

## **Key-Note for ERSCP-2017**

### **18th European Roundtable for Sustainable Consumption and Production**

**1-5 October 2017, Skiathos, Greece**

**Topics: Waste and Circular Economy; Sustainable policy and Future Development;**

Presented by: **Robbert Droop** (policy-maker in NL Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment) and **Michal Miedzinski** (NEW\_InnoNet project), also on behalf of the European Commission (DG-Environment) and University College London (UCL) Bartlett Institute for Sustainable Resources

### **Process and Policies towards a Circular Economy**

#### **Lead to Major Knowledge Questions**

#### **Governments, EU, and business face resources challenges**

The key-note will introduce some challenges and ways forward for Governments, EU and private sector towards a higher resource-productivity and circularity.

Several governments introduced legislation and incentives in support of sustainable waste management. Other governments promote design-for-reuse or design-for-recycling. Some governments aim to mobilize society to actively contribute to transition to the circular economy. Other Governments consider how to make the change from waste management to resource efficiency and circularity.

#### **EU-Governments making the change from waste-management to circular economy**

Over the past two years, the European Commission presented its proposals to effectuate a change from the current pre-dominantly throw-away society towards a circular economy.

All national Governments in the EU support the plans from the European Commission. This was expressed in Council Conclusions (Environment) on 20 June 2016, together with a call for more measures at the national and European levels, in support of private sector to innovate and change in time to survive the transition to a circular economy.

Part of the EU approach is to end landfilling of waste and to avoid unnecessary incineration of waste, by stimulating co-incineration, circular design, market development, and changing consumption habits, allowing for high-quality recycling of resources. The key-note will address some of these policies.

#### **As an Example - NL-Programme "A Circular Economy by 2050"**

The government-wide programme "A Circular Economy in the Netherlands by 2050" outlines how we can convert our economy into a sustainability-driven, fully circular economy. The first interim-target is ambitious but not unachievable: a 50% reduction in the use of raw materials like minerals, fossil-based fuels and metals by 2030. The Government invites a variety of stakeholders, to investigate the problems that are impeding the realisation of our circular economy, and together they are asked to come up with appropriate solutions.

To accelerate the transition to a circular economy, government and stakeholders aim to draw up "transition agendas" for the priority chains and sectors. The process towards these transition agendas and some of the policy measures will be outlined in presentation.

### **New business for circularity**

In a circular economy, private sector will deal with natural resources in a smarter way. Society will use products and services more intelligently by sharing them and passing them on. At end-of-life, products will be disassembled with as little loss of material characteristics as possible so that full recovery and re-use of the resources is possible. Thus the manufacturing industry will have (secondary) raw resources amply available. By doing so, society jointly, slowly but steadily, builds a circular economy.

A special challenge is the development of new business which is based on circularity, respecting the limits of the ecosystem. A theoretical model and some practical examples will be presented.

### **Finding the practical way forward and what knowledge questions need resolving**

Many knowledge questions must be resolved during the transition to a circular economy. That relates to the technology and business which make a circular economy technologically possible, but especially also relates to non-technological issues with a large variety, such as: awareness, culture and strategy within business; inter-sectoral coordination and collaboration towards symbiosis; development of economic instruments to get the prices "right" for products and processes real impact on the environment; consumer behaviour and life-style; macro-economic changes due to more servicizing and less primary product manufacturing.

At ERSCP2017 in October 2017, we will aim to jointly develop the transition and knowledge agendas for a change towards circularity in Europe with an emphasis on countries currently changing from waste management to circularity. Relevant questions include:

- **What do we know and what we don't know about circular economy in practice?** What are the main practical knowledge gaps relevant for research, innovation, management and policy?
- **Which circular economy model to choose?** What are mechanisms leading to selecting and implementing specific circular economy approaches in? To what extent is waste hierarchy reflected in the choices made across different regions?
- **How important is the context for selection and update of circular economy?** How important is specific socio-economic and political context for selection and uptake of various CE models? What are key drivers and barriers for selection and uptake of various CE models in different contexts?
- **Who can lead the change?** Which actors have a potential to lead the shift to a more sustainable circular economy? Can actors from catching up and peripheral regions also become leaders of the transition? What are key competences and resources various actors need to engage in systemic CE models?
- **Can circular economy become a universal strategic framework for Europe?** Do circular economy models offer a viable strategy for any region, including catching-up regions with limited innovation and organisational capacity? How feasible are various circular economy models for SMEs?
- **What is the role of policy makers?** Should policy support for circular economy become more selective and focus specially on transformative business models? How can policy makers at different governance levels (from local to European) encourage selection and uptake of more ambitious systemic CE models which offer more social and environmental benefits in a long term? Or in other words, how can they prevent selection and lock-in in the least environmentally and socially beneficial models (e.g. incineration)?