

HELLENIC SOLID WASTEMANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

Scientific Non Profit Organisation for the Promotion of Sustainable Development

National Member of the International Solid Waste Association

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**GREECE 2020 – Priorities for the Circular Economy
Linking citizens, business & science**

Athens, February 27th and 28th 2020

The 6th HSWMA Conference for Circular Economy was concluded with great success.

**The Conference conclusions contribute to the National Roadmap
for the transition to the new model.**



The 6th HSWMA Conference entitled: “GREECE 2020 – Priorities for the Circular Economy -Linking citizens, business & science” was concluded with great success on February 27th and 28th, 2020 at the historical building of the National Technical University of Athens, just few days before the announcement of the new EU action plan for Circular Economy, as part of the European Green Deal.

More than 500 Greek and foreign attendees participated in the Conference, which was held in collaboration with ISWA, brought together, representing the whole field of circular economy specialists: authorities, entities and individuals, Government, Local Government and Central Administration, academia and scientific community, researchers, suppliers, manufacturers, administrators and a new generation of undergraduates.

The purpose of the 6th HSWMA Conference was to bring together citizens, enterprises, scientists, central and local government, in order for them to form together the priorities for the implementation of the Circular Economy in Greece, today and in the future. The range of themes was wide and all aspects of this model were covered: the new EU institutional framework, the revision of the corresponding Greek regulatory framework, the impacts of landfilling, the best available technologies, the separate collection systems, bio-waste, the contribution to climate change mitigation, as well as the innovative digital technologies.

Apart from the 70 scientific lectures, three roundtables gave also food for thought, fruitful exchange of views and conclusive suggestions. Prominent Greek politicians were the participants of the first roundtable, while two more were organized, with representatives of important environmental Greek entities among their participants. Significant lectures were presented by MEP M.Spyrakis, Ms A. Hatzis, Directorate General for the Environment, as well as by ISWA representatives.

It is worth noting that the role of new technologies in the transition to the circular economy was a key topic of discussion at the 6th HSWMA Conference.

Main Conclusions of the Conference

- The new EU Green Deal for 2020 is a real opportunity to make Europe the first climate-neutral continent in the world. Actions in the framework of circular economy are contributing significantly to climate change mitigation. Connecting these two should be a priority, as confirmed by the announcement of the European Commission's new Action Plan on Circular Economy, on March 11th, 2020. Our country is among the last ones in the EU, in the ranking for circular economy implementation and in particular, in the field of waste management. Therefore, an opportunity is emerging, for our country to combine the CO₂ emissions reduction with waste management, thus increasing employment and making our country competitive. Minimizing landfill from 80% today to 10% in 2035 or even 2030, is essential, not just in order to meet European objectives and avoid fines, but also to reduce negative environmental impacts.
- It is therefore imperative to urgently incorporate all new EU Directives on Circular Economy into national law, until 30/6/20, according to the announcement of the Secretaries General of the Ministry of Environment, for Waste Management and Natural Environment & Water Resources. The announcement, made by the National Council for Circular Economy, of the Roadmap for the implementation of circular economy by June 2020 is expected to make a significant contribution, in line with the announcement of the Secretary General of the Ministry of Environment, for Natural Environment & Water Resources. It is essential to design efficient separate collection

systems for Paper, Plastic, Metal, Glass, Pet Bottle and Biofuels with the most effective combinations models, taking into consideration the regional and local conditions.

- Creating a framework of industrial symbiosis will facilitate licensing, synergies and market strengthening for secondary raw materials, as will the promotion of green public procurement in critical sectors, in combination with the dissemination of eco-design.
- Immediate revision of the National and Regional Plan for Waste Management and Prevention, with actions promoting circular economy, should aim for landfilling of 10% of the total waste by 2035 at the latest (as provided for in Directive 2018/800 / EU), or even in 2030, according to the announcement of the Secretary General of the Ministry of Environment, for Waste Management.

In this context, it is necessary to promote energy recovery, both from the biogas produced by anaerobic digestion of bio-waste, as well as energy recovery from waste treatment residues (after removal of the recyclable material), primarily at the Greek, energy intensive industries e.g. cement industry, and later on, at the new Waste to Energy plants for cogeneration of electricity & heat where applicable.

- At the same time, implementation of mature projects Solid Waste Treatment Plants should not be delayed, ensuring that new units are capable of meeting with the new requirements of the European directives.
- The financial incentives for this transition are essential, as is the introduction of the special landfill tax (of untreated waste and residues) as early as 2020 so that everyone will know in advance that this will apply to every ton that is directed to landfilling, starting on the date of operation initiation of the new Solid Waste Treatment Plants, i.e. from 2023.

For the implementation of these proposals, HSWMA estimates that very bold steps are required, as well as partnerships. We are optimistic that these proposals can be turned into achievable goals, as there is discussion already active with both competent authorities (Secretariats) as well as with important entities in the National Council of Circular Economy. Our country must proceed from analysis to specialized planning and implementation of the necessary projects and actions.