

RETRACE INTERREGIONAL DISSEMINATION

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

Brdo pri Kranju, 3 July 2019

Minister Puric,

Executive Director Milic,

Dear participants and guests,

I would like to focus my speech on the 5th Agi-Censis report "Why the Circular Economy in Italy is worthwhile". The new paradigm of circularity is a theme in which Italy plays an important role: because it is a manufacturing country without natural resources with the lowest consumption of raw materials in Europe; among the best at extracting value from the resources used; leader for the circulation of materials recovered within the production processes; Italy's recycling industry is estimated to produce about 1% of GDP.

The following data show that Italy is a reference point for Europe when it comes to the "circular economy":

- it has the lowest domestic consumption of raw materials: 8.5 tons per capita against 13.5 in the EU average;
- it is among the best at extracting value from the resources used: 3.34 euros of GDP for each kg of resources, against an average European value of 2.2 € / kg;
- it is in 1st place for "circulation" of materials recovered within the production processes (18.5% of re-use compared to 10.7% in Germany);
- of the total waste produced (129 million tons) only 21% is sent for disposal (compared to the European average of 49%). Of the total waste treated, Italy sends 76.9% to recycling (36.2% is the EU average);
- in 1999, 68% of urban waste was sent directly for disposal. Today this percentage has dropped to around 8%;
- the recycling industry alone is estimated to produce 12.6 billion euros of added value (about 1% of the Italian GDP);
- in 2017, 48% of Italians bought or sold second-hand goods, with 11% growth compared to 2016. A market worth 21 billion euros (1.2% of GDP). 42% of used goods purchases took place online;

- Car sharing subscribers doubled in two years: from 630 thousand in 2015 to 1 million 310 thousand in 2017.

I would like also to mention the Confindustria award "Best performer of the circular economy 2019" created to inform and raise awareness of companies on Circular Economy, as well as to survey the many initiatives of recovery, recycling and reuse activated by Italian companies in the form of projects and / or actual circular business models. At its first edition, the award included seven categories in the competition.

The founder and CEO of the winning company in the Manufacturing SME category in her speech stated that "the consolidated experience in recent years has led me to the conclusion that the green approach can represent a critical success factor for the company, but vice versa, if left out, it can become a very critical element. Eleven years after the birth of our brand, we count collaborations with internationally known designers in three different sectors: fashion accessories, home and office objects. All with 100% recycled materials that are recyclable in turn. Because objects do not live only once".

It is worth mentioning that in Faenza in the Emilia Romagna Region, the largest winery in Italy, a wine cooperative of 12.500 winegrowers from 7 regions harvesting 11% of all Italian grapes, produces 190 million liters of wine as well as hundreds of thousands of tons of waste. For decades, marcs and lees have become musts, alcohol for industry and pharmaceuticals. Now they are used also to produce Biomethane also through the waste of the agri-food industry (dairy, fruit and livestock). Even green clippings and prunings are used. A 540,000-ton mountain of waste is broken down into compost, inert products for industry and 12 million cubic meters of biomethane, sold to the gas national network.

We have also good examples of circular economy cooperation between Italy and Slovenia. One is Aquafil SLO, based in Ljubljana. Aquafil has very recently been in the news also for a partnership with a major Italian fashion brand. Another is the work being done by Lucart in Novo Mesto and now in Ljubljana. There are also 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.

Allow me to conclude thanking the organizers of today's event for inviting me, and expressing my appreciation for representatives from Italy, in particular the Turin Polytechnic as coordinator of the project and the Piedmont Region as managing authority.