

4th CIRCULAR CHANGE CONFERENCE

Intervention by H.E. Mr Paolo Trichilo, Ambassador of Italy

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The title I have been given for my speech is “Italy and Slovenia - what can neighbouring countries learn from each other, how collaboration in the field of sustainability and creativity can contribute to economic and social prosperity, as well as to the preservation of nature”.

I will therefore give some data and information to why Italy can be a source of inspiration for European countries, including the neighbouring, allied and friendly Republic of Slovenia.

In general terms, 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

Italy is known as a country with a strong tradition in manufacturing, but one that lacks raw materials. This is precisely where Italy’s propensity towards circularity comes from. Using 256.3 tonnes of materials for every million euros produced, Eurostat puts Italy in second place for efficient materials consumption after Great Britain (which uses 223.4 tonnes of materials per million euros). Italy’s performance has improved since 2008: the country has halved its consumption of materials.

Italy is second in terms of industrial recycling, sending 48.5 million tonnes of non-hazardous waste to be recycled. This level of recovery allows for a saving on primary energy of over 17 million tonnes of petrol a year and reduces CO2 emissions by around 60 million tonnes, according to data from Ambiente Italia (an Italian Institute focusing on Environmental Research).

In his book *Circular Economy in Italy*, author Duccio Bianchi suggests some other data we need to take into account. For every kilogram of resource consumed, Italy generates (adjusted to the purchasing power standard, or PPS) 4 euros to GDP, against a European average of 2.24. In addition to already having efficiency levels above the European average in 2000, Italy also

improved more consistently in terms of efficient resource use than any other European country between 2000 and 2016 (up 281%, with PPS adjustment).

I could give many concrete examples about ongoing projects in Italy, but I will limit myself to mention just a few ones.

Ecopneus is a non-profit consortium for the recycling of end-of-life tires (ELT's) to be used for surfacing roads and football pitches or to be transformed into sealants, adhesives, varnishes and much more.

The Corepla consortium recycles all sorts of plastics as a globally recognised excellence. In 2016 they collected 961.000 tonnes of plastic waste in Italy of which 550.000 were recycled and 304.000 used to produce energy. Only 2.7% with foreign substances was sent to landfill sites. Total energy saving amounted to about 9,700 GWh.

A memorandum has been signed in Rome last month in the presence of three Ministries (Environment, Agriculture and Economic Development) between the Agriculture Confederation, the Italian Biogas Consortium and various companies for the development of biogas for transportation, that could lead inter alia to the so called model of the Energy Independent Farm.

Milan, for its part, is a city in the forefront thanks to various initiatives of car sharing, waste sorting – it has one of the highest percentages of waste sorting in Europe – and recycling. Among the latter the excellent results obtained with the Nosedo Wastewater treatment plant stand out: 400 million litres per day of water from sewage is treated and recirculated after purifying. This plant was a winner of a sustainable best practice award from the European Community.

Finally, “Circular Market” is an app listing companies and products which reduce and eliminate waste and differentiate supply sources, such as: fabrics created with waste from wine production; organic pasta made with microalgae; leftovers of sheep shearing transformed into thermal insulation; coffee grounds used as raw material for the production of mushrooms. The list already includes 250 Italian successful experiences.

We have also extremely good examples of circular economy cooperation between Italy and Slovenia. One is Aquafil, and I will leave in a while to CEO

Giulio Bonazzi to describe the company's business model. Another is the work being done in and with Novo Mestno by Lucart and I have recently been there to witness the good results so far achieved. I also would like to mention the projects undertaken in the framework of the INTERREG Italy – Slovenia, such as RETRACKING, a project for the development of a management model competitive and compliant with EU regulations, for the recycling of waste from Fibre Reinforced Composites (FRC); BLUEGRASS that aims to introduce and develop aquaponics; a sustainable production technique that allows for vegetables to be produced with a reduction of water consumption of up to 90% and through the recycling of waste products from aquaculture practices.

In the light of the above, I am confident that more opportunities for cooperation between our countries will continue to develop, also with the support of the Italian Trade Agency in Ljubljana who in the co-organizers of today's Conference.