

EMILIA-ROMAGNA PROMOTES THE CIRCULARITY OF RESOURCES

APPROVED AT THE END OF 2015, THE LAW OF THE EMILIA-ROMAGNA REGION ON WASTE MANAGEMENT ANTICIPATED THE CONTENTS OF THE EUROPEAN PACKAGE ON CIRCULAR ECONOMY. A NEW VISION IS REQUIRED TO TURN WASTE INTO A RESOURCE. COMMITMENTS AND TANGIBLE ACTIONS TO PROMOTE A SUSTAINABILITY CULTURE.



Today a number of facts are becoming increasingly patent: resources are limited and depleted; climate change phenomena have a growing impact on communities' everyday life and the countries' ecological footprint has already exceeded the planet's bio-capacity for decades. Owing to these facts, the Emilia-Romagna Region thought that it could not wait any longer. Quick signals of change were required and the Regional Law 16/2015, which was approved just over one year ago, is a case in point. The first in Italy, even before the Circular Economy Package of the European Commission, Emilia-Romagna Region enacted a law conceived with the active contribution of the whole regional community, as well as the municipal and provincial councils, that sets ambitious goals to be reached by 2020: cutting per capita urban waste production by 20-25%; increasing separate collection to 73% and recycling to 70%; reducing landfills and making regions self-sufficient in terms of waste disposal.

We started from a precise assumption: focusing on the end-of-life phase of goods is not enough. A new vision of

waste management is necessary so that waste is intended not as mere scraps but rather as an actual resource.

The value of products and materials should be maintained as long as possible, the use of raw materials and waste production must be minimized and, whenever a good reaches the end of its life cycle, actions should be undertaken to re-introduce its components into the system to make up a new resource.

Important opportunities for growth should be based on this assumption by developing new technical and technological solutions and by creating green jobs.

This is also the foundation for a development model in which all activities – starting from production – are organized to turn waste into a resource and to ensure that raw materials are reused.

Law 16/2015 points in this direction. Once approved, we immediately took action to prevent its contents from remaining just on paper: this was clearly shown by the actions we carried out in 2016.

Of course, considerable work still needs to be done and transition towards a

more circular economy remains a real priority for the actions of the regional government chaired by president Stefano Bonaccini.

I should point out the progress that has been achieved so far, resulting from the efforts made and the human and financial resources provided.

The first, important result was the approval of the Regional Waste Management Plan that includes useful tools to reach our goals: from the extension of punctual pricing to fully express the Community "polluter pays" principle up to the incentive fund that, with an overall allocation of € 11 million, aims at rewarding the best performing towns – which received 5.5 million in discounted bills for citizens and enterprises – and to support those willing to improve their performance in terms of waste production reduction. Let's not forget the support to re-use centres, for which we have recently approved specific guidelines that have become a basis for dialogue and discussion.

Moreover, we signed 4 supply chain agreements on a voluntary basis and we are committed to sign others with different stakeholders, first of all

companies, because our circular economy model should be necessarily based on industrial logics; we started a Permanent Circular Economy Forum that, within the participatory initiative known as “Close the loop”, provides an opportunity for active participation and dialogue with the regional community on such an important topic. It gathers local institutions, civil society representatives, the economic organization of enterprises and environmentalist associations: all together for the same purpose, towards the adoption of a new economic development model.

The latest strategic tool, presented in mid-November, is the Green Public Procurement Plan that aims at making Emilia-Romagna public governments greener and greener.

The reform of the Public Contracts Code introduced the adoption of minimum environmental criteria in the contract procedures for purchasing goods, services and works, making them 100% binding for products with energy-intensive components (e.g. lighting, construction, vehicles) and 50% binding for other types of goods such as office furnishings, stationery, urban waste management and street furniture.

Through the regional plan, the minimum share of 50% is extended to all the remaining categories and it is expected that it will be reached by 2018. But how can this be achieved? Thanks to the many measures made available through the Plan: strengthening training and information activities; providing technical support to help contracting authorities developing and adopting environmental and social criteria in contract procedures; promoting green procurement by using European funds; raising awareness and involving trade associations; spreading environmental quality certificates across the production world.

A monitoring activity, to be started by the Region's public authorities, will ensure that the results achieved are constantly checked.

If the whole public machine turns to green procurement, a small revolution would follow: lower energy consumption and a reduced environmental footprint; less emissions, included those responsible for climate change; starting an innovative and virtuous production and distribution supply chain within the boundaries of the green and circular economy, especially in sectors such as construction, health, transport and computer equipment. It is not only a matter of rules and regulations. First of all, it is a cultural issue.



A radical change is required to fully implement the shift towards a more circular economy, for a truly smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. In order to achieve this, the collective work of the communities should play a central role.

Only together we can achieve better and better results. I feel very strongly that it is essential to share an idea, a model, a goal to be reached.

The cultural issue is decisive: we should create a veritable environmental sustainability culture, it is necessary to

raise awareness, inform and train citizens so that they become more aware of how much everyday living patterns affect the future of the planet. Resources should be used more efficiently, while respecting the environment. Today we are determined to accept and meet this challenge

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BY-PRODUCTS

A REGIONAL BY-PRODUCT LIST DRAWN UP IN EMILIA-ROMAGNA

By Decision of the regional government No. 2260 of 2016, the Emilia-Romagna Region launched the *Permanent coordination for by-products* and drew up the *Regional by-product list*, that can be joined on a voluntary basis by all regional enterprises complying with the relevant legal requirements. By-products are materials derived from production processes that, provided they comply with the conditions required by legislation (in particular by Art. 184 of Legislative Decree 152/2006), should not be considered as waste, but rather as by-products to be employed in other production processes or for other uses.



The list is a public recognition system aimed at enhancing the use of by-products in line with the circular economy principles laid down in the regional Law 16/2015 and in the context of a constructive public-private collaboration. The regional government outlined a system that, through official determinations, identifies the types of production processes entitling enterprises to apply for registration into the regional list. The technical sheets that have been approved so far are those relating to apricot and peach stones.