

## 47th SESSION

# Fostering a circular economy at local and regional levels

Resolution 503 (2024)<sup>1</sup>

1. The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe (“the Congress”) refers to:

a. the European Charter of Local Self-Government (ETS No.122, “the Charter”), in particular its Articles 3, 4 and 9;

b. the Priorities of the Congress 2021-2026, in particular Priority d: Environmental issues and climate action in cities and regions;

c. Congress Resolution 500 (2024) “Local and regional responses to natural disasters and climate hazards: from risk preparedness to resilience”;

d. Congress Resolution 489 (2022) “A fundamental right to the environment: a matter for local and regional authorities. Towards a green reading of the European Charter of Local Self-Government”;

e. the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development of the United Nations, in particular SDG 1 “End poverty in all its forms everywhere”, SDG 3 “Good health and well-being”, SDG 6 “For clean water and sanitation for all”, SDG 11 “Sustainable Cities and Communities”, SDG 12 on “Ensuring Sustainable Consumption and Production patterns”, SDG 13 “Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts”, SDG 14 “For life below water” as well as SDG 16 “Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels”.

2. The Congress underlines that:

a. the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine and the fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic have exposed significant weaknesses in the global supply chain; coupled with the ongoing consequences of climate change and resulting global warming, these developments underline the urgency of reimagining various aspects of economies and making them more resilient to current political realities and future challenges, notably, climate change;

b. the “take-make-waste” linear economic model used throughout the 20th century causes significant harm to the environment and social justice and is no longer viable;

c. the circular economy, a restorative model that decouples economic growth from natural resource use, and emphasises longevity, reuse, and recycling, has emerged as an alternative to the linear economy;

<sup>1</sup> Debated and adopted by the Congress on 15 October 2024 (see document CG(2024)47-14, explanatory memorandum), co-rapporteurs: Linda GILLHAM, United Kingdom (L, ILDG) and Kristoffer TAMSONS, Sweden (R, EPP/CCE).

d. the circular economy has the potential to boost social and economic resilience at local level and to foster equality, enabling redistribution of resources and jobs and addressing resource scarcity;

e. a multi-level and multidisciplinary strategic approach is required for making the ambition of a circular economy a reality. Community involvement is crucial for the success of circular initiatives;

f. local and regional authorities are uniquely well-placed to contribute to the development of resilient, circular economies rooted in the particular needs of their communities and foster circular policies.

3. In light of the above, the Congress calls on the local and regional authorities of Council of Europe member States to:

a. develop and actively implement local and regional circular economy strategies and action plans tailored to local and regional contexts and promoting human rights and local democracy; establish clear goals and metrics to define and track the progress towards circularity; support the development of circular practices, such as preparation for reuse, recycling, upcycling, local renewable energy production, urban greening including the undoing of soil sealing, localised food growing, low and zero emission mobility;

b. integrate circular economy principles into urban planning and development; designing spaces that encourage sharing resources, such as tool libraries and community gardens with local food production and incorporating green infrastructure to manage waste and resources more effectively;

c. ensure that circular economy benefits human rights and is accessible to all residents, including marginalised and economically disadvantaged groups; this includes providing access to recycling programmes, repair services, and energy-efficient housing;

d. establish robust local and regional regulatory frameworks that support circular principles; this includes creating incentives for sustainable practices;

e. promote and implement Green Public Procurement, prioritising the procurement of sustainable and recycled products, leading by example and setting a standard for private sectors to follow;

f. encourage collaboration between the public sector, private companies, and the civil society to enhance local democracy and develop new technologies and business models that support circularity; leverage data and technology to monitor waste management, resource usage, and the lifecycle of products;

g. invest in circular infrastructure, building or upgrading facilities that support the circular economy, such as advanced recycling plants, community repair shops, anaerobic digestion and composting centres; making it easier for residents and businesses to participate in circular practices;

h. develop policies to prevent waste and implement separate collection, reuse, recycling and recovery of waste;

i. invest in circular mobility, providing low to zero emission transport options to citizens with easy transfers and access to the entire municipality at low cost, so encouraging the shift away from private vehicles for daily, routine movements;

j. engage the community through education and participation to inform the public about the benefits of this circular economy transformation for them and the ways in which they can engage with it and contribute to it.

4. The Congress calls on the local and regional authorities and their national associations to take account of this resolution and the accompanying explanatory memorandum, on this specific issue. It also asks its statutory bodies to take the present resolution into account in their activities.