

Press Release
EREK Workshop in Austria

Let's help SMEs to go circular

23/10/2018

The European Resource Efficiency Knowledge Centre held its latest workshop in Vienna, Austria, on the topic of SMEs, circularity and Cluster organisations on Monday the 22nd of October. The workshop was co-hosted by Business Upper Austria and Interreg-Project “Moveco”. The event was well-attended with 40 participants.

Attendees came from a diverse range of sectors and industries, including cluster managers, business support managers, regional authorities and experts in resource efficiency and circular economy. Furthermore, the audience was composed of a myriad of different nationalities.

Agis Evrygenis, EREK director, welcomed all of the participants and provided a brief run-through of the day's programme while introducing the workshop organiser Mr. Siegfried Keplinger of Cleantech Austria.

“Do you think climate change and limited resources are a severe problem? No, these we can solve, problems are ignorance and apathy and denial.” - Siegfried Keplinger – Cleantech Cluster

Helene-Diane Dage of DG GROW formally opened the workshop and spoke of the importance which clusters have to play in bringing together SMEs so that they can implement resource efficient solutions and collaboratively develop new environmental technologies.

The workshop adopted an interactive approach which allowed for fruitful discussions between the participants and increased interplay between the speakers and the audience. Topics addressed included cluster management, corporate support services, best environmental management practices, and tools for improving resource efficiency and circularity within companies.

The overarching objectives of the workshop were to enable networking and engage cluster organisations with EREK and its related resource efficiency and circular economy activities. Moreover, raising awareness vis-à-vis clusters and enabling them to provide resource efficiency support services and tools in their sector activities. Capacity building, sharing knowledge and experiences related to circular economy and establishing synergies with various EU projects were also raised during the course of the workshop.

“Clusters have an important role to play in raising awareness and bringing their SMEs to innovate through collaboration for the development of a circular economy.” - Lucia Seel - ECCP Communication & Content Manager

The workshop utilised an interactive format to showcase the benefits of embracing efficient solutions for business competitiveness and improved environmental management. This included a participatory session and peer-to-peer learning which saw lively discussions on clusters and the interests which they can garner from their members vis-à-vis resource efficiency technologies and solutions. Practical advice was provided as to how clusters can promote resource efficiency and circular economy to their network members.

The afternoon sessions saw an array of interesting and pertinent presentations including the corporate support services landscape in Austria and an overview of circular public procurement with details on new opportunities and requirements for SME's.

Our hosts Wiener Linien, the largest transportation company in Austria, gave a presentation on the work which they've undertaken in relation to renovating Vienna's public transport infrastructure which has seen considerable material re-use and savings while reducing wear rates of components.

The final section of the workshop kept the interactive element going with a site of Wiener Linien's premises. Participants were allowed to see the control room which is the hub of all operational activities. Further information was given on the measures which they've undertaken in relation to resource efficiency and circular economy.

The Vienna Workshop is part of a series the EREK Network has planned in the coming months. Please refer to our website for the latest updates, we might be visiting a place near you! www.resourceefficient.eu/en

[Background information](#)

[European Resource Efficiency Knowledge Centre - EREK](#)

EREK stands for the European Resource Efficiency Knowledge Centre: a new European initiative that enables small and medium sized companies (SMEs) to make better use of their resources, produce less waste and increase their overall productivity and competitiveness.

Via its online platform, EREK is bringing together a network of business support organisations from different regions and sectors across the continent. The platform is an open, collaborative space for the sharing of knowledge and expertise on resource efficiency. EREK is looking forward to welcoming new members to take part and stimulate resource efficiency initiatives in SMEs.

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[Flash Eurobarometer 456: SMEs, resource efficiency and green market](#) has gathered extensive information on actions being undertaken by SMEs to enhance their resource efficiency. Questions range from the types of actions companies have implemented, the impacts of resource efficiency actions on production costs in the previous two years and the projected business planning actions linked to resource efficiency in the upcoming two years. <http://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/ResultDoc/download/DocumentKy/81280>

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EREK is an initiative of the European Commission

