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Motion

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Title: **An Accelerated Transition to the Circular Economy**

Motion text

Resolution submitted by JEF Norway / PC2 – Internal European Affairs
Adopted by the Federal Committee in London on 23 March 2019. Re-adopted and amended by the Federal Committee in Athens, Greece on 31 October 2026.

Europe’s consumption of energy and natural resources remains high. Recent energy and supply chain shocks underlined the vulnerabilities Europe is facing without a resilient economy, aware of the benefits of the circular economy. Every year, the EU’s inhabitants consume resources equivalent to that of the production of two and a half Earths. In 2024, only 12.2% of materials used in the EU originated from recycled resources, representing an increase of merely one percentage point since 2015. At the current pace, the EU risks falling significantly short of its ambition to double its circular material use rate by 2030. Furthermore, the EU is highly dependent on imports of raw materials. However, the extraction of raw materials accounts for a substantial amount of greenhouse gas emissions as well as degrading vulnerable natural landscapes. In order to reduce our per capita footprint, mitigate climate change, and preserve resilient ecosystems, Europe must step up its transition to a truly Circular Economy, reducing waste, increasing resource productivity and regenerating natural resources.

JEF Europe,

- **Reaffirming the political, legal and ethical commitments towards climate neutrality, wherein the circular economy, domestically and globally, plays an important role in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction;**

- **Taking note of initiatives such as the Circular Economy Action Plan (CEAP) and the Circular Economy Act at the core;**

- **Underlining actions such as the Sustainable Products Initiative, the Right to Repair Directive, the Ecodesign Directive, Industrial Emissions Directive, Common Chargers Directive, Batteries Regulation, Green Claims Directive proposal, and multiple initiatives supporting clean energy and clean technologies;**

- **Welcoming the EU's increased ambitions for European energy efficiency and emissions-reduction goals, in line with the Paris Agreement of limiting warming to well below 2 degrees Celsius;**

- **Expressing concern about the failure of the EU to disconnect from non-renewable energy sources following disconnecting from energy imported from Russia;**

- **Deeply concerned about the degree of wastefulness in the European economy, with only 38% of waste in the EU recycled, and noting the differences among Member States in waste recycling rates;**

- **Worried that several Member States registered regresses between 2010 and 2024 in their circularity rates;**

- **Recalls the recommendations of the European Court of Auditors to the Commission on improving its monitoring of Member States' transition to a circular economy and analysing reasons for low take up of EU funding for circular design and greater incentivisation considerations;**

- **Concerned by environmental and health damaging business practices on transnational waste shipping;**

- **At the same time acknowledging that shifting toward a circular economy model involves a deep-going change of mentality and a radical departure**

from current incentivisation where going circular remains, for the time being, widely unprofitable;

- **Recognising that a transition necessitates more than mere voluntary schemes and industry initiatives, demanding coordinated practices across businesses, governments, civil society and national boundaries;**

- **Underlining the significant benefits associated with the Circular Economy, such as: reduced emissions, diminished pollutants in atmosphere, air, and water, lower resource extraction rates and dependency on imports, job creation within re-use, recycling and regeneration businesses, and limiting the impact on environmental and human health and safety;**

- **Highlighting that the transition to a more circular model of our economy has social consequences, and that actions need to be taken to ensure a fair transition for citizens, workers and regions;**

- **Underlining that the circular economy should be a driver for the development of the European social pillar and European solidarity, both as a whole and for marginalised regions and segments of the population in particular;**

- **Recalling JEF Europe's resolutions "Environment does not stop at borders"; "Towards a green, globally competitive and digital European industry" and "A federal strategy for sustainable, safe and healthy food for all Europeans";**

JEF Europe, therefore,

1. **Calls for the EU to address the key barriers to transitioning to a truly Circular Economy in Europe, and effectively implement the Circular Economy Act;**

2. **Calls for an EU-wide tax reform that makes it beneficial to reuse, recycle, regenerate and use secondary raw materials, and that will support**

European projects for a circular economy, and stresses the need for effective application of the polluter-pays principle;

3. **Calls for Member-States to establish cross-border refund schemes;**

4. **Requests further market-funded investments into transitioning toward a circular economy, using the experience from Next Generation EU;**

5. **Calls for the integration of the principles of cohesion and just transition into all circular economy initiatives, so that the shift benefits workers, communities, and regions equitably;**

6. **Insists that the EU must empower consumers to recirculate their products, fully implementing the “right to repair” and addressing shortcomings of the current regulatory framework, so the EU Ecolabel becomes the default sustainability branding throughout the EU, and that information campaigns towards consumers and producers are intensified;**

7. **Demands the mainstreaming of circular economy policies in free trade agreements, supporting bilateral and regional trade of secondary raw materials, and promoting EU-wide recycling of materials through harmonisation of regulation;**

8. **Further calls for the EU to take stronger actions to reduce municipal waste and local impacts from waste and landfill pollution, mandating a standardised model for separate waste collection and setting EU-level waste reduction targets, including minimising the presence of persistent organic pollutants in material used in circular economy;**

9. **Invites the EU to propose a coordinated waste management action plan in the EU, the lack of which complicates the long-term planning of material streams, trade and recycling across borders;**

10. **Calls on the Commission to implement the ‘Renovation Wave’ initiative**

fully in line with the circular economy principles, while promoting the reuse of construction and demolition waste within the building sector through modular building design, deep renovations, on-site production, and reusability of all materials;

11. **Asking for the effective introduction of the Digital Product Passports which provide information about the ecological footprint of each product, enabling seamless trade and tracking of sustainable secondary materials across borders;**

12. **Calls for effective implementation of the revised waste shipment regulation given the negative consequences on climate and environment, on human health, and on EU solidarity of transborder waste shipping without proper accountability and traceability of the illicit and harmful business operations for waste management and disposal;**

13. **Calls for the EU to effectively and in a transparent way follow up the progress of a circular economy in line with the Circular Economy Monitoring Framework, and in particular monitoring the progress made on the Member States' binding targets for circularity and recycling rates as well as making binding the ambitions in the updated Sustainable Products Regulation and the framework for ecodesign requirements;**

14. **Encourages the European Union to support the transition to a circular economy in the candidate countries by sharing the European best practices and providing technical assistance, according to their own individual needs.**