

Statement 2015/16: MJU13 Circular economy

Summary

The Committee has examined the Communication from the Commission on An EU Action Plan for the Circular Economy (COM (2015) 614). In its Communication, the Commission presents an overall action plan to support the transition to a more circular economy, where the value of products, materials and resources is maintained in the economy for as long as possible, and the generation of waste minimised.

The Committee is positive to an EU action plan to support the transition to a circular economy. The Communication raises many good ideas about promoting a collaborative economy, about new business models and industrial symbiosis, and about strengthening markets and trade with secondary and renewable materials by means of various measures. The Committee considers that a well-functioning circular economy should be based on non-toxic, bio-based and resource-efficient life cycles. In order to achieve such life cycles, improved coordination of legislation for waste, chemicals and products in the EU is needed. In the opinion of the Committee, an overview of the relevant regulatory framework at the EU level is needed. The Committee also hopes that the EU strategy for a non-toxic environment that the Commission is to present by 2018 will contain more concrete proposals for achieving a non-toxic life cycle. However, the question of how individual countries use their own natural resources is a matter that should be determined at the national level.

As regards the revised legislative proposals on waste, the Committee notes that they do not express the higher level of ambition previously promised by the Commission. The Committee therefore agrees with the European Parliament's request for a higher level of ambition in these matters. Among other things, the Committee would like to see a landfill ban for biodegradable waste and waste that is suitable for recycling and energy recovery.