

EUROPEAN SOCIAL PARTNERS' RECOMMENDATIONS ON CIRCULAR ECONOMY IN THE FRAMEWORK OF SOCIAL DIALOGUE

1. Social Partners should promote the shift to circular economy by raising awareness and informing their members. This could be done by organizing events and webinars on the topic, disseminating reports and translating findings from future research into practical information for workers and enterprises. Social Partners should also further explore the socio-economic impacts of the transition towards circular economy in specific sectors and regions;
2. Social Partners should bring the topic of socio-economic impacts of the transition to the Circular Economy on the agenda of Social Dialogue at different levels, e.g. European, national, regional, sectoral and/or company. Social partners should discuss just transition¹ strategies to move towards circular economy. Where applicable, these just transition strategies should be negotiated through social dialogue and collective bargaining structures. These should aim to deal with socio-economic challenges and optimize employment and competitiveness opportunities for workers and enterprises, and contribute to inclusive and fair transitions;
3. At company level, employers and trade union representatives should use Works Councils and Health and Safety Committees – when they exist – or other relevant bodies, to collect information and develop concrete measures to move towards circular business models while ensuring a positive contribution to employment, competitiveness and a fair transition for workers;
4. At regional, sectoral and company levels, Social Partners should map and anticipate the needs for training, upskilling and reskilling of workers to support adaptation to the transition to circular economy and enhance employability. Where needs are identified, training should be provided, for example by employers, training institutes, public authorities, etc. with an inclusive approach. Social Partners should also promote continuous and life-long learning and provide support for enterprises and workers to make progress on upskilling, reskilling and training issues in the field of circular economy, including via the sharing of good practices;
5. Social Partners at the different levels should evaluate the consequences of the transition to Circular Economy on collective agreements. They should evaluate whether existing collective agreements should review/revise their scope to adapt to changes in activities or if new ones should be created to cover new activities. Social Partners should also discuss and if possible agree on ways to improve working conditions and prevent informal work in those sectors where problems are identified/prevalent.
6. Social Partners should strengthen the implementation of health and safety measures as part of guaranteeing good working conditions in activities related to circular economy transition, in particular in waste handling and re-manufacturing from secondary raw materials;
7. Circular economy can bring many opportunities but also some challenges when it comes to enterprises' competitiveness. Social Partners should discuss ways to help ensure the competitiveness of enterprises, taking account of particular needs of SMEs, moving towards more circular business models;
8. Social Partners should discuss ways to ensure that the shift to circular business models goes along with improving gender equality and inclusiveness of the labour market.

1 See ILO guidelines for a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all (2015), https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/--ed_emp/--emp_ent/documents/publication/wcms_432859.pdf

EUROPEAN SOCIAL PARTNERS' RECOMMENDATIONS ON CIRCULAR ECONOMY TO POLICY MAKERS

1. Policy makers should properly consider the impact of the transition to circular economy on the world of work. The socio economic dimensions should be fully integrated in policies related to circular economy;
2. In terms of governance, policy makers should involve Social Partners in the design and implementation of European, national, regional and sectoral circular economy action plans and policies;
3. Policy makers should ensure that labour markets and education and training systems are adequately equipped to accompany the transition to the circular economy in a way that supports inclusive and sustainable employment, good working conditions and competitiveness.
4. Policy makers and public authorities should ensure sufficient public and private funds to support a fair and inclusive transition to circular economy, while ensuring competitiveness. These funds should promote quality employment, innovation, reskilling and upskilling. Targeted support for SMEs to move more rapidly to circular economy and to support their workers should also be provided
5. Policy makers should ensure that education and training systems provide future workers with the appropriate skills to support the transition to the circular economy and that incentives exist to ensure availability of manpower for specialized and technical tasks.
6. Supply and demand for secondary raw materials are essential for the development of Circular economy and should be strengthened. Policy makers should create and facilitate a well-functioning market for high-quality secondary raw materials through measures in the Second Circular Economy Action Plan
7. Policy makers should reinforce the competitive position of circular products on the market, including through stronger market surveillance to ensure fair competition and a level playing field;
8. Policy makers should provide employers, workers and their representatives with a knowledge-based support (e.g. support for information and technical assistance; support for regional or sectoral training centers, support for formal collaborations and knowledge exchange on CE-related activities). This is especially important for SMEs.

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