



**AMBASADORI ODRŽIVOG
RAZVOJA I ŽIVOTNE SREDINE**
ENVIRONMENTAL AMBASSADORS
FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



Environmental Ambassadors for Sustainable Development

2020 Spotlight Report on Circular Economy in Serbia

2020

2020 Spotlight Report on Circular Economy in Serbia

1. Introductory remarks

At EU level, 2020 brought *Circular Economy Action Plan* (in March 2020); however, without binding EU-wide targets to reduce resources use and related material footprint, it falls short of addressing Europe's over-consumption and matching its own words of respecting planetary boundaries².

For Serbia, conclusions from 2019 spotlight on circular economy in Serbia, wrapped up in December 2019 in publication *Circular Economy in Serbia: The Process Started*³, remain in 2020, including that is no integrated approach in place yet and the environmental policy framework needs to be reinforced in key economic and sectoral policies.

In 2020, in Serbia, process continuous, with some (small) steps and good example cases, primarily at company level.

2. Some milestones to mention

2. 1. Negotiation position for Chapter 27

Serbia is candidate country for EU membership⁴; in January 2020 Serbia presented its Negotiating Position for Chapter 27 (Environment and Climate Change)⁵, and EU now prepares Draft EU common position, towards this chapter to be opened for negotiation.

Within the Negotiation position is plan how and when Serbia, through set of Directives Specific Implementation Plans, will implement all EU member countries obligations. For waste management (where are circular economy targets related waste management presented), Serbia is requesting transitional period.

Serbia has achieved *some level of preparation* in the area of environment and climate change. Overall, Serbia

¹ Prepared for the EU-funded project: ENV.Net Factoring the Environmental Portfolio for WB and Turkey in The EU Policy Agenda, by EASD Team

² Background paper to the EEB 2020 Annual Conference: The European Green Deal one year in (EEB is Partner organization in ENV.net project)

³ Mihaljov A., A.Mladenović and F.Jovanović (2019), *Circular Economy in Serbia: The Process Started*, Belgrade: Environmental Ambassadors for Sustainable Development, available at <http://ambassadors-env.com/en/www-staro-pre-2020/circular-economy-in-serbia/publikacija-eng/>

⁴ Some facts regarding Chapter 27 (Environment and Climate Change), are following: Explanatory meeting hold 15-19 September 2014; Bilateral meeting hold 17-21 November 2014; Received EC Opinion – Screening Report at the very end of 2016 without benchmarks. Negotiation Position for Chapter 27 has been finalized at the end of 2019, consisting of number of DSIPs (Directive Specific Implementation plans), to support position, and in January 2020, after final approval by the Government, it is submitted to EC. Negotiation Position for Chapter 27 was prior to final Governmental approval, discussed and approved by National Convention of EU, Committees for EU and for Environment of Serbian Parliament. The Serbian Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) has a responsibility to prepare a national State of the Environment report on a yearly basis, since 2006 (in accordance with Articles 76 and 77 of the Law on Environmental Protection). The Government and Committee for Environment of Serbian Parliament approve the latest Report for 2018 in December 2019. Although legal framework is advanced (EU directives transposed), implementation of laws is "too little to slow".

To highlight that it is the chapter without opening benchmarks.

⁵ Negotiation Position for Chapter 27 is under „limite“ sign, and it will be like that until Chapter 27 open for negotiation

made *limited progress* in the past year, mainly on strategic planning. The 2019 recommendations remain valid. Serbia should considerably step up ambitions towards a green transition.

Circular economy concept in Serbia is still in its early stage. Term “circular economy” is not mentioned in 2020 EC Report⁶. Since 2018 CSOs in Serbia started to raise this issue⁷. Serbia is implementing some initiatives that support the circular economy.

In 2020, Ex-ante analysis of effects related (future) circular economy policy is finished⁸, as well as Serbian Ministry for Environment, supported by UNDP, published “A Roadmap for circular economy in Serbia”⁹. The purpose of the Roadmap is to encourage production through application of circular business models, to motivate industry to create new work posts and to advance doing business by detecting innovative, sustainable solutions on the market.

2.2. New industrial policy

To recall 2019 analysis conclusion that for Serbia relevant strategy is *National Strategy for Sustainable Use of Natural Resources and Goods (2012-2022)*, with some elements relevant for circular economy; however, this strategy not have approved action plan for implementation.

Although Serbia is having *Waste Management Strategies* from 2003, in line with EU acquis, now in 2020 the latest strategy legally is not valid. Updated/new public policy document for waste management, as well as a new/updated Law on Waste Management, in line with EU acquis related circular economy and waste is expected in 2020 (more realistically in 2021). Considering the recommendations of the European Commission on the Circular Economy, *amendments to the Waste Management Act*¹⁰ were adopted in January 2016, enabling support of the circular economy concept and creation of green jobs.

In 2020 Serbia adopted *New Industrial Policy Strategy 2021-2030*¹¹. At about same time EU introduced new European Industrial Strategy¹², and consequently this Serbian one did not take in account messages formulated in the new EU industrial policy.

EASD analyzed nexus Serbian New Industrial Policy Strategy 2021-2030 – circular economy concept, i.e. how much of circular economy concept is substantially considered. The strategic challenges of the new industrial policy have been identified; this public policy document contains comprehensive reform steps in the field of industrial development and permeates a large part of economic activities, with a focus on the manufacturing industry. As a horizontal industrial policy this strategy addresses, among others, issue of the circular economy.

6 https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/serbia_report_2020.pdf

7 Under the ENV.net3 project umbrella, and also look at eukonvent.org; eukonvent.org/category/vesti; eukonvent.org/category/saopstenja/

8 through project “Policy and Legal Advice Centre – PLAC III, EuropeAid/139295/DH/SER/RS).

9 https://www.ekologija.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/razno/2020/FINAL_202004020_roadmap%20SRBIJA.pdf

10 Website: https://www.paragraf.rs/propisi_download/zakon_o_upravljanju_otpadom.pdf (Serbian)

11 <https://www.pravno-informacioni-sistem.rs/SlGlasnikPortal/eli/rep/sgrs/vlada/strategija/2020/35/1/reg>

12 file:///C:/Users/AnMi/Downloads/EU_industrial_strategy_en.pdf

Important issues intended to be addressed in this document is: the issue of compliance with environmental standards by industrial companies and the circular economy as a source of new industrial growth. Mission is that industry grows taking into account resource efficiency and potential of new products and technologies in the field of environmental protection. Having in mind

the presented and elaborated strategic challenges, as well as an overview of the current situation, Serbian New Industrial Policy Strategy 2021-2030 list strategic areas of intervention within which the goals and measures will be defined. In this spotlight report, we are just mentioning measures related circular economy (strategic area 6), as:

Measure	
2.5	Support program for industrial economic entities for the procurement of first-generation technological equipment. The measure aims to support the import of modern equipment that is in line with the principles of circular economy , i.e. to respect the principles of efficiency and minimal negative impact on the environment. Type of measure: incentive
5.1	Promotion of the circular economy and education of economic entities. This measure aims acquainting economic entities with the importance of more efficient use of material resources and energy efficiency in industrial processes and opportunities for savings in the production process and earnings. The measure will be implemented through the organization of promotional and educational gatherings and the use of services of centers that are active in this sector (Center for Circular Economy of the Serbian Chamber of Commerce; Center for Cleaner Production, Faculty of Technology and Metallurgy, etc.). Type of measure: informative-educational ¹³
5.2	Encouraging investment in circular and low-carbon economy solutions as growth generators. Adjusting the criteria for encouraging investment in production equipment in a way that favors investment in equipment that meets European energy efficiency standards and is certified in accordance with it. Type of measure: regulatory
5.3	Encouraging more efficient use of material resources and energy efficiency in industrial processes. Adjust the criteria for encouraging investment in production equipment by favoring investment to use recycled resources. Type of measure: regulatory

2.3. EASD continuous knowledge-based advocacy towards circular economy

EASD continuous with knowledge/information advocacy and education activities on circular economy. Before the ENV.net3 project, where one of the topics is chosen to be circular economy, Environmental Ambassadors has worked with some companies in

Serbia (Tetra Pak, RECAN Foundation, C&A Foundation), which supported Eco-schools Serbia network in their pioneer efforts to promote and to switch daily activities to the circular economy. Thus, Eco-schools Serbia network from 2013 raised awareness in local communities how to deal with resources in sustainable way and to promote re-using of different materials, especially beverage carton,

¹³ ENV.net and EASD activities belongs largely to this measure

metal and textile. These activities resulted in strengthening institutions working with children and adults with special needs, to develop skills and entrepreneurship and to generate income. The first regional conference on circular economy in the frame of ENV.net project was held in October 2018 in Belgrade, with participation of all ENV.net partner, as well as relevant experts, institutions, national and international organizations which has already run project and/or initiatives focused to the circular economy. EASD also initiated update of the National Strategy for Sustainable Use of Natural Resources, possibly in the form of the National Sustainable Use of Natural Resources Plan; this was joint activity of EASD and National Convention on the EU. The proposal to innovate and to rethink

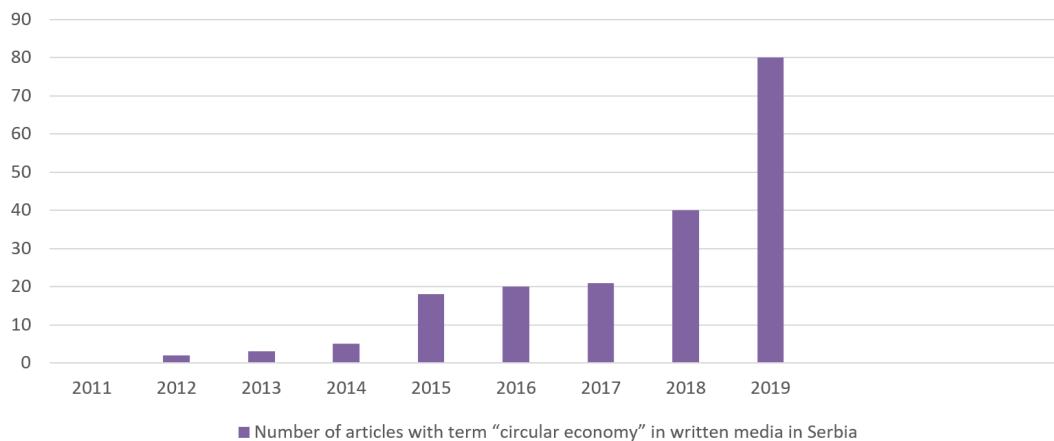
the National Strategy for Sustainable Use of Natural Resources was addressed to the Ministry of Environmental Protection of the Republic of Serbia.

In 2020, ENV.net3 research related circular economy is presented at EurAsia Waste Management Symposium 2020, Istanbul, Turkey, October 2020.

Publication is receiving great attention. It is posted on Researchgate, and as on 31 October 2020 have: 309 reads of publication in Serbian, and 124 reads of publication in English.

EASD continuous with separate research within the ENV.net3 project (imple-mented by *Ebart media archive*, Belgrade) on nexus environmental issues-media in Serbia. Bellow outreach data are presented:

Number of articles with term “circular economy” in written media in Serbia



To note that ENV.net3 project in Serbia with circular economy as one of priority topics are from 2018, and EASD team believe that our activities contributed to results presented above.

In this context EASD team would like to list related subgrant projects:

1. Education Development Centre “Planet”, City of Sombor (project: „The Hive- circular economy as a model of

entrepreneurship for the youth “).
Activities supported:

- Creation of promotional videos and the entire campaign of the project;
- Promotion and organization of the action of collecting old textiles in primary and secondary schools in Sombor, sorting it;
- “Quality Buzz Generator” Workshops - Going for Responsible Entrepreneurship

- Young people with intellectual and physical disabilities, with the support of teachers, create certain usable items using old clothes, materials (two workshops monthly for six months at ŠOSO "Vuk Karadžić");

-Promoting circular economy workshops
- workshops in four primary and six secondary schools in Sombor - initiation of collection of garbage from garments, sorting it out and realization of workshops for the production of items from collected raw materials in each school;

- Organizing a lecture on the topic of circular economy and entrepreneurship in extracurricular activities in elementary and secondary schools with the aim of involving these in their curriculum for the next school year;

- Organization of sales exhibitions in which objects made at workshops will be presented and sold, and for the purpose of collecting funds for the realization of an excursion for young workshop participants;

-Communication with different stakeholders (representatives of local self-government, schools, associations, entrepreneurs, individuals, etc.) in order to provide support for the establishment of a sustainable social enterprise of young people that will use the circular economy principle and enable them to be useful members of society and employees;

-Attending the meeting of eco-school coordinators at Zlatibor and organization of a sales exhibition;

-Furnishing "The Hive" - the space (obtained by the city) for continuing the work of the social enterprise of youth with intellectual and physical disabilities.

2.Association Zlatibor cycle, Municipality of Cajetina, (Project: Model of circular economy in the service of environmental protection in the municipality of Cajetina). Activities supported:

-raising the awareness of citizens of municipality of Cajetina regarding the importance of responsible behavior to protect the environment through the model of circular economy,

-activities on promotion and engagement of NGOs in campaign in the local community and advocacy issues regarding the importance of the environment and sustainable development

-establishment of the Council for Sustainable Development and Education of the Municipality of Čajetina, with involvement of students in primary and secondary schools from the municipality of Cajetina

- educational and promotional activities related to environmental protection and workshops for didactic resources of natural materials, increasing the awareness of parents about responsible behavior , circular economy and environmental protection;

- encouraging the concept of renting and making instead of buying toys- establishing Eco Toys Library (collection of used and production of new toys made of natural materials);

- raising the level of knowledge of the employees in the kindergarten, primary and secondary school teachers in the municipality of Čajetina on the activities through which the principles of circular economy and sustainable development are presented to pupils;

- raising the level of awareness of employees in local and regional media about the importance of broadcasting educational and promotional content on the principles of circular economy and sustainable development and presenting examples of good practice.

3. Center of expertise for natural and economic resources (Project: Re-fresh 4EU); supported activities:

- Development of Analysis as Advocacy Tools for Information based advocacy
- Contributing to improve the creation and implementation of environmental policy in line with the EU.
- Enforcing intensification of action for climate and environment, including circular economy (in the current situation of European integration).

4. Concluded remarks

The circular economy concept in Serbia remain in its early stage.

It is underlined in *New Industrial Policy Strategy 2021-2030*¹⁴ that circular economy and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions include:

- A clear strategic direction of the state is needed for the transformation of the economic model in the direction of circular economy and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.
- Underdeveloped awareness of industry representatives about the importance of the environment and the fight against climate change in general. Especially in terms of waste management, and the possibilities of using waste as a raw material in industrial processes.

¹⁴ <https://www.pravno-informacioni-sistem.rs/SlGlasnikPortal/eli/rep/sgrs/vlada/strategija/2020/35/1/reg>

Some data relevant for circular economy in Serbia

Municipal waste generation: 2,46 (2019) mil tons per year; 0,33 (2019) t/cap/year

(Total waste generation for all waste categories about 11,9 mil tons per year, 2019)

Municipal waste recycling rate is 3% (in 2018); 35-40% recycling rate for packaging waste

Municipal waste landfilling: majority of generated municipal waste (about 2 mil tons per year, 2019). Also, no facilities for biological treatment of municipal waste (about 50% of municipal waste is organic waste)

In Serbia there are 3 cement kilns, which can treat (in Serbia, still not significantly; 2 of 3 cement plants substitute fossil fuels with some specific waste (at an average rate at about 20%) to recover energy and to obtain raw materials for the production of cement.

Waste separation is not sufficiently developed, only in some cities/towns there are facilities for waste separation of recyclable waste. For recycling, there are some registered facilities for recycling of metal, plastic, PET, etc.

Materials possible to recycle: 72% of paper and cardboard is recycling, 35% of metal, 25% plastic, 22% glass, 20% wood. Also, there are possibilities for some specific waste recycling.

Availability of incineration plants: no facilities for municipal waste incineration; Belgrade landfill and the construction of a waste to energy facility is expected to start in 2020/21.

Number of (legal/illegal) landfills (and dump sites): 9 regional sanitary landfills and 2 municipals in compliance landfills (plus 2 regional landfills under construction). 137 non-compliant municipal landfills (operated by Public Utility Companies); number of illegal/noncontrolled dump sites (for about 20% of generated municipal waste) – it is noted that there are more 2000 such sites, different sizes.

- Through a series of regulatory changes, the EU places special emphasis on the preservation of material resources and the improvement of energy efficiency of industrial capacities, as well as the comprehensive introduction of the concept of circular economy. It is necessary to harmonize domestic regulations with EU regulations in the field of circular economy and climate change.

-Lack of necessary institutional infrastructure (bylaws and administrative capacity) for the implementation of adopted legal solutions, which would encourage the process of economic transformation.

- Industrial production in the country is predominantly based on older technologies, which belong to the larger environmental pollutants and greenhouse gas emitters. Such technologies are accompanied by higher energy consumption and waste production per unit of product (with a significant occurrence of losses in material flows). Insufficient level of waste and wastewater treatment by individual industrial entities has also been identified in the country.

- Insufficient use of the potential of renewable energy sources. Renewable energy production requires additional investment, which makes it more expensive compared to the use of conventional fuels. The use of energy from renewable sources by industrial entities in the country is also insufficient due to insufficient financial strength or insufficient awareness.

- Significant lag of the country in terms of waste management, wastewater and the degree of waste recycling. Lack of necessary infrastructure for waste

management (waste collection, sorting, storage and processing systems) and wastewater. Insufficient recycling rates for wood and plastic, which have great potential for inclusion in the circular economy system. Occurrence of significant losses of potentially valuable raw materials due to large amounts of waste (including packaging waste) disposed out of legal landfills and waste management sites.

If add, EASD concluded remarks on the main obstacles for switching to circular economy concept, the “picture” is “with more colors”:

-Use of natural resources and circular economy concept are not national priority and strategic goal (currently only indirectly through EU accession as priority)

-No integrated approach is in place (the circular economy is relevant to all sectors of the economy, not only for waste management); limited multi-sectoral approach and connection

-Appropriate and adequate waste management policy related to circular economy

-Means of financing by all sources (often financing unsustainable recourse management models)

-Capacities, primarily at local level and businesses (for new concept)

-Limited awareness raising and education/ dissemination of knowledge around circular economy topics and green agenda, including youth

-More strict enforcement of environmental policy framework in key economic and sectoral policies (like proper implementation of SEA, EIA, IPCC/ Industrial Directives, investment tools).

EASD (Environmental Ambassadors for Sustainable Development)
2020 Spotlight Report on
Circular Economy in Serbia

Autor: Prof. dr Anđelka Mihajlov

Dizajn: Miša Jovanović

Izdavač: Ambasadori održivog razvoja i životne sredine

Tiraz: 300

Štampa: Original, Gornji Milanovac



AMBASADORI ODRŽIVOG
RAZVOJA I ŽIVOTNE SREDINE
ENVIRONMENTAL AMBASSADORS
FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



env.net



ENV.net PROJECT IS FUNDED
BY THE EUROPEAN UNION

The views expressed in this project do not necessarily
reflect the views of the European Commission



**AMBASADORI ODRŽIVOG
RAZVOJA I ŽIVOTNE SREDINE**
ENVIRONMENTAL AMBASSADORS
FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



**ENV.net PROJECT IS FUNDED
BY THE EUROPEAN UNION**
The views expressed in this project do not necessarily
reflect the views of the European Commission