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The circular economy package

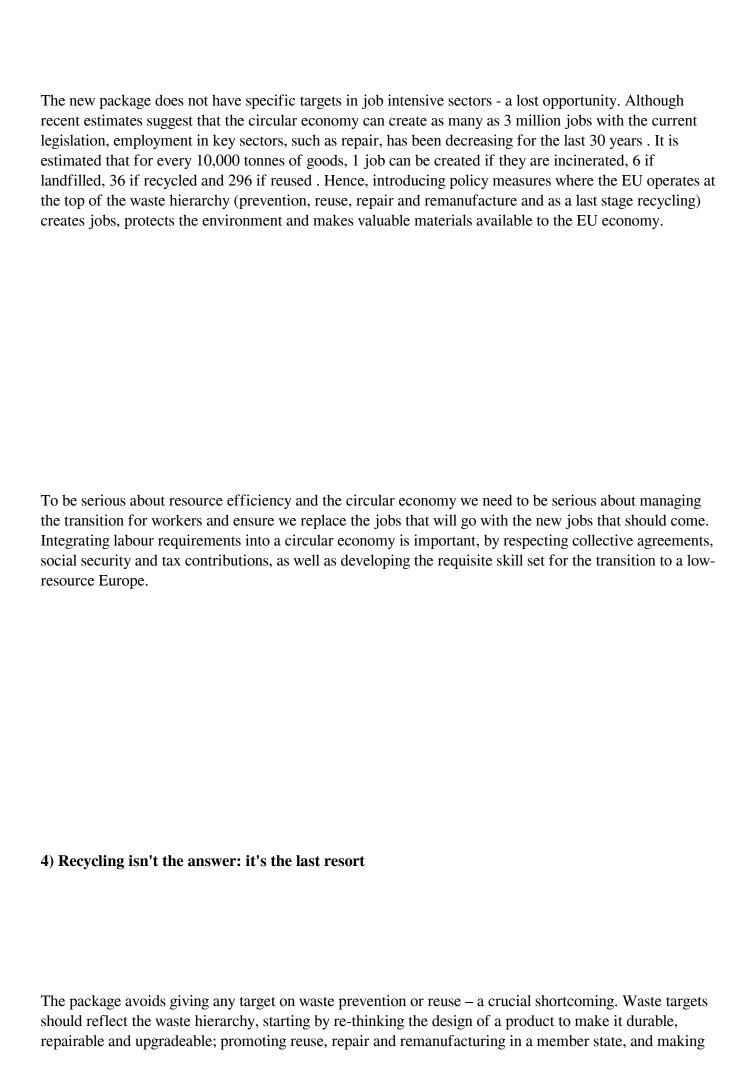
a transformation for all?

The circular economy needs to be an inclusive democratic change that has societal benefits at its core or we could end up in a new paradigm that promotes business as usual: benefits for the few only.

The circular economy package is a missed opportunity to move to living within our planetary means and bringing benefits to society, such as green jobs. For this reason, the Greens/EFA believe that the circular economy package needs to include the following points:

1) Integrate resource consumption into economic accounting
It is a mistake for the Commission's new package, unlike the previous one, to ignore resource use. Even if we were to recycle all our waste, for most materials, we would still need a constant supply of virgin materials to meet our consumption levels. The circular economy on its own can improve the availability of materials, but cannot provide an endless and increasing supply. We have to face up to the limits to our resources and need to work towards an effective reduction of resources.
Addressing resource use allows for a better analysis of cross-cutting barriers, such as the levels of tax on labour compared with resources as well as enabling the measurement of resource consumption in terms of land, water, carbon and materials using the footprint methodology, and using these indicators in policy impact assessments and macroeconomic policies such as the European Semester, as already requested by Parliament in 2012 and 2015, and which was included in the 7th EAP in 2013.

2) Make jobs part of the transformation



recycling the last possible option for the waste that cannot be recovered in any other way.
At the moment, EU legislation has binding targets for recycling, rather than for prevention and preparation for re-use. Although increasing recycling is positive, it is the last step to recover waste, and this should be reflected in EU legislation.
3) Invest in small scale enterprises instead of the linear economy
The package ignores the need to use EU funding to target communities, rather than only big infrastructure. It is unfortunate that until now, cohesion funds have been used to perpetuate the linear economy by funding mostly landfills and incinerators. In addition to promoting the right infrastructure, EU funds should be used to establish smaller scale, often citizen-led or social enterprises or SME initiatives, such as borrowing shops or repair networks, which currently find themselves struggling despite the wide appeal and the myriad benefits they bring to communities.



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Green Jobs and Green Economy

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