

Press Release

EUsalt's Conference on 'Innovation for the Circular Economy'

Brussels, 27th June 2017: 100 people gathered for the EUsalt conference on 'Innovation for the Circular Economy' on 27th June. Speakers from the European Commission's Joint Research Centre, UNIDO Brussels, the Water Footprint Network, EPEA, K+S AG, International Synergies Ltd., and Re-Think Solutions shared their views and experience on how to achieve the transition to a circular economy.



From technological to service innovations and new business models, many innovative solutions have been developed over the years and across industries to tackle the circularity challenge. Yet, barriers remain that obstruct their diffusion. The conference thus addressed the need to adapt market structures to scale up the circular economy thinking and output.

Discussions tackled the imperative to act on perception and public acceptance of new patterns and products, whilst guaranteeing quality standards. The very terms that are used in reference to circularity models, i.e. 'remanufacturing', are often associated with the notions of 'downgrading' and 'risk of contamination'. To change that, the EU needs a constructive, innovation-friendly regulatory framework that help develop and expand new solutions; we need positive definitions of products and services.

The European salt industry has undertaken to evaluate its production cycles and performances so as to identify the most important areas for action towards more sustainable and circular industrial ecosystems. The project is called the 'Salt Sustainability House' and is being developed in collaboration with Kienbaum Consultants International GmbH and the Environmental Protection Encouragement Agency (EPEA).

Lastly, the conference stressed the fact that a perfect and complete closed loop is an ideal that cannot be achieved. Rather, circular economy can be applied at any point of the value chains, depending on relevance, needs, and feasibility. Even more so, that calls on industries to assess the most critical points of their production and supply chains, and determine their most significant contributions to the circular economy.