



Boosting circular economy in Serbia

— Nordic experiences —



BOOSTING CIRCULAR ECONOMY IN SERBIA - NORDIC EXPERIENCES

Embassies of Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden with the support of the Nordic Council of Ministers implemented the project "Boosting circular economy in Serbia – Nordic experiences". The embassies of the Nordic countries intend to support Serbia in continuing to implement the principles of circular economy, to share the experiences of their countries, and raise awareness of local partners about the importance and benefits of the circular economy, which affects each individual and society as a whole.



^ Ambassador Gjelstad with journalists

(NALED), Chamber of Commerce Serbia, Chamber of Commerce Vojvodina as well as cities Novi Sad, Kragujevac and Nis.

Through several workshops-conferences that were held during September and October 2021 in Novi Sad, Kragujevac, Nis, and Belgrade, experts from Nordic countries presented examples of good practices and pointed out the importance and benefits of the circular economy.

Partners of the Nordic embassies for the project "Boosting circular economy in Serbia – Nordic experiences" were: Nordic Business Alliance (NBA), National Alliance for Local Economic Development



Launching of the project - Garden reception at the Norwegian residence, September 9th, 2021 BELGRADE

The project was announced on September 9th during a reception in the garden of the residence of the Ambassador of Norway, H. E. Jørn Gjelstad. With the presence of numerous guests from the field of diplomacy, economy, and media, the concept of the project was presented and conferences in several cities in Serbia were announced.



^ Ambassador of Norway H. E. Jørn Gjelstad

"The circular economy saves resources, reduces pollution, promotes innovation, lowers the cost of production, and creates new jobs. Fighting climate change and promoting climate-neutral growth has become political issue number one in Europe. As a pioneer of sustainable development and circular economy, Nordic countries fully share the European Commission's vision for European Green Deal and a greener, non-toxic, and resource-effective production process. That is the reason why will be happy to share our experience and the best examples with Serbia", said Ambassador of Norway to Serbia, H.E. Jørn Gjelstad at the opening.

On that occasion, the guests were entertained by one of the most popular jazz orchestras in the region, Nikolov-Ivanovic, and the Norwegian Ambassador presented the recognition to the writer and publisher Vladislav Bajec for his contribution to the promotion of Norwegian literature and culture in Serbia.



^ Ambassador Gjelstad and publisher Vladislav Bajec



< Ambassadors of Norway, Denmark and Finland



v Jazz orchestra Nikolov-Ivanovic

[▶ WATCH VIDEO HERE](#)

NOVI SAD

The first conference dedicated to the circular economy and experiences of the Nordic countries was held in Novi Sad on September 15th. With the presence of the local officials, representatives of the business sector, and media, the Nordic experts shared their experience on how biodegradable waste is managed and how a systematic approach to the circular economy can help both the community and each individual.



^ Ambassador of Denmark H. E. Susanne Shine

The Ambassador of Denmark to Serbia, H. E. Susanne Shine spoke about the importance of developing awareness about the re-use of products among children and young people. She said that the essence is to get back to the earlier concepts and not stick to a linear economy in which we use and throw things away. *"We need to think about what and how we can recycle and reuse, what can be recycled and re-usable and return to the economy."*



^ Press Statements

Ambassador Shine cited the example of Denmark where recycling and waste sorting have a long tradition and where children are at the forefront in the sorting of the waste. *"Every household has ten trash cans and very often it happens that children advise their parents what and where to throw"*, she said.

During the conferences, Norwegian expert Jens Måge and Danish expert Wini Evers shared their experiences in biodegradable waste management. They also participated in the panel discussion *"Systemic approach to the circular economy on the national level on the example of bio-waste"*.



^ Iva Petrovic NBA

< Panelists

KRAGUJEVAC

The second conference organized by the Nordic embassies with the support of the Nordic Council of Ministers on the topic of circular economy was held on September 28th in Kragujevac.



„Current use of natural resources in the world is unsustainable and that is why the circular economy is necessary for solving global environmental and economic challenges. Recycling is a very important part of the circular economy, but the circular economy is not just recycling. It also implies good product design, efficient use of resources, reduction of emission, and reuse of the products and the materials. Waste from one industry is a raw material for another industry“, said the Ambassador of Finland Kimmo Lähdevirta.

Deputy Head of Mission of the Embassy of Sweden Alexander Peyre Dutrey said that the authorities at all levels should be committed to not perceiving waste as a problem but as a resource. *„Circular economy or green economy will play a significant role in environmental strategies being developed in Serbia. This is related to the reforms that Serbia is going through on its way to the European Union. Development cooperation with partners in Serbia aims to create framework conditions for green investments, both on the local and national level“*.



In Kragujevac Nordic experts presented the Finnish City of Lahti, the European green capital, and the management of green waste and wastewater in the Swedish cities. Representatives of companies operating in Serbia, cardboard factory Umka/Kappa Star Group and Vucomm/Vaisala, shared their experiences in applying the Nordic principles in circular economy and air quality monitoring.

NIS

In the Science and Technology Park Nis, in a city with which Sweden has long cooperation in the preparation of a project for a waste-water treatment plant, the conference „Circular economy-Nordic experiences“ was held on September 29th.



^ Karin Mc Donald Head of Development Cooperation Section in the Embassy of Sweden

Head of Development Cooperation Section in the Embassy of Sweden Karin McDonald said that the Nordic countries intend to discuss the importance of connecting and integrating different investments in the development of one city - waste management and wastewater. „Apart from Swedish companies, those companies that operate in Serbia and are established in Nis, such as the Flamma Systems, also operate on the principles of the circular economy,” she said emphasizing that the green waste and sludge can be resources only if managed properly, in which „green investments“ can help.

The plant, whose construction is planned in Nis, will prevent the discharge of 30 million tons of wastewater into the Nisava River every year. In addition, through the treatment of sludge, the produced biogas can be used for electricity and heating.

„The circular economy is an important topic that concerns all citizens because the resources are limited. So far, we have lived in a linear economy - we used things, threw away and bought new ones, used water, and discharged dirty water. That is not the way we should go forward, the economy should be circular. It is not something exclusive for only one group, it is important for each of us, for each municipality, city, region, and each government“, said the Ambassador of Denmark Susanne Shine.



^ Sandra Dokic Assistant Minister of the Environmental Protection

^ Ambassador of Denmark H.E. Susanne Shine with journalists



BELGRADE – FINAL CONFERENCE



On the way to the circular economy, green innovations and active involvement of all actors in society are necessary – institutions, local self-governments, the private sector, and citizens. Strengthening the state’s capacity, investing in communal infrastructure, and finding solutions for better waste management were some of the conclusions from the final conference „Boosting circular economy in Serbia – Nordic experiences“ held on October 12th at the Serbian Chamber of Commerce in Belgrade.

On this occasion, the results of the previous conferences held in Novi Sad, Kragujevac and Nis were presented.

The event was attended by the Minister of Environmental Protection Irena Vujovic and the Minister of the European Integration Jadranka Joksimovic, as well as the Head of Cooperation Section in The Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Serbia Nicola Bertolini and the host of the event of the President of the Serbian Chamber of Commerce Marko Cadez, numerous businessmen, representatives of institutions, companies, and media, the results of the previous conferences held in four largest cities in Serbia were presented.





^ Ambassadors of the Nordic countries

The Ambassador of Sweden H. E. Annika Ben David said that the citizens are at the heart of change. „I am sure you have seen from the Nordic examples that the involvement of citizens in recycling and circular economy is at the heart of this silent revolution in the Nordic countries. It is not just about sorting plastic and paper, but also about everyone being able to raise their voice about how a city should look and function. If citizens are enabled to engage in improving their lives, that is a part of the common progress” said Ambassador Ben David.



^ Audience

„We need a new way of thinking – circular economy. Authorities and the business sector need to think in advance about green investments that will connect all actors in the chain of the circular economy. Once that chain is established, all the benefits of it will be seen very soon”, said the Ambassador of Finland H. E. Kimmo Lähdevirta. He added that the circular economy is not just about saving money, but it is also about a very important issue of the quality of life of citizens, as well as the survival of the planet.

The Ambassador of Norway H. E. Jørn Gjelstad said that the circular economy is the key issue today. „We have to bear in mind that this involves alternative ideas, innovations, but it also involves inclusion. To accelerate this process, we have to create a stakeholders’ platform linking central and local authorities, civil society, business sector and citizens. Individuals have to take a lot of responsibility to contribute to this change, that is the key” said Ambassador Gjelstad.



^ Journalists





"We should start with education from the earliest age, from kindergarten. It is the children who bring about change. In Denmark, children are the main advocates of waste sorting, they warn parents when they do not throw some waste in the right bin. The children are 'family policemen'. The essence is to instill from an early age an awareness of how important it is for society and the planet to take care of waste and to act responsibly".

"Circular economy is equally important for environmental protection as it is for the wallet. Key actors in this area, including the business sector and citizens, need to understand how the circular economy works, to be part of the transition from a linear to a circular economy. It should be borne in mind that waste from one industry can be a raw material for another industry"



▲ Ambassador of Finland H. E. Kimmo Lähdevirta



"On the way to the circular economy, we need innovations, but also the responsibility of both – economic entities and citizens, because all social actors should participate in this process. Everyone has a role to play in this process, local governments need to establish a legislative framework, civil society needs to accept and participate, and the business sector need to implement technologies and production models".

▲ Ambassador of Norway H. E. Jørn Gjelstad

"There are two takeaways from this series of conferences. The first is to try and learn and cooperate, perhaps to compete with your neighbors, both on the regional, but also on the local level. The second is to put your citizens at the heart of this quiet revolution – that is the key experience that we have. Today, I am wearing a second-hand outfit. This is the way for life for me and my family".



▲ Ambassador of Sweden H. E. Annika Ben David



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