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Les défis de développement pour les villes et les régions dans une Europe en mutation

## **Circular Economy in Greece. Towards operationalizing EU recommendations on Cities and Regions involvement**

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### **Référence à la session / reference to the session**

C7 - Integrated Territorial Development / D1 - Globalization, Growth and Local Development / B8 - Environment and Sustainable Development

### **Résumé / Summary**

2016 proved to be one of the most effective and key year over urban and regional agenda and the highlighting of issues concerning the territorial dimension of specific economic, environmental, social and political evolutions. The “New Urban Agenda” adopted during the Habitat III, the third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development, in Quito, Ecuador and also the agreement of “Pact-of-Amsterdam”, were both two very important and integrated procedures that had set the new urban dialogues among cities and regions in EU and worldwide.

At the same time recent studies demonstrate that every European citizen, is consuming - in average – 14tn of resources and produces 5 tn of waste, annually. This is the vivid reality of the environmental and economic pressure on resources and emphasizes the current model that economies, markets, regions and cities are organized. Linear model is emphasizing in a “take-make-use-dispose” structural pattern. The situation is being highlighted through several studies and reports produced from independent institutions, but also from official EU Institutions. Within the revised Urban Agenda for Europe, the term and policy field of “Circular

Economy” is stressed out and prioritized along with other important policy fields that EU decided to act effectively in the next years, such as urban mobility, energy transition, sustainable use of land etc. Circular Economy is based on the restoration of the way local economies are organized, but in a more profitable and environmentally effective way: the value of products and materials is maintained for as long as possible. Waste and resource use are minimised, and when a product reaches the end of its life, it is used again to create further value. This can bring major economic benefits, contributing to innovation, growth and job creation. EU put forward an ambitious legislative package promoting the transition to the circular economy model and at the same time cities and regions appeared to have a role to play over that.

Historically the cities have been “hubs” for economic growth and political power, but also innovation and change. This assumption is stressed also in the paper in order to support the critical role of cities and regions in promoting the “circular economy”, which consist of a more systemic approach of resources and services circularity which creates environmental and sustainable results for the local economies. The main purpose of the paper is to stress out and describe the European context of circular economy and suggest methods and tools for operationalizing these recommendations for the transition to circularity for cities and regions in Greece. So far, Circular Economy policy is only a theoretical approach for the Greek municipalities and regions. Since the proposed framework and tools have not declined in their practical application, the cities and regions won't realize the important potential and the economic, environmental and social revenues of this new model.

The paper will try to set a basic framework for the specialization of operational planning of Greek cities and Regions in order to include the principles of circular economy in their local policies. The cross-cutting issue of sound and sustainable integrated approach in urban and regional planning in Greece will be demonstrated as the most effective way to mobilize also special EU funding for the Greek municipalities and Regional Governments.

## **Bibliographie / Bibliography**

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