



# Policy Brief

October 2019



## Systemic Change in National and Regional Circular Economy Transition

In a circular economy, resource efficiency is maximised, and waste production is minimised in order to achieve a more sustainable economy. The successful transition towards circular economy needs to have comprehensive support from governments (Loiseau et al. 2016; Geissdorfer et al. 2017). Consequently, efforts are required at different scale levels to reach a systemic and holistic approach: local, regional and national (Geng et al. 2012; Su et al. 2012; EC 2015; Ghisellini et al. 2016). The macro-level efforts to support this transition refer to policy changes on national and regional levels.

The current situation of circular economy policies from the perspective of national and selected regional strategies in Finland, France, Greece, Romania, Slovakia and Spain is shown in Table 1. The importance of the transition towards circular economy has been recognized in the majority of the policies and strategies studied, both on the regional and national levels. Several circular economy strategies have already been finalised while others are in the process of being validated.

**Table 1.** Current Situation of National and Regional Circular Economy (CE) Policies (9/2019)

### Current Situation of National and Regional Circular Economy (CE) Policies (9/2019)

NATIONAL LEVEL	FINLAND	FRANCE	GREECE	ROMANIA	SLOVAKIA	SPAIN
<b>Relevant national strategy</b>	Finnish Roadmap to a Circular Economy	Law Relative to Energy Transition for Green Growth	National Plan for Waste Management	National Waste Management Strategy	The Waste Management Program of Slovak Republic	Waste Management State Plan (PEMAR)
<b>Validity period</b>	2016 - 2025	2015 - 2030	2015 - 2020	2014 - 2020	2019 - 2030	2016 - 2022
<b>Circular economy included</b>	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Status of national circular economy strategy updates</b>	CE roadmap updated in 2019	Existing law includes CE. Specific CE law expected in 2019	CE strategy expected in 2020	First draft of the strategy for CE is expected in 2019	Strategy includes CE	CE strategy expected in 2020
REGIONAL LEVEL	PÄIJÄT-HÄME	PAYS DE LA LOIRE	CENTRAL MACEDONIA	SOUTH MUNTENIA	NITRA	CASTILLA-LA MANCHA
<b>Strategic document in focus</b>	Päijät-Häme Regional Development Strategy and Programme	Performance Agreement for a Regional Dynamic about Waste and Circular Economy (CODREC)	Regional Waste Management Plan of Central Macedonia	Smart Specialisation Strategy for South Muntenia	Program of Economic and Social Development of Nitra Self-governing Region	Integrated Waste Management Plan for Castilla-La Mancha
<b>Validity period</b>	2018 - 2021	2016 - 2020	2016 onwards	2014 - 2020	2016 - 2022	2016 - 2022
<b>Circular economy included</b>	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Status of regional circular economy strategy updates</b>	CE vision and aims defined in a roadmap 2017, updated in 2018	Regional action plan for circular economy(PRAEC) expected to be validated in 2019	Regional plans will follow the national strategy guidelines to achieve targets	Strategy update in progress	CE was included in 2018 in the Action Plan for the Programme of Economic and Social Development of Nitra Self-governing Region for 2019-2021	CE law is in the approval process CE strategy is expected to be validated in 2020

Tweet!

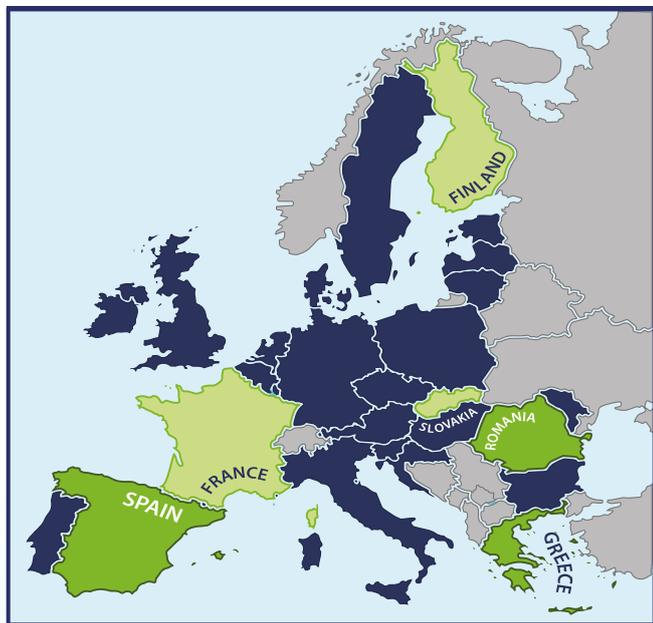
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## Circular Economy Emerging in National Policies

Development of policies related to circular economy depends on the situation in each partner country, and moreover, varies at the national and regional level. (Figure 1) At the national level, in all countries, except Greece, circular economy is included in the relevant national policies. In Finland, a Roadmap to Circular Economy has been in force already since 2016 and was updated in 2019. In Slovakia, the Waste Management Program already includes circular economy. Similarly, in France, the Law Relative to Energy Transition for Green Growth includes circular economy and a specific circular economy law is expected in 2019. In Greece and Spain, a specific circular economy strategy is expected in 2020. In Romania, the first draft of a national strategy is foreseen in 2019.



- Existing circular economy policy on national level
- Circular economy policy on national level expected in 2019-2020

**Figure 1.** Status of National Level Circular Economy Policies in the Studied Countries (9/2019).



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## Specific Circular Economy Strategies are Developed in the Regions

At the regional level, in all studied regions, except in Central Macedonia, Greece, circular economy is included in the strategic documents in focus. In Finland, Pääjät-Häme, a regional circular economy strategy was defined in a roadmap already in 2017 and was updated in 2018. In Slovakia, the circular economy strategy was recently included in the Action Plan for the Programme of Economic and Social Development of Nitra Self-governing Region for 2019-2021. In France, Pays de la Loire, and Spain, Castilla-La Mancha, the regional strategies are expected to be validated in 2019 and 2020. Also, in Romania, South Muntenia, the regional strategy update is in process. Finally, in Greece, the regional plans will follow the national strategy guidelines when they are set. In all countries, active communication between the national and regional level (working groups, networking, soft measures etc.) is ongoing.

Systemic change requires understanding of the various possibilities and developing a comprehensive approach to circular economy. These are the key factors in promoting circular economy to become an integral part of national and regional policies. Experiences have shown that both concrete actions and support from different policy levels are fundamental in the transition process.

Trans-regional cooperation, exchange of good practices and linkages between public and private sectors can promote the integration of circular economy in the Member States

The study is an outcome of the ongoing Interreg Europe project BIOREGIO, where the circular economy and bio-based circular economy policies are developed through the transfer of good practices. Read more: [www.interregeurope.eu/bioregio](http://www.interregeurope.eu/bioregio)

The policy brief is based on the poster presented at the European Days for Sustainable Circular Economy event held in Helsinki, Finland on 30.9.-1.10.2019.



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