

CIRCULAR ECONOMY DAY

*Intervention by H.E. Mr Paolo Trichilo, Ambassador of Italy
Novo Mesto, 3 April 2019*

Dear Mayor,
Distinguished Guests,

Circular economy is one of the important areas of activity of the Italian Embassy and the Italian Trade Commission in Ljubljana. The program of the economic conference on Slovenia held in Rome on the 14th of February with the participation of the Italian and Slovenian State Secretaries for Economic Development, also included the presentations by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Štájerska on the "Networks for Transition into Circular Economy" and by LUCART of Italian success case of sustainability and circular economy in Slovenia. Furthermore, I have been a regular speaker in the Circular Change Conference in Maribor and the Italian Trade Office in Ljubljana has been a partner of that event.

The future of the manufacturing sector lies in its capacity to recycle, reduce reliance on raw materials, and cut down on both material and energy waste. This is the European Union's position and it is also supported by the performance of businesses that operate within the circular economy. Italy never had a wealth of natural resources, so its economy has been trained to operate in an environment of scarcity. Therefore, the country is well placed in the global circular economy. From scrap metal in Brescia to rags in Prato to paper waste in Lucca, Italian manufacturers have followed the best practices for centuries.

Based on Eurostat data, Italy is

- The 1st country with the highest level of secondary raw materials
- The 2nd European country for industrial recycling of non-hazardous waste
- The 2nd most efficient country in material consumption

These results can be attributed to a virtuous synergy between innovation by companies, research & training by universities and the promotion of new manufacturing model by business associations. Circular economy creates new

opportunities for that specific collaborative capacity which forms part of the DNA of the entire Italian production system.

According again to Eurostat figures, 18.5 percent of all materials used in Italy's factories are secondary raw ones. Germany, the only major European economy with a larger manufacturing sector, is at 10.7 percent. Through recycling, Italy saves an amount of primary energy equivalent to 17 million tonnes of oil, while also reducing CO2 emissions by 60 million tonnes.

Cutting emissions and energy bills is not the only advantage that the circular economy presents. A circular economy triggers growth, as evidenced by the stories of businesses that have turned environmental challenges into opportunities.

Coming now to today's event, I would like to congratulate Lucart for the work being done in and with Novo Mesto. I remember when I first met them during the Italian Ambassadors meeting in Rome two years ago. Since then, their activities in Slovenia have developed quite well in cooperation with the local authorities. In this connection, I would like also to mention the constructive attitude of Mayor Macedoni, that I appreciated already when I first paid a visit in this town; I congratulate him for his recent reelection.

This success story of Italian-Slovenian business cooperation is not an exception; on the contrary it confirms a very valuable and growing trend. Hence, I wish all the actors involved in this endeavour to go ahead successfully with a business model that conjugates economic growth and environmental respect in the interest of the inhabitants of this beautiful region.