays a central role in the circular economy, aiming to encourage the options that deliver the best overall environmental outcome. As, in present, only around 40% of the waste produced by EU households is recycled, with wide variation between Member States

and regions, there is a real need of new measures and sustaining actions to increase recycling and reduce the landfilling of municipal waste.

- d. **Circular economy in Romania.** Is Romania prepared for the circular economy? This is one of the most important questions raised in the literature. The analysis of some economic indicators like the resource utilization efficiency, resource consumption, water productivity, waste management, etc., gives a negative picture of the present state of this country's economy, showing its inability to follow the new trend.
- e. **Education for sustainable development towards circular economy.** "Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is about enabling us to constructively and creatively address present and future global challenges and create more sustainable and resilient societies" (UNESCO). The technological solutions, political regulation or financial instruments alone cannot lead us to the equilibrium we are seeking for. The circular economy concept is an important step towards a better environment, towards the salvation of our world. In this concern we all need to change the way we think and act. And the beginning is in the educational system. Children are the future and they must understand and accept the new trends. Reforming the educational curricula and tools is a must.