



## Greece is the word for Circular Economy nations

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**Wales' determination to move towards a circular economy and become more resource efficient and resilient has been further underlined by our presence at the latest CESME event in Thessaloniki, Greece.**

The **Circular Economy for Small and Medium sized Enterprises (CESME)** is a European funded project that will enable SMEs to turn environmental challenges into opportunities. The circular economy is a key concept of the Green Economy, where high-quality materials derived from waste products can be supplied back to Welsh manufacturers and productively used again and again.

In a world where resource prices are rising fast, the circular economy model has the potential to provide significant cost benefits for Welsh businesses. Studies have found the adoption of a Circular Economy could save the Welsh economy up to £2bn and has the potential to create up to 30,000 jobs.

The meeting in Thessaloniki included workshops and study visits to three SMEs in the Region of Central Macedonia in Greece, all of which implement good practices promoting circular economy. The Thessaloniki meeting follows previous CESME get-togethers here in Wales last May, Aalborg, Denmark and Bologna, Italy.

Earlier this year the Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs announced a £6.5m fund to help Wales move towards a circular economy. Lesley Griffiths said:

“Wales is fully signed up to the benefits of the circular economy. Sharing valuable expertise with our European partners helps us break down barriers for SMEs and will bring our vision of a leaner, greener Wales into reality.”

“The £6.5m fund I announced earlier this year will help businesses save money by becoming more resource efficient and resilient, an approach that will deliver numerous environmental benefits including less waste and reduced CO2 emissions”.

The Circular Economy for Small and Medium sized Enterprises (CESME) project is supported by €1.73million of Interreg Europe funding and its foreseen duration is four years. Wales is one of 10 partners from six European countries.

The latest CESME event took place in Thessaloniki, Greece on 10 and 11 May 2017. Further information on CESME can be found on the [Interreg Europe website](#) (external link)